This course examines the origins of Japanese civilization and surveys the classical, medieval, and early modern periods. From the emergence of a court-centered state through the rise and fall of a warrior-dominated society, Japan’s premodern history is explored through a focus on political, social, cultural, and intellectual developments. Early interactions with Asia and the West will be considered as a means of questioning the “opening” of Japan in the mid-nineteenth century. Enrollment Limit: 40.

Students are encouraged to keep in mind the following goals for maximizing learning throughout the semester:

- **Looking for patterns and themes in history.** Students are encouraged to draw connections between major events and ideas in Japan’s history and those encountered in other history courses.
- **Thinking about how historians practice their craft.** In particular, students will learn to read and interpret a variety of primary sources as a way of understanding the creation of multiple perspectives on the past.
- **Understanding how history-writing is shaped by contemporary concerns.**
- **Improving expository writing about historical events;** learning to posit an argument and develop it in a clear and logical progression.
- **Polishing the verbal articulation of ideas before an audience of one’s peers.**

**Required texts:** Required texts have been ordered in paperback at the Oberlin Bookstore (basement) as well as placed on reserve at Mudd Library.


**Recommended text:**


All other readings are available on Blackboard.
Assessment:
The course grade will be based on the following:

- Mid-term (hour) exam: 20%
- Short papers: 20% each
- Final exam: 25%
- Attendance/Participation: 15%

Exams: The Midterm Examination, covering the lectures and all assigned readings to date will be given in class on Monday, Oct. 8. The Final Examination is scheduled for Thursday, December 20, 7-9pm.

Papers: Students will write two 3-5 page (double-spaced) essays, due in class on Friday, Nov. 9, and Monday, Dec. 10.

Attendance and Participation:
- Lectures are an integral part of the course, and attendance is mandatory.
- Students are expected to come well-prepared for Friday discussion sections by which time all readings must be completed. (It is advised that students complete all non-primary document readings by the Monday class meeting each week.)
  - Always bring assigned readings to class.
- Each week, students will be required to post one reading question on the online discussion board in Blackboard by Thursday, 10pm. Good reading questions are not quizzes on factual content (In what year did Murasaki Shikibu write The Tale of Genji?). Rather, they stimulate ways of thinking about processes and trends in the historical record, and getting a feel for lived experience (What can we learn about the values and belief systems of the Heian aristocracy from the Yūgao chapter of Genji?). Good questions have multiple answers and help readers frame a larger context for any given reading.

Short Assignments: Students will complete two 1-page (single-spaced) writing assignments. The first will analyze a primary document and be due in class on Monday, Sept. 24. The second will focus on an object from visual culture and be due on Monday, Nov. 26. Details to be explained in class.

Assignments are due on (or before) the due date noted in the syllabus. Only one extension will be granted per semester and must be requested during office hours at least 2 days before the due date of the paper. (Note: Requests for extensions may not be granted in all cases.) Late assignments will be reduced by one grade step per day. A paper due on Friday, November 9 which is turned in on Saturday, November 10, for example, will get a “B-” rather than the “B” it merited. A “B” paper turned in on Monday, November 12 will earn a “C+”, etc.

Film Screenings: Two films will be shown during the course of the semester in Wilder 101. The first, “Ran” by Director Kurosawa Akira will be screened on Tuesday, October 2 at 7pm. The second film, “Twilight Samurai” (Tasogare Seibei) by Director
Yamada Yōji will be screened on **Tuesday, December 4 at 7pm.** Films will be discussed during lecture in conjunction with the week’s readings.

**Thinking about History with Art:** Examination of works of art from Oberlin’s Allen Memorial Art Museum will form an integral part of the course curriculum. Students will visit the museum during class hours in weeks three, six and nine for discussion of the week’s themes in the context of material objects. Students will also be given an opportunity to write one of the two required papers on a topic related to objects from the museum’s collection.

**Honor Code:** Students are expected to adhere to the Oberlin Honor Code on all written assignments. Infractions of the Honor Code will be referred to the College Honor Committee. Questions regarding the citation of sources and proper attribution of information should be directed to the instructor.

**Writing Assistance:** Students are encouraged to use the Drop-In Writing Center located in Mudd 101A (the Academic Commons) as well as other services offered by Oberlin’s Writing Associates Program.

**Accommodations for Disabilities:** Students requiring accommodation for a disability must present a note from Jane Boomer (Director, Office of Disability Services, Peters Hall G-27) by **Wed. Sept. 12.** The note should include a detailed description of the type of accommodation required.

**Office Hours:** Students are encouraged to come see the instructor with questions about any aspect of the course:
- Wed. 2:30 - 4pm and Thurs. 4:30 - 6pm
- Rice Hall, Room 308
- Phone: 5-6708
- E-mail: Emer.ODwyer@oberlin.edu

**Related Lecture (Suggested, not mandatory):**

*Tuesday, September 18, 2012* 4:30 pm-6pm.
Professor Peter Kornicki, Cambridge University
“Scruffy Paperbacks, Unsightly Texts and Illustrations for the Ignorant: Japanese Books in the 17th century meet the Challenge of Imports from China and Korea.”
Craig Lecture Hall, Science Center.
LECTURE SCHEDULE:

I. PRE-MODERN TRADITIONS

Week 1: Origins
Sept. 5 (W)  Introduction and Maps
Sept. 7 (F)  Earliest Times: 11,000 to 300 B.C.E.
             Peopling the Archipelago

Readings:
Hall, John W., Japan from Prehistory to Modern Times, 1-23.

Primary documents: Sources of Japanese Tradition (SJT)
“History of the Kingdom of Wei,” pp. 6-8.

Week 2: The Early Japanese State
Sept. 10 (M)  Conquering the Islands: The Rise of the Yamato Kings
Sept. 12* (W) The Asuka Enlightenment
Sept. 14 (F)  Discussion

Readings:
Mason & Caiger, pp. 25-63.

Primary documents: SJT

*On Wednesday, Sept. 12, there will be a map quiz at the beginning of class.

Week 3: The Classical Age
Sept. 17 (M)  Courtier Rulership in the Heian Period (794-1185)
Sept. 19 (W)  Heian Refinements and Religions
Sept. 21 (F)  The Tale of Genji and Heian Literature (*To be held at Allen Memorial Art Museum)

Reading:
Mason & Caiger, pp. 64-117.

Primary documents: SJT
“Murasaki Shikibu: On the Art of Fiction,” pp. 201-03.

[Blackboard]:

**Week 4: The Rise of the Warrior Class**

Sept. 24* (M) The Rise of the Warrior Class
Sept. 26 (W) No Class (Yom Kippur)
Sept. 28 (F) The Medieval Bakufu: Kamakura and Ashikaga; Civil War

Reading:
Mason & Caiger, pp. 121-43.

Podcast:
In Our Time with Melvyn Bragg, “The Samurai,” Dec. 24, 2009. (43 minutes)
http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00pcm9f

Primary documents: SJT

[Blackboard]:
*Tales of Times Now Past*, 93-101; 173-77; 184-86.

*Visual Culture Assignment due in class on Monday, Sept. 24.*

**Week 5: Medieval Cultures**

*Oct. 1 (M) Everyday Life in Medieval Japan
Oct. 3 (W) Religion
Oct. 5 (F) The Culture of War and the Southern Barbarians

Reading:
Mason & Caiger, pp. 144-70.

Primary documents: SJT
“Medieval Uses of the Past,” pp. 250-57;
“Genshin: The Essentials of Salvation;” pp. 217-222;
“Eisai: Propagation of Zen for the Protection of the State,” pp. 311-17;

*Reminder: Screening of “Ran” by Kurosawa Akira at 7pm on Tuesday, Oct. 2.

**Week 6: Medieval Period in the Arts**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 8 (M)</td>
<td><strong>In-Class Midterm</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 10 (W)</td>
<td>Section #1: Allen Art Museum Visit*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 12 (F)</td>
<td>Section #2: Allen Art Museum Visit*</td>
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*Important: AMAM Museum Visit Information:*
*Students should convene at the museum at 1:30pm on their scheduled day.*

**Readings:**
Mason & Caiger, pp. 144-57.

Mason, Penelope. *History of Japanese Art*, pp. 147-48; 174-201; 211-12.

**Week 7: Towards Unification**

<table>
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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 15 (M)</td>
<td>The Mature Daimyo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 17 (W)</td>
<td>The Unifiers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 19 (F)</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
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**Reading:**
Mason & Caiger, pp. 173-89.

**Primary documents: **SJT:**

**Fall Recess**
II. EARLY MODERN JAPAN

Week 8: The Pax Tokugawa

Oct. 29 (M) Political Unification
Oct. 31 (W) The Tokugawa Polity
Nov. 2 (F) The Shoguns

Readings:


Primary documents: *SJT*, Vol. 2 [Blackboard]:
“Code for the Warrior Households,” pp. 12-4;
“Code for the Imperial Court and Court Nobility,” pp. 14-8.
“Anecdotes concerning Yamazaki Ansai,” pp. 82-3.

Week 9: Thinking about Tokugawa-era Women with Art

Nov. 5 (M) Section #1: Allen Art Museum Visit
Nov. 7 (W) Section #2: Allen Art Museum Visit
Nov. 9 (F) Paper #1 Due

Readings:


Primary documents:


Week 10: Protests and Uprisings

Nov. 12 (M) Revolt!
Nov. 14 (W) Urban Riots
Nov. 16 (F) “A Tale of a Dream from the Fox Woman Plain”

Readings:

**Primary document:**

**Week 11: A Closed Country? Foreign Relations in Tokugawa Japan**
Nov. 19 (M) “Sakoku”
Nov. 21 (W) The Dutch on Dejima; Case Study: Engelbert Kaempfer (1651-1716)
Nov. 23 (F) No Class. Happy Thanksgiving!

**Readings:**


**Primary document:**

**Thanksgiving Recess**

**Week 12: Black Ships and Red Beards**
Nov. 26* (M) The Tempō Crisis
Nov. 28 (W) Perry’s Arrival
Nov. 30 (F) Discussion

*Visual Culture Assignment due in class on Monday, Nov. 26.*
Use images from [http://asian.library.ucsf.edu/introduction](http://asian.library.ucsf.edu/introduction) Assignment details to be discussed in class.

**Readings:**


**Primary documents:** *SJT*, Vol. 2 [Blackboard]:
“Aizawa Seishisai: Revere the Emperor, Repel the Barbarian;” “New Theses” pp. 520-29;
Week 13: Narrating the Restoration
Dec. 3 (M) Who Gets to Tell the Story of Tokugawa Japan?
Dec. 5 (W) Imperial Loyalism
Dec. 7 (F) Collapse of the Bakufu

**Reminder: Screening of “Twilight Samurai” (Tasogare Seibei) at 7pm on Tuesday, December 4.

Primary documents: *SJT*, Vol. 2 [Blackboard]

Week 14: From Tokugawa to Meiji
Dec. 10* (M) A New Regime
Dec. 12 (W) The Satsuma Rebellion
Dec. 14 (F) Japan’s Premodern and Early Modern Period in Contemporary Perspective

*Second papers are due by 4pm on Monday, Dec. 10.

Reading:

Primary documents: *SJT*, Vol. 2 [Blackboard]

Final Examination: Thursday, December 20, 7-9pm