Spring 2013

History 284
Tokyo: 1600-2000

Tu/Th 1:30-2:45
King 323
Office Hours: W 2:30 – 4pm
Th. 2:45 – 4:15pm

Professor Emer O’Dwyer
Rice 308, Tel. 5-6708
Emer.ODwyer@oberlin.edu

This course charts the history of one of the world’s first metropolises. From shogunal capital in the early seventeenth century to global commerce center in the twenty-first, Edo/Tokyo will be examined from political, economic, social, and cultural angles to question familiar assumptions about the course and nature of modernity.

This course surveys Japan’s modern transformation from the Meiji Restoration of 1868 to the present. It examines how political, social, and economic modernization were simultaneous projects while considering their impact on the lives of citizens at home and imperial subjects abroad. We focus on how economic volatility, popular struggles for representative democracy, war, and colonization represent aspects of Japan’s twentieth century experience as well as widely shared dilemmas of modernity.

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

• To look for patterns and themes in history. Students are encouraged to draw connections between major events and ideas in Japan’s modern history and those encountered in other history courses.
• To think 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.
• To understand how history-writing is shaped by contemporary concerns.
• To improve expository writing about historical events; to posit an argument and develop it in a clear and logical progression.
• To polish the verbal articulation of ideas before an audience of one’s peers.
• To gain an appreciation for Japan’s role in today’s world, understanding the relationship between where it has been and where it is headed as a nation.

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


All other readings are available on Blackboard.

**ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING POLICY:**
The course grade will be based on the following:
- Class Participation: 20%
- Short Papers (Two @ 2,000 words each): 20% each
- Film or Book Review (500 words): 15%
- Thursday Responses & Presentation: 25%

**Assignments:**
Paper #1 is due by 4pm on **Thursday, March 21**.
The film or book review is due in-class on **Tuesday, April 23**.
Paper #2 is due in-class on **Tuesday, May 7**.

Grading relies on the following scale: A+ 100-97; A 96-93; A- 92-90; B+ 89-87; B 86-83; B- 82-80; C+ 79-77; C 76-73; C- 72-70; D 65-69, F below 65.

**CLASS FORMAT & EXPECTATIONS:**
Class will be a combination of lecture and discussion. Attendance at all sessions is mandatory and absences will be recorded. Students are required to complete the assigned readings and **come prepared to discuss the readings**.

Assignments are due on (or before) the due date noted above. Only one extension will be granted per semester and must be requested during office hours **at least two 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 Tuesday, Oct. 7 which is turned in on Oct. 8, for example, will get a “B-” rather than the “B” it merited. A “B” paper turned in on Oct. 9 will earn a “C+”, etc.

**Thursday Response Papers:** A one-page double-spaced response paper will be due every Thursday, reflecting your response to the readings assigned for the week. These do not need to be well-crafted essays, but rather should be focused around critical observations of the author’s argument or approach, points of comparison with other material from the course, and/or questions of fact or interpretation stimulated by the readings.

Note: students may have **two free passes** for the semester exempting them from submission of a weekly response. In addition, there will be no response paper required for weeks 6, 7, and 13.

**Thursday Presentations:** Every Thursday, one student will give a presentation of no more than 15 minutes focused on the week’s readings. The presentation can mirror the
format of a response paper, yet should be geared toward introducing questions for discussion to the class as a whole.

**Film or Book Review:** Students will write a one-page single-spaced description of a film or book of their choosing. Students should explain the importance of the chosen work within the context of relevant themes from the history of its period and, if appropriate, discuss cultural or historical allusions embedded in the work. The assignment is due **Tuesday, April 23** in class.

**Film Screening:** “Drunken Angel” (*Yoidore tenshi*, 1948) by Director Kurosawa Akira will be screened on **Wednesday, April 3 at 7pm** (location: TBA).

**Writing Assistance:** Students are advised to consult Kate Turabian’s *Student’s Guide to Writing College Papers*, Fourth Edition (University of Chicago, 2010) as a guide for questions relating to proper citation technique and methods for improving clarity of written expression. Students are also encouraged to attend the writing skills workshops offered by the staff of Student Academic Services (SAS) located in Peters 118.

**Special Needs:** Requests for extra time on exams and other special needs must be made well in advance of exam times/other due dates and must be accompanied by an endorsement from Ms. Jane Boomer, Student Academic Services (Peters G27).

**Honor Code:** All students are expected to adhere to the Oberlin Honor Code on all written assignments.

**OFFICE HOURS:**
Monday 2:30 – 4pm and Thursday 1-2:30pm
Rice Hall, Room 308
Phone: 5-6708
E-mail: Emer.ODwyer@Oberlin.edu
PART I
Edo: Capital of the Eighteenth Century

Week 1: Beginnings: Time and Place
Feb. 5: Introduction

Feb. 7: Establishment of the Tokugawa Bakufu


Week 2: Building Legitimacy
Feb. 12: Edo Castle and its Jōkamachi (城下町)


Feb. 14: Structure of Political Authority in Edo


- Available on JSTOR


Week 3: Edo Merchant Culture
Feb. 19: The Townsman and Edo-koko (江戸っ子)


Feb. 21: Pleasure


- Available on JSTOR

Week 4: Everyday Life
Feb. 26: Consumption Patterns

Vaporis, Constantin. “Digging for Edo: Archaeology and Japan’s Premodern
• Available on J-STOR.

Feb. 28: Health and Welfare
Hanley, Susan B. “Urban Sanitation and Physical Well-Being,” in Everyday

61-107.

Week 5: Summing Up Edo
March 5: Comparisons
Rozman, Gilbert. “Edo’s Importance in the Changing Tokugawa Society,”

Smith, Henry D. “Tokyo and London: Comparative Conceptions of the City,”

March 7: Allen Art Museum Visit

PART II
Tokyo: A New Imperial Capital

Week 6: From “Edo” to “Tokyo”: Designing a New City and a New Polity
March 12: Paper #1 Due

March 14: The Spectacle of Meiji Tokyo
Iwatake Mikako. “From a Shogunal City to a Life City: Tokyo between two Fin-

Tseng, Alice Y. “Styling Japan: The Case of Josiah Conder and the Museum at

Week 7: Disaster and Rebuilding
March 19: The Great Kantō Earthquake


**March 21:** No Class (Note: There will be no Thursday response paper due this week.)

**Spring Break**

**Week 8: Tokyo Modern, The Prewar Years**

**April 2:** The Crimson Gang of Asakusa  


*Note: April 3 at 7pm:* Film screening: “Drunkcn Angel” (*Yoidore tenshi*, 1948) by Director Kurosawa Akira.

**April 4:** Mass Culture and Modernity  

**PART III**  
Postwar

**Week 9: War**

**April 9:** Homefront  

**April 11:** Wartime Diaries  


**Week 10: Rebuilding**

**April 16:** Tokyo in Ruins  
April 18: Occupied City

“Gate of Flesh” (Nikutai no mon) Dir, Suzuki Seijun, 1964.

Week 11: High-Growth Era Megalopolis
April 23: Film or Book Review due in class.

Tokyo Avant Garde: Art City

April 25: Cultures of Excess

Week 12: 1990s: The Struggle Years
April 30: A Faltering Economy & The Search for Identity

May 2: Underground

Week 13: 3-11 and After
May 7: Paper #2 due in class.
Testimony


May 9: Legacies
http://www.japanfocus.org/-David_H-Slater/3804