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.

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

4. Tanizaki Junichirō, *Naomi (Chijin no ai, 1924; trans. 1985).*

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 on Monday, March 2. The Final Examination is scheduled for Wednesday, May 13 from 9-11am.

**PAPERS:** Students will write two 4-6 page essays, due in class on Friday, March 13, and Monday, May 4.
ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:
• Lectures are an integral part of the course, and attendance is mandatory.
• Students are expected to complete all readings and be prepared to discuss in class.
• Each week, students will be required to post one question (concerning the readings) on the online discussion board in Blackboard by Thursday, 10pm.

SHORT ASSIGNMENTS: Students will complete two 2-page writing assignments. The first will analyze a primary document and be due in class on Friday, Feb. 20; the second will focus on an object from visual culture and be due on Monday, April 13. 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 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, March 13 which is turned in on November 13, for example, will get a “B-” rather than the “B” it merited. A “B” paper turned in on November 14 will earn a “C+”, etc.

FILM SCREENINGS: Two films will be shown during the course of the semester. The first, “The Human Condition (Ningen no jōken, 1959) by Director Kobayashi Masaki will be screened on Thursday, April 2 at 7pm (location: TBA). The second film, “The Eel” (Unagi, 1997) by Director Imamura Shōhei will be screened on Sunday, April 26 at 7pm (location: TBA). The films will also be available on library reserve to view on video if you cannot make the screenings. Films will be discussed during lecture in conjunction with the readings for the week.

Allen Memorial Art Museum: On Friday, Feb. 6 students will meet at the Allen Art Museum for a special tour of the museum’s Ainsworth Collection of Japanese prints.

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

Writing Assistance: Students are encouraged to visit the Writing Center in Mudd Library where tutors from the Writing Associates Program can provide tips and strategies for improving writing skills.

OFFICE HOURS: Mondays 2:30 – 4pm and Thursdays, 4:30 – 6pm
Rice Hall, Room 308
Phone: 5-6708
E-mail: Emer.ODwyer@oberlin.edu
LECTURE SCHEDULE:

**Week 1: Japan’s Modern Revolution**

Feb 2 (M)  Introduction; Meiji Restoration
Feb 4 (W)  Dismantling Feudalism, Creating a Nation-State
Feb 6 (F)  Allen Memoral Museum Visit

Readings:
Gordon, Andrew. *A Modern History of Japan (MHJ)*, ch. 5.

Primary Sources:
“Memorial on the Proposal to Return the Registers,” pp. 10-12.*
“Imperial Rescript on the Abolition of the Han,” p. 12.

*All entries under “Primary Sources” can be found in Sources of Japanese Tradition, (Vol. 2, Part 2) unless otherwise noted.

**Week 2: Freedom and Popular Rights**

Feb 9 (M)  Civilization and Enlightenment
Feb 11 (W)  Freedom and Popular Rights, 1873-1889
Feb 13 (F)  *A Discourse by Three Drunkards on Government* (1887); The Meiji Constitution (1889)

Readings:
*MHJ*, ch. 6.

Primary Sources:
“Kido’s Observations on Returning from the West,” pp. 16-17.

*Map Quiz, Complete on course Blackboard site under “Assignments” by Feb. 13.*

**Week 3: Building Modernity**

Feb. 16 (M)  Schools, Hospitals, Factories
Feb. 18 (W)  Modern Economic Growth
Feb. 20 (F)  Education

Readings:
*MHJ*, ch. 7.

**Primary Sources:**
“Progress of Female Education in Meiji,” pp. 115-16.

**Primary Documents Assignment due in class Friday, Feb. 20.**

### Week 4: The Meiji Wars
- **Feb. 23 (M)** 1890s: New Concepts of “Japanese-ness”
- **Feb. 25 (W)** War with China, 1894-95 / War with Russia, 1904-05
- **Feb. 27 (F)** Tokutomi Sohō

**Readings:**
*MHJ*, ch. 8.

**Primary Sources:**

### Week 5: Generating Capitalism
- **March 2 (M)** In-Class Midterm
- **March 4 (W)** Empire Attained and Industrialization Begun
- **March 6 (F)** Factory Girls

**Readings:**
*MHJ*, ch. 9.
Review *MHJ*, ch. 7.

**Primary Source:**

### Week 6: Prewar Liberalism
- **March 9 (M)** A Politicized Citizenry, An Enlarged Electorate
- **March 11 (W)** Minponshugi / Contention in the Workplace
- **March 13 (F)** No class. **Paper #1 due** by 4pm.
Readings:
MHJ, ch. 10.

Primary Sources:

**Week 7: Alternative Modernities**
March 16 (M) The End of Capitalism?; The Rise and Fall of Party Cabinets
March 18 (W) Visions of a New Society
March 20 (F) Tanizaki’s Naomi

Readings:
MHJ, ch. 11.

Primary Sources:
Tanizaki Junichirō, Naomi.

**Spring Recess**

**Week 8: Depression, War, Defeat**
March 30 (M) Militarism and Politics
April 1 (W) Imperial Japan at War
April 3 (F) Total Defeat

*Film: Kobayashi, dir., “The Human Condition (Ningen no jōken) will be screened on Thursday, April 2 at 7pm.*

Readings:
MHJ, ch. 12.

Primary Sources:
“The Decision for War with the United States,” (1941) pp. 309-12.
Week 9: Transwar
April 6 (M) Reckoning and Repatriation
April 8 (W) Rebuilding
April 10 (F) Recreation

Readings:

Primary Sources:

Visual Culture Assignment due in class Monday, April 13.

Week 10: The High-Growth Era, 1956-1973
April 13 (M) Citizen, State, and Democracy in the Postwar Era
April 15 (W) Middle Class Life for Everyone?
April 17 (F) Social Revolutions

Readings:

Primary Sources:

Week 11: The ‘80s Boom
April 20 (M) The Making of the Bubble
April 22 (W) Japan on the World Stage
April 24 (F) The End of the Shōwa Era

Readings:
*MHJ*, Ch. 16.
Ishinomori Shōtarō. *Japan Inc.: An Introduction to Japanese Economics*.

Primary Sources:
Ishihara Shintarō, *The Japan that Can Say No*. chs. 2-3 (pp. 26-41).

Week 12: The ‘Lost Decade’ of the ‘90s
April 27 (M) The Bubble Bursts and the End of LDP Dominance
April 29 (W) Aum Shinrikyō and New Limits on a Free Society
May 1 (F) New Social Phenotypes & Murakami, *Underground*
Primary Source:

**Film:** Imamura Shōhei, dir., “The Eel” (*Unagi, 1997*) to be screened: Sun., April 26.

**Week 13: Issues for the 21st Century**
May 4 (M) Constitutional Revision and War Memory
May 6 (W) Future Concerns
May 8 (F) Concluding Thoughts

**Paper #2 due in class on Monday, May 4.**

**Readings:**
*MHJ*, Ch. 17.

**Primary Sources:**

**Final Exam: 9-11am on Wednesday, May 13.**