Fall 2008

History 159
EAST 131

Japan from Earliest Times to 1868

MWF 1:30-2:20
King 337

Professor Emer O’Dwyer
Rice 308, Tel. 5-6708

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: 50.

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 administered in class on Monday, Oct. 13. The Final Examination is scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 18 from 7-9pm.

PAPERS: Students will write two 4-6 page essays, due in class on Monday, Nov. 10, and Monday, Dec. 8.
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 Monday, Sept. 22; the second will focus on an object from visual culture and be due on Monday, Nov. 24. 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 Monday, November 10 which is turned in on November 11, for example, will get a “B-” rather than the “B” it merited. A “B” paper turned in on November 12 will earn a “C+”, etc.

FILM SCREENINGS: Two films will be shown during the course of the semester. The first, “Ran” by Director Kurosawa Akira will be screened on Tuesday, October 7 at 7pm (location: TBA). The second film, “Twilight Samurai” (Tasogare Seibei) by Director Yamada Yōji will be screened on Tuesday, December 2 at 7pm (location: TBA). The films will also be available on library reserve to view on DVD if you cannot make the screenings. Films will be discussed during lecture in conjunction with the readings for the week.

SPECIAL EVENTS:
Allen Memorial Art Museum
On Wednesday, October 8 and Friday, October 10, students will meet at the Allen Art Museum for a special tour of the museum’s Ainsworth Collection of Japanese prints. The class will be split into two groups (one group per museum session). See details below under Week 6.

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

Writing Assistance: Students are encouraged to avail of the writing skills workshops offered by the staff of Student Academic Services (SAS) located in Peters 118.

OFFICE HOURS:
Students are encouraged to come see the instructor with questions about any aspect of the course: Monday 2:30 – 4pm and Thurs. 1-2:30pm
Rice Hall, Room 308
Phone: 5-6708
E-mail: Emer.ODwyer@oberlin.edu
LECTURE SCHEDULE:

I. PRE-MODERN TRADITIONS

**Week 1: Origins**
Sept. 3 (W)  Introduction, Maps, and Earliest Times
Sept. 5 (F)  Peopling the Archipelago

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

Primary documents:

**Week 2: The Early Japanese State**
Sept. 8 (M)  Conquering the Islands: Early State Formation
Sept. 10* (W)  Prince Shōtoku and his Constitution
Sept. 12 (F)  The Japanese Imperial State

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


Primary documents:
*SJT*, pp. 3-8; 40-53; 75-82.

*On Wednesday, Sept. 10, there will be a map quiz at the beginning of class.*

**Week 3: The Classical Age**
Sept. 15 (M)  Courtier Rulership in the Heian Age (794-1185)
Sept. 17 (W)  Heian Refinements and Religions
Sept. 19 (F)  *The Tale of Genji* and Heian Literature

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

Primary documents:
*SJT*, pp. 114-20; 201-03.
**Week 4: The Rise of the Warrior Class**

Sept. 22* (M) The Rise of the Warrior Class
Sept. 24 (W) Warrior Rulership
Sept. 26 (F) Civil War

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

Primary documents:
*Tales of Times Now Past, 93-101; 173-77; 184-86.
*SJT*, pp. 250-57; 265-70; 276-7.

*Visual Culture Assignment due in class on Monday, Sept. 22.*

**Week 5: Medieval Cultures**

Sept. 29 (M) Everyday Life in Medieval Japan
Oct. 1 (W) The Culture of War and the Southern Barbarians
Oct. 3 (F) Religion

Reading:
Mason & Caiger, pp. 158-72.

Primary documents:
*SJT*, pp. 211-228; 306-28; 336-42; 399-432.

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

**Week 6: Medieval Art**

Oct. 6 (M) A Cultural Flowering
Oct. 8 (W) Section #1: Allen Art Museum Visit*
Oct. 10 (F) Section #2: Allen Art Museum Visit*

*Important: AMAM Museum Visit Information:*
*Students will be assigned to one of two groups for the museum visit. The group not visiting the museum on a given day will meet as usual in King 337 to review for the midterm on Monday, October 13.

**Students should convene at the museum at 1:30pm on their scheduled day.**

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

Primary documents:
*SJT*, pp. 388-94.
II. EARLY MODERN JAPAN

Week 7: The Warring States
Oct. 13 (M) **In-Class Midterm**
Oct. 15 (W) The Sengoku Daimyo
Oct. 17 (F) The Attack on Odawara Castle

Reading:
Mason & Caiger, pp. 144-57.

Primary documents:

Fall Recess

Week 8: The Pax Tokugawa
Oct. 27 (M) Political Unification
Oct. 29 (W) The Tokugawa Polity
Oct. 31 (F) The Shoguns

Readings:


SJT, Vol. 2, pp. 1-17; 75-80; 353-63; 387-93. [Blackboard]

Week 9: Women in the Tokugawa Period
Nov. 3 (M) Profile and Prospects
Nov. 5 (W) The Sex Trade
Nov. 7 (F) Urban versus Rural

Primary documents:


Readings:

**Week 10: Protests and Uprisings**

Nov. 10 (M) **Paper # 1 Due**
Nov. 12 (W) Revolt!
Nov. 14 (F) Case Studies

**Readings:**


**Primary document:**

**Week 11: A Closed Country? Foreign Relations in Tokugawa Japan**

Nov. 17 (M) The Persisting Myth of “Sakoku”
Nov. 19 (W) The Dutch on Dejima
Nov. 21 (F) Case Study: Engelbert Kaempfer (1651-1716)

**Readings:**


**Primary documents:**


**Week 12: Black Ships and Red Beards**

Nov. 24* (M) 1850s Troubles
Nov. 26 (W) Perry’s Arrival

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

**Readings:**

**Primary documents:**

*Thanksgiving Recess*

### **Week 13: Narrating the Restoration**

- Dec. 1 (M) Who Speaks for Tokugawa Japan?
- Dec. 3 (W) How to Narrate the Restoration
- Dec. 5 (F) The Restoration and Modern Japan

**Reminder:** Screening of “Twilight Samurai” (*Tasogare Seibei*) at 7pm on Tuesday, December 2.

**Reading:**

### **Week 14: Assessing the Tokugawa Period**

- Dec. 8* (M) Abandoning the Old, Building the New
- Dec. 10 (W) Japan’s Premodern and Early Modern Period in Contemporary Perspective

*Second papers are due by 4pm on Monday, Dec. 8.*

**Reading:**

**Final Examination:** Thursday, Dec. 18 from 7-9pm.