Fall 2013

History 159
EAS 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: 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%

All grading is based 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 69-65. A grade below 65 is a failing grade.

Note: Failure to submit any single written assignment for the class will result in a failing final grade and no credit will be granted.

EXPECTATIONS:
• Lectures are an integral part of the course, and attendance is mandatory. Absences will be recorded. (In the case of personal or family emergency, students should contact the instructor to make arrangements for completing missed work.) Additionally, students are expected to be ready to begin promptly at 1:30pm for each class meeting.
• 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.)
  o Always bring assigned readings to class.
  o Be responsible for both your own and your fellow students’ learning. Together, you can ensure that all class time is spent in a productive discussion of ideas—an endeavor dependent on the timely and thorough completion of all readings by all.
• Honor Code: Students are expected to adhere to the Oberlin Honor Code on all written assignments, concluding each with the handwritten pledge: “I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code on this assignment.” 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. For more information on the Oberlin Honor Code, please refer to the “Student Policies” section of the Oberlin College website.

ASSIGNMENTS:
Exams: The Midterm Examination, covering the lectures and all assigned readings to date will be given in class on Monday, Oct. 7. The Final Examination is scheduled for Thursday, December 19, 7-9pm.

Papers: Students will write two essays (1,400 words each), due in class on Friday, Nov. 8, and Monday, Dec. 9.
Reading Assignments: Students are asked to complete the assigned reading by Monday for each week listed (except for week 1 when the reading must be completed by Friday.) There are two basic types of readings in the course. The first are those from Mason and Caiger, *A History of Japan*. These readings are useful for reinforcing the chronological narrative presented in lecture. The second are literary and other primary source texts. Both types of readings require careful attention to detail and presentation, though strategies for reading both differ. Discussions of reading strategies for all types of readings will be discussed in the first weeks of class.

Note: if it appears that even a small minority of students are not completing weekly reading assignments in preparation for the Friday discussion period, the instructor reserves the right to give pop quizzes.

Discussion Board: 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, patterns 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 writing assignments of 500 words each. 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 8 which is turned in on Saturday, November 9, for example, will get a “B-” rather than the “B” it merited. A “B” paper turned in on Monday, November 11 will earn a “C+”, etc.

In-Class Contributions: In certain weeks, students will be asked to present a map or image related to the week’s reading, to focus in groups on specific passages from a given reading, and/or to perform a short writing exercise in class. All such exercises will presume timely completion of that week’s readings, so come prepared!

CULTURAL PROGRAMMING

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 1 at 7pm. The second film, “Twilight Samurai” (*Tasogare Seibei*) by Director Yamada Yōjirō will be screened on Tuesday, December 3 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.

OTHER COURSE POLICIES/INFO:
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. 11. 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. 2:45 – 4:15pm
Rice Hall, Room 308
LECTURE SCHEDULE:

I. PRE-MODERN TRADITIONS

Week 1: Origins
Sept. 4 (W)  Introduction and Maps
Sept. 6 (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. 9 (M)  Conquering the Islands: The Rise of the Yamato Kings
Sept. 11* (W)  The Asuka Enlightenment
Sept. 13 (F)  Discussion

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

Primary documents: *SJT*

*On Wednesday, Sept. 11, there will be a map quiz at the beginning of class.*

Week 3: The Classical Age
Sept. 16 (M)  Courtier Rulership in the Heian Period (794-1185)
Sept. 18 (W)  Heian Refinements and Religions
Sept. 20 (F)  Meet at Allen Memorial Art Museum. *The Tale of Genji* and the “Rule of Taste”

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. 23* (M) The Rise of the Warrior Class
Sept. 25 (W) The Medieval Bakufu: Kamakura and Ashikaga
Sept. 27 (F) Civil War

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

Primary documents: SJT

[Blackboard]:

*Visual Culture Assignment due in class on Monday, Sept. 23.

**Week 5: Medieval Cultures**

*Sept. 30 (M) Everyday Life in Medieval Japan
Oct. 2 (W) Religion
Oct. 4 (F) The Culture of War and the Southern Barbarians

Reading:
Mason, pp. 144-70.

Primary documents: SJT
“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. 1.
Week 6: Medieval Period in the Arts
Oct. 7 (M) In-Class Midterm
Oct. 9 (W) Section #1: Allen Art Museum Visit*
Oct. 11 (F) Section #2: Allen Art Museum Visit*

*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
Oct. 14 (M) The Mature Daimyo
Oct. 16 (W) The Unifiers
Oct. 18 (F) Discussion

Reading:
Mason & Caiger, pp. 173-89.

Primary documents: *SJT*:

Fall Recess

II. EARLY MODERN JAPAN

Week 8: The Pax Tokugawa
Oct. 28 (M) Political Unification
Oct. 30 (W) The Tokugawa Polity
Nov. 1 (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. 4 (M) Section #1: Allen Art Museum Visit
Nov. 6 (W) Section #2: Allen Art Museum Visit
Nov. 8 (F) Paper #1 Due

**Readings:**


**Primary documents:**


**Week 10: Protests and Uprisings**
Nov. 11 (M) Revolt!
Nov. 13 (W) Case Studies
Nov. 15 (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. 18 (M) “Sakoku”
Nov. 20 (W) The Dutch on Dejima
Nov. 22 (F) Case Study: Engelbert Kaempfer (1651-1716)

Readings:
Gordon, _MHJ_, pp. 35-46.

Toby, Ronald. _State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan_, pp. 1-22.

Primary document:

Week 12: Black Ships and Red Beards
Nov. 25* (M) Troubles Within and Without
Nov. 27 (W) Perry’s Arrival
Nov. 29 (F) No Class: Happy Thanksgiving!

*Visual Culture Assignment due in class on Monday, Nov. 25.
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;

Thanksgiving Recess

Week 13: Narrating the Restoration
Dec. 2 (M) Who Gets to Tell the Story of Tokugawa Japan?
Dec. 4 (W) Imperial Loyalism
Dec. 6 (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. 9* (M) Commoner Political Consciousness during the Bakumatsu Period?
Dec. 11 (W) Abandoning the Old; Building the New

*Second papers are due by 4pm on Monday, Dec. 9.

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

Final Examination: Thurs., Dec. 19, 7-9pm.