

History of Modern Japan

Section 1

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【Course Outline / Description】

This course provides students with a broad survey of the political, economic, social and cultural developments in Japan, from the era of the Tokugawa Shogunate up to the recent past. Major themes include: examining the rise and fall of the Shogunate, the "opening" of the nation, economic and technological development under the Meiji government, the crises of the Taisho and Showa eras, Japan at war, the postwar "miracle", and the "lost decade(s)." An important emphasis throughout the course is on Japan's role in the wider world, how events in Japan were impacted by global forces, and how Japan in turn contributed to global historical changes.

Each class session is very interactive. A typical day involves a combination of brief lectures, source analyses, viewing of film clips or other visual sources, and group discussions or class discussions about that day's assigned readings. By the end of the course students will have a good general knowledge of Japan's history, in the wider context of World History, since about 1600 CE.

Students will write three papers in the course, which are based on assigned readings and require students to effectively utilize the source materials in constructing their arguments. Participation in daily class discussions is also a significant part of the students' grade, so active and involved participation, as well as conscientious reading of assignments is a requirement of the class.

Section 2

【Course Objectives/Goals/Learning Outcomes】

Although this is a History of Japan course, the goal of the course is not to analyze the history of Japan "in a box," but to understand how the modern history of the nation has been impacted by global historical changes, while also understanding how some of the unique cultural characteristics of Japan's peoples and other internal factors also exerted a profound influence on historical change and continuity. This means that a considerable part of our analysis of Japan's modern history is done from a comparative viewpoint, in which we compare and contrast the developments in Japan with what happened in societies with similar or contrasting historical experiences.

By the end of the course, students will: have acquired a broad general knowledge of the history of modern Japan; be able to communicate effectively and analyze complex questions about the history of modern Japan; be able to understand the history of modern Japan within the wider context of world history.

Section 3

【Class Schedule/Class Environment, Literature and Materials】

Lecture 1: Introduction to the Course (None)

Lecture 2: Economic and Social Conditions in Premodern Japan (Read Gordon Chapter 1)

Lecture 3: Establishment of the Tokugawa Shogunate (Read Musui's Story pp. 1-42)

Lecture 4: Tokugawa at its Peak of Power (Read Musui's Story p. 43-98; Gordon Chapter 2)

Lecture 5: Internal and External Challenges to the Regime (Read Musui's Story p. 98-146)

Lecture 6: Downfall of the Tokugawa (Read Musui's Story p. 147-57; Gordon Ch. 4)

Lecture 7: Meiji Restoration/Revolution (Read Gordon Chapter 5)

Lecture 8: Meiji Reforms and the Remaking of Society (Review Gordon Chapter 5)

Lecture 9: Meiji Modernization (Read Gordon Chapter 6)- First Paper Due

Lecture 10: Industrial Age in Japan (Read Gordon Chapter 7)

Lecture 11: Building of a Capitalist System (Read Gordon Chapter 8)

Lecture 12: The Move Towards Empire (Review Gordon Chapter 8)

Lecture 13: Late Meiji (Read Gordon Chapter 9)

Lecture 14: Late Meiji (Kokoro part I)

Lecture 15: Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars (Read Kokoro Part II)

Lecture 16: Japan and World War I (Read Kokoro Part III)

Lecture 17: Taisho Democracy (Read Gordon Chapter 10)

Lecture 18: Depression Era Economic and Political Change (Review Gordon Chapter 10)

Lecture 19: Japan, Asia, and the West (Read Gordon Chapter 11)

Lecture 20: War with China (Read Gordon Chapter 12)

Lecture 21: Pearl Harbor and Mobilization for War (Review Gordon Chapter 12)- 2nd Paper Due

Lecture 22: War at Home and Abroad (Read Dower Chapter 1, 2)

Lecture 23: War at Home and Abroad (Read Dower Chapter 4-5)

Lecture 24: War at Home and Abroad (Read Dower Chapter 8-9)

Lecture 25: The Bombing of Japan (Read Japan at War Chapter 16)

Lecture 26: Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and the Surrender (Read Japan at War Chapter 17, 19)

Lecture 27: The Allied Occupation (Read Gordon Chapter 13)

Lecture 28: The LDP and the Yoshida Doctrine (Read Gordon Chapter 14)

Lecture 29: The "Economic Miracle" and Japan-US Postwar Relations (Read Gordon

Chapter 15)

Lecture 30: Wrap Up and Final Paper Review Session

Final Paper Due

Syllabus and reading assignments are subject to change.

【Textbooks/Reading Materials】

All readings will be provided to students online.

We will be reading portions, or in some cases all, of the following texts:

Main textbook:

Andrew Gordon, A History of Modern Japan (Oxford University Press)

Other books:

Natsume Soseki, Kokoro (Penguin Classics)

Katsu Kokichi, Musui's Story (University of Arizona Press)

John W. Dower, War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War (Pantheon Books)

Haruyo Taya Cook and Theodore F. Cook, Japan at War: an Oral History (The New Press)

Additional readings, including relevant articles, will also be assigned and made available online.

Section 4

【Learning Assessments/Grading Rubric】

Writing Assignments (3)- 20% each, 60% of total grade

Class Participation in Synchronous Sessions- 20%

Class Participation- 20%

The **Papers (3 of them)** are based on the readings and are worth a combined 60% (or 20% each). Each paper should be 1500-3000 words. Papers must include footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical citations and a bibliography listing all sources used (books, articles, internet sites, etc.). These will be based on the material covered in the class, including the readings. To do well on the papers, you will need to keep up with the reading and take good notes during all class sessions.

Class Participation in synchronous sessions is based on active and involved participation in discussions and activities, preparedness throughout the semester (demonstrating that you have done the readings and are engaging with the material), and maintaining a positive attitude in our sessions and is worth 20% of your final grade.

Discussions Participation in Asynchronous Work is the grade for weekly asynchronous assignments. Each week, students will be given a folder of assignments to read and questions to discuss using the “discussions” section of Blackboard. Each week’s discussions board postings will be graded from 0-10 points based on content, organization, clarity of writing, and use of sources to support your responses. The discussions participation is worth 20% of your final grade.

Section 5

【Additional Information】

Attendance and active participation are required in this course and are a significant part of the grade. To do well in the course, you should prepare all reading and writing assignments prior to each class meeting and be prepared to actively participate in class discussions. Thoughtful and informed discussions are an important part of the class.