2014

346-01 Modern Japanese History

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Xavier University
HIST 346 Modern Japanese History

Spring 2014
Instructor: Hsing-yi Kao
Time: W, F 3:00-4:20pm
Room: Smith G29
Office: Schott 509
Office Hours: TUE / TR. 10:00-11:00; or by appointment
Email: kaoh@xavier.edu

Course Description

The course surveys Japan’s modern transformation since the Meiji Restoration of 1868 to the present. The course examines how political, social, and economic modernizations were simultaneous projects while considering the impact on the lives of citizens at home and imperial subjects abroad. The course consists of lecturing, reporting, screening and discussion sessions on issues of modern Japanese history.

Course Goals

1. Through reading and discussing, students are expected to appreciate a non-Western culture.
2. To help students build a overall good understanding of Japan’s historical development in the modern period.
3. Through learning Japan’s unique historical experience in the modern period, students are encouraged to compare or contrast Japan with other nations in the world.

Course Requirements

Attendance is mandatory. Students are expected to do the readings and attend the in-class discussion. There will be 2 in-class quizzes (on Wk 4 and 12 respectively) The Midterm and Final Exams cover the lectures and the assigned readings. The format of the exams will be: identification and essay questions. Students should make an individual presentation by the end of the semester (dates to be announced). The presentation should be 15-20 minutes in length. Other students should comment and critique the report, and based on the critiques and comments, students revise the report and turn them in as the final paper. The paper should be 8-10 pages long. Be sure to consult the topic of the report with the instructor no later than the Eleventh week. Final Paper is due on the final exam day.
Percentage:

- Class participation / Discussion 10%
- Quizzes 10%
- Individual report (oral) 10%
- Midterm exam 25%
- Final exam 25%
- Final paper 20%

Required reading


* Other readings will be on the Blackboard

Course Schedule  
*(subject to change)*

Week One
- 1/15 Course Introduction
- 1/17 Japan before the Tokugawa Period: An Overview (I)
  
Week Two
- 1/22 Japan before the Tokugawa Period: An Overview (II)
  
Week Three
- 1/29 Tokugawa Legacy (I) – Political / Economic Spheres
  
Week Four
- 2/5 Life of a Samurai
  
  *Musui’s Story* (part) discussion; Quiz #1

- 2/7 The Meiji Restoration and its Impact (I)
  
  Gordon, Ch. 5
  
  De Bary, p.669-676; on Blackboard
Week Five
2/12  The Meiji Restoration and Its Impact (II)
      Gordon, Ch. 6
      De Bary, p.681-688; on Blackboard
2/14  Screening *The Last Samurai* (part) / Discussion: History in film

Week Six
2/19  The Path towards Civilization - A Choice between East and West
      De Bary, p.694-707; on Blackboard
2/21  Japan’s Great Transformation: Building a New Nation (I)
      Gordon, Ch. 7

Week Seven
2/26  Japan’s Great Transformation: Building a New Nation (II)
      Gordon, Ch. 7
2/28  Discussion I: Meiji Restoration or Revolution?

Week Eight
      Spring Break— no class

Week Nine
3/12  Midterm Exam

3/14  Japan’s Imperial Ambition in Meiji Era
      Myers and Peattie, Introduction, Ch.1; De Bary, p.803-805; on
      Blackboard

Week Ten
3/19  Rendering Japan into the Modern World
      Stephen Tanaka, *Japan’s Orient, Rendering Past into History*, p.68-
      104; on Blackboard
3/21  Discussion (II) Japan: An Eastern or Western Nation?

Week Eleven
3/26  Japan Undergoing Capitalist Development
      Gordon, Ch. 9
      Kenneth Pyle, Ch. 5; on Blackboard
3/28  Taisho / Imperial Democracy
      125-143; on Blackboard

Week Twelve
4/2   External Advancement and Domestic Unrest in Interwar Era; Quiz #2
      Gordon, Ch. 10, 11
4/4   Japan and the Asian War
Gordon, Ch. 12;  
De Bary, p.1006-1017 on Blackboard

Screening: *Empire of the Sun* (part) / Discussion

Week Thirteen

4/9  Managing the Japanese Empire  
     Myers and Peattie, Ch. 7; 12 on Blackboard

4/11  Discussion (III) Japan’s Failure in WWII

Week Fourteen

4/16  Postwar Japan: under American Occupation  
     Gordon, Ch.13  
     De Bary, p.1023-1032; on Blackboard

Screening: *The Grave of Fireflies* / Discussion

4/18  Post-War Economic Recovery and Social Transformations  
     Gordon, Ch. 14, 15

Week Fifteen

4/23  A Special Relationship: Japan and the US during the Cold War Era  
     Pyle, Ch. 7; on Blackboard

Screening: *Rhapsody in August* (part) / Discussion

4/25  Japan under a New World Order —1950s to 1970s  
     Pyle, Ch. 8; on Blackboard

Week Sixteen

4/30  Japan since the Ninety-eighties  
     Gordon, Ch. 16

5/2   New Century, New Japan?  
     Gordon, Ch. 17

*Paper due on the date of Final exam*