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Montana State University, Bozeman
Office hours: 12:00-1:00TTH
Class hours: TTH 1:40–2:55; LEWH 304

HSTR 145: REINVENTING JAPAN

This course is designed to trace the political, cultural, and economic development of Japan from the earliest times to the present. Special attention will be given to Japanese relations with Asia and the West, both in the context of “cultural borrowing” and war, and how these relations shaped the emergence of the modern Japanese state. Other issues addressed in this course will be the changing role of women in Japanese society, the development of the myth of Japanese homogeneity and the “emperor system ideology,” relations with the native Ainu, the emergence of Japanese business culture, and Japan today. The goal will be to present Japan in a fresh light, one that emphasizes the diversity and contention surrounding the rise of modern Japan.

Under the new Core 2.0, this course is designated as Diversity (D). For this reason, among other overarching themes, we will explore the notion of diversity as it applies to the “most homogeneous” of all places—Japan—emphasizing how gender, ethnicity, class, history, and political philosophies shape different and often competing “Japanese” experiences. That is, this class uses diversity as an analytical tool with which to interrogate the Japanese past. Tests and written assignments will reflect this theme.

This is also an important class in the history curriculum. Basically, you will be required to become a historian in this class, and read and analyze primary texts, as well as secondary literature, and write thoughtfully about them. History is, simply put, the rendering of the past—to order a chaotic stew of traditions, convictions, abstract realities, and human memories, into a rational, and more often than not, narrative form, stressing the causal relations between thought, culture, environment, and human events. This is a highly creative task, to be sure, but one which is bolstered by the authority inherent in basing historical observations in the sources.

Required readings (available for purchase in the MSU bookstore).

Anne Walthall. *Japan: A Cultural, Social, and Political History*. Houghton Mifflin Co., 2006. ISBN: 0618133887

Richard Bowring, trans. *The Diary of Lady Murasaki*. Penguin Classics, 1999. ISBN: 014043576X

Donald Keene, trans. *Essays in Idleness*. Columbia University Press, 1998. ISBN: ISBN: 0231112556

Donald Keene, trans. *Chushingura*. Columbia University Press, 1997. ISBN: 0231035314

Kayano Shigeru. *Our Lands Was a Forest*. Westview, 1994. ISBN: 0813318807

Eiichi Kiyooka, trans. *The Autobiography of Yukichi Fukuzawa*. Columbia University Press, 1980. ISBN: 0231083734

Short documentaries:

- “Secret Empire”
- “Meiji, Asia’s Response to the West”
- “The Japanese Version”

Classroom conduct: Turn cell phones off. No video or audio recording of any kind without permission. Any form of cheating or plagiarism will be met with intense displeasure and, most likely, a failing grade in the course and a formal report to the Dean of Students. For the Student Conduct Code, see: http://www2.montana.edu/policy/student_conduct/.

Course requirements (all assignments must be turned in to pass this course):

Midterm examination (20%); two papers (20% each); recitation grade and discussion (10%); final examination (30%). No late assignments accepted.

Lecture schedule:

WEEK ONE: Getting started

8/28: Introduction

8/30: Prehistoric civilization: Pottery, tombs, and mirrors of authority early kingship

Required reading: *Japan*, xi-7.

WEEK TWO: The Riddle Age

9/04: Early kingship

9/06: Continental models and Nara period

Required reading: *Japan*, 8-29; *The Diary of Lady Murasaki*, xii-29.

WEEK THREE: Early State Development

9/11: Heian period

9/13: Heian culture (discussion of *The Diary of Lady Murasaki*)

Required reading: *Japan*, 30-45; *The Diary of Lady Murasaki*, entire.

WEEK FOUR: Classical Age

9/18: The rise of warrior power

9/20: Emperor Kenmu’s “revolution”

Required reading: *Japan*, 46-71; *Essays in Idleness*, xvii-64.

WEEK FIVE: Medieval Age

9/25: Medieval lives, religions, and cultures

9/27: Era of the Warring States

Required reading: *Essays in Idleness*, entire.

WEEK SIX: Age of Unification

10/02: “Overspread the Realm with Military Might”

10/04: Hideyoshi

Required reading: *Japan*, 72-93.

WEEK SEVEN: The New Order

10/09: Early modern politics

10/11: Early modern orthodoxies and Christianity

Required reading: *Chushingura*, 1-180.

WEEK EIGHT: Early Modernity

10/16: Industrious revolutions

10/18: Mid-term examination

Required reading: *Japan*, 94-119.

WEEK NINE: Imperial Restoration

10/23: Restorationism

10/25: Tokugawa collapse

Required reading: *Our Land Was a Forest*, entire.

WEEK TEN: Legacies

10/30: Documentary: "Secret Empire"

11/01: Documentary: "Meiji, Asia's Response to the West"

Required reading: *Japan*, 120-53.

WEEK ELEVEN: Meiji Revolutions

11/06: No class: Election Day

11/08: Meiji Restoration

Required reading: *The Autobiography of Yukichi Fukuzawa*, v-177.

WEEK TWELVE: War and Empire

11/13: Empire building

11/15: The Pacific War

Required reading: *The Autobiography of Yukichi Fukuzawa*, 178-336.

WEEK THIRTEEN: Occupation

11/20: Occupied Japan

11/22: No class: Thanksgiving Holiday

Required reading: *Japan*, 154-81.

WEEK FOURTEEN: Aftermath

11/27: Postwar Japan

11/29: Economic miracles

Required reading: *Japan*, 182-98.

WEEK FIFTEEN: Postwar Japan

12/04: Documentary: "The Japanese Version"

12/06: Pollution, tsunamis, and the future of Japan

Required reading: *Japan*, 199-213.

FINAL EXAMINATION: Ganbatte!

Our final examination is scheduled for 4:00-5:50, Wed. (12/12). Bring a bluebook.

