

AEAJ 170

Japan: Its Culture and Heritage

Fall 2009

Course #30520

Instructor: Dr. David Eason
Class Meetings: MWF 9:20-10:15am, Humanities Room #123
Office Hours: MWF 11:30-12:30pm and by appointment
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Overview

This course is designed to provide students with an introduction to “Japanese culture” as seen in the various religious, literary, political, economic, and artistic practices pursued by inhabitants of the Japanese archipelago at diverse points in time stretching from the period of earliest recorded history and spanning up until the present day. Organized around the realization that any people’s culture is exposed to substantial additions and alterations with the passing of time, this class adopts a chronological approach in order both to better reflect and address this process of change. Moreover, along with readings and lectures aimed at charting the major developments in a given artistic field or during a particular era, most weeks will also include at least one detailed in-class discussion centered on a specific “cultural object.” In the context of this course the introduction of these objects – ranging from well-known works of literature to noted achievements in architecture, painting, and film – will serve not only as a means to reiterate many of the broader issues addressed in class, but also as an important occasion for students to learn how to question, analyze, and interpret such materials for themselves.

Required Texts (Available for purchase at the Campus Bookstore)

Varley, H. Paul. *Japanese Culture – Fourth Edition*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2000.

- Please note that all other required readings will be made available online via the library's Electronic Reserve (ERes).

General Education Credit

This course fulfills the General Education Categories for both **Humanities** and **Regions Beyond Europe**.

Characteristics of *all* General Education Courses

- General Education courses offer introductions to the central topics of disciplines and interdisciplinary fields.
- General Education courses offer explicit rather than tacit understandings of the procedures, practices, methodology and fundamental assumptions of disciplines and interdisciplinary fields.
- General Education courses recognize multiple perspectives on the subject matter.
- General Education courses emphasize active learning in an engaged environment that enables students to be producers as well as consumers of knowledge.
- General Education courses promote critical inquiry into the assumptions, goals, and methods of various fields of academic study; they aim to develop the interpretive, analytic, and evaluative competencies characteristic of critical thinking.

Learning Objectives for General Education *Humanities* Courses

Humanities courses teach students to analyze and interpret texts, ideas, artifacts, and discourse systems, and the human values, traditions, and beliefs that they reflect.

Humanities courses enable students to demonstrate knowledge of the assumptions, methods of study, and theories of at least one of the disciplines within the humanities.

Depending on the discipline, humanities courses will enable students to demonstrate some or all of the following:

- an understanding of the objects of study as expressions of the cultural contexts of the people who created them

- an understanding of the continuing relevance of the objects of study to the present and to the world outside the university
- an ability to employ the terms and understand the conventions particular to the discipline
- an ability to analyze and assess the strengths and weaknesses of ideas and positions along with the reasons or arguments that can be given for and against them
- an understanding of the nature of the texts, artifacts, ideas, or discourse of the discipline and of the assumptions that underlie this understanding, including those relating to issues of tradition and canon

Objectives for General Education *Regions Beyond Europe* Courses

Approved courses engage students in considerations of the "local" as opposed to the "global." Courses focus on specific cultures (other than those of the United States) or the world's regions. Courses emphasize the features and processes whereby cultures and regions gain their specific identity, offering an explicitly historical organization (i.e., one that emphasizes the narratives whereby any given region or culture has come to gain its specific identity), and balancing topical focus and chronological breadth (i.e., considering a topic of sufficient specificity for the course to be coherent, but over a period of time long enough to ensure that the relevant historical dynamic is clearly visible).

Course Requirements

Participation	-	15%
Reading Responses (5)	-	10%
In-class Midterm	-	20%
Annotated Bibliography	-	5%
-- Due 11/04/2009 --		
Research Paper Outline	-	5%
-- Due 11/13/2009 --		
Research Paper (5-7 pages)	-	20%
-- Due 11/23/2009 --		
Final Exam	-	25%

- Note that attendance is mandatory and will be taken on a regular basis. Please be aware that participation credit cannot be made up in the case of an unexcused absence.

Grading Policies and Guidelines

1) Letter grades are assigned in accordance with the following scale:

93-100=A; 92-90=A-; 87-89=B+; 83-86=B; 80-82=B-; 77-79=C+; 73-76=C; 70-72=C-; 67-69=D+; 63-66=D; 60-62=D-; 0-59=E.

Work not turned in will be counted as a zero (0).

2) Late papers will be marked down a grade for each day late (ie. an “A” paper turned in two days late will become a “B+”).

3) There is no extra credit offered for this course. Do not ask me for any.

4) “Incompletes” will only be given in the case of an emergency (sudden death in the family, serious illness) and require thorough documentation.

5) Plagiarism is a serious offense. Students who use the words and ideas of others in their written work without providing citations to the original source(s) will be given a zero (0) for the assignment along with a copy of an official “Violation of Academic Integrity Report” to be sent to the Chair of the Department of East Asian Studies, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Vice-Provost for Undergraduate Affairs. If you have any doubts concerning what constitutes plagiarism you are to consult with me BEFORE submitting an assignment. For more information concerning the University’s policies in regards to plagiarism and academic dishonesty in general, see the University at Albany Undergraduate Academic Regulations located on the web at – http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html for further details.

Weekly Readings and Reading Response Assignments

Reading responses are due during five of the fifteen weeks that this class meets. These responses, which are to be submitted via email no later than 8am on the due date specified on the syllabus, are to consist of the following:

Two paragraphs, the first of which provides an overview of the content of the reading, whether a primary source (piece of literature written at the time, etc.) or an essay or research article written by a scholar about a particular subject. Here you should be sure to clearly identify what kind of material is under discussion.

The second paragraph should be a detailed analysis of the reading. Explain what you took away from the reading, including any questions, doubts, or problems that arose during your close examination of the text. In addition, you should also devote at least two or three sentences to the larger question of “culture” and what the particular object(s) discussed in the reading seem to reveal about the activities and beliefs of people at a particular point in time.

Class Schedule

All assigned readings are listed under “Readings” on the right-hand side of the schedule below.

- **ER** indicates material available through the library’s Electronic Reserve
- Assigned readings in bold font indicate that a **reading response** for this item is due in my email inbox no later than 8am on the day of class

Week #1		Themes	Readings
8/31	Mon.	Class Introduction	
9/2	Wed.	Discussion – “Japanese Culture”	ER <i>Re-inventing Japan: Time, Space, Nation</i> – Chapter 4: “Culture,” pp. 60-78
9/4	Fri.	Geography and Culture	Varley, pp. 1-18
Week #2			
9/7	Mon.	No Class	
9/9	Wed.	Discussion – <i>Kojiki</i>	ER <i>Kojiki</i> , pp. 47-86
9/11	Fri.	Shintō	

Week #3			
9/14	Mon.	Discussion – Objects of the Shōsōin	ER <i>Discovering the Arts of Japan: A Historical Overview</i> , pp. 36-73
9/16	Wed.	The Introduction of Buddhism	Varley, pp. 19-47
9/18	Fri.	Continental Influences	
Week #4			
9/21	Mon.	Classical Poetry and Prose	ER “Courtly and Human Values,” pp. 1-17
9/23	Wed.	Discussion – <i>Waka</i>	ER “Forms and Conventions,” pp. 18-35
9/25	Fri.	Life in the Capital	Varley, pp. 48-76
Week #5			
9/28	Mon.	No Class	
9/30	Wed.	Discussion – <i>Konjaku monogatari</i>	ER <i>Tales of Times Now Past</i> , pp. 121-152.
10/2	Fri.	Farmers, Fishermen, and Itinerants	Varley, pp. 77-89
Week #6			
10/5	Mon.	Medieval Worldviews	
10/7	Wed.	Discussion – <i>Heike monogatari</i>	ER <i>The Tale of the Heike</i> , pp. 310-324
10/9	Fri.	Samurai	Varley, pp. 90-110
Week #7			
10/12	Mon.	Warrior Government	
{Research Paper Guidelines Distributed}			

10/14	Wed.	The Ashikaga as Arbiters of Taste	Varley, pp. 110-39
10/16	Fri.	Discussion – Muromachi Painting	ER <i>Discovering the Arts of Japan: A Historical Overview</i> , pp. 136-161
Week #8			
10/19	Mon.	Performers, Poets, and Painters	
10/21	Wed.	Midterm	
10/23	Fri.	An Age of Usurpation	Varley, pp. 140-63
Week #9			
10/26	Mon.	Discussion – Azuchi Castle	ER “A Visualization of Eitoku’s Lost Paintings at Azuchi Castle,” pp. 87-111
10/28	Wed.	“The Three Unifiers”	
10/30	Fri.	Early Modern Objects	
Week #10			
11/2	Mon.	The Tokugawa “Great Peace”	Varley, pp. 164-182
11/4	Wed.	Discussion – Ihara Saikaku { Annotated Bibliography Due }	ER <i>The Japanese Family Storehouse</i> , pp. 35-56
11/6	Fri.	Literature for an Urban Audience	Varley, pp. 183-204
Week #11			
11/9	Mon.	A Formal End to Isolation	Varley, pp. 205-234
11/11	Wed.	Discussion – Portrait of an Emperor	ER “ The Monarch in Japan’s Modernity, ” pp. 155-194
11/13	Fri.	The Meiji Period { Research Paper Outline Due }	Varley, pp. 235-270

Week #12			
11/16	Mon.	The Taishō Period	Varley, pp. 271-289
11/18	Wed.	Discussion – Mass Culture	ER “An Alternate Informant: Middle Class Women and Mass Magazines in 1920s Japan,” pp. 137-153
11/20	Fri.	War and Imperialism	Varley, pp. 290-303
Week #13			
11/23	Mon.	World War II {Research Paper Due}	
11/25	Wed.	No Class	
11/27	Fri.	No Class	
Week #14			
11/30	Mon.	Defeat and Occupation	Varley, pp. 304-318
12/2	Wed.	Discussion – Godzilla	Varley, pp. 319-331
12/4	Fri.	Growth and the Bubble	Varley, pp. 332-351
Week #15			
12/7	Mon.	Discussion – Edo-Tokyo Museum	ER “ Monumentalizing the Everyday: The Tokyo-Edo Museum, ” pp. 351-378

** The **Final Exam** will take place in our regular classroom on Friday, December 11, 2009 from 3:30 to 5:30pm.