Japan: Its Culture and Heritage (AEAJ 170)

University at Albany, Fall 2016
Instructor: John D. Person, Assistant Professor, Department of East Asian Studies
e-mail: jperson@albany.edu
☎ (Office): 518-442-4579
Room: ES 147, MWF 12:35 – 1:30
Office Hours: HU 242, Tuesdays 10:00am – noon or by appointment

This course surveys major themes in the study of Japanese culture and heritage. By drawing upon primary sources from literature, film, drama, visual culture and music, as well as secondary perspectives from the fields of history, religious studies, anthropology, literature and sociology, this course aims to present a historical narrative for the development of Japanese culture from early civilization to the present day, while also introducing elements such as women’s history and ethnic minorities that challenge and complicate that narrative. Students will use elements of this narrative, as well as their own insights, to juxtapose their own engagement with Japanese culture with other outside and inside perspectives. This course fulfills the General Education categories of International Perspectives and Humanities. This class utilizes English-language translations of all sources; no knowledge of Japanese required.

Course Requirements & Policies

GRADING: Your performance in this course will be evaluated on the A-E scale. The grading breakdown is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>25%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY: Students must inform the instructor prior to class if they need to miss a class. It goes without saying that “attendance” here implies attending to the course in a manner that involves more than mere physical presence: students must be alert and engaged. *A student’s final grade in the class will be penalized by a third of a grade (i.e. from B to B-) after his or her fifth unexcused absence, and an additional third of a grade with each unexcused absence thereafter.

CLASS PREPARATION: Students are expected to complete the reading assignments before coming to class. Please bring your reading assignments to class so that you can reference them during discussion. You may bring them in e-form, but you must view them on a device other than your phone. You are also expected to bring a writing utensil for in-class writing assignments.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: I request that any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations speak with me during the first two weeks of class. All discussions will remain confidential. For more information, please visit Disability Resource Center. Their website is available here: http://www.albany.edu/disability/index.shtml

ACADEMIC HONESTY: Any use of work produced by another person without proper citation is plagiarism, and is a violation of the academic code of honesty. The instructor reserves the right to dismiss from the course any student that is caught cheating on an assignment or plagiarizing the work of another person. Please see the university’s policies for academic regulations for more info: http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html

ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT: You may not use any electronic equipment in class for any purpose, other than engaging in the course (i.e. note-taking, reading course materials, etc.). If you are expecting a call that you absolutely must take, please inform me prior to class.
REQUIRED TEXTS:


NOTE: Additional reading assignments will be distributed via blackboard.

**Course Schedule**

NOTE: This schedule of topics and readings may be subject to adjustments throughout the quarter.

August 29: Introduction

August 31: What is “Japan”? What is “Culture”? What is “Heritage”?
Harumi Befu, “Concepts of Japan, Japanese culture and the Japanese”

*Syllabus Quiz*

September 2: Early Japan

September 5: No Class (Labor Day)

September 7: Japanese Mythology

September 9: Shinto

*Map and Era Chart Quiz*

September 12: Buddhism in Japan
Addiss et. al., eds., 21-26.
De Bary et. al., eds., 100-106, 120-121.

September 14: Development of Japanese Writing & Heian Literary Forms
Addiss et. al., eds., 26-48.
Hugh Clarke, “Language”

September 16: *The Tale of Genji*
Murasaki Shikibu, *The Tale of Genji*, chs. 2, 5..

September 19: Heian Period Music and Theater & the Development of Japanese Aesthetics
Addiss et. al., eds., 48-80.

September 21: Kamakura/Muromachi Period: *The Tales of Heike*
Addiss et. al., eds., 81-90.
The *Tales of Heike*, selection

September 23: Kamakura/Muromachi Period: Music and Theater
Addiss et. al., eds., 111-128.

September 26: Edo Politics, Class System, Basho
Addiss et. al., eds., 137-151.
Matsuo, Basho, *The Narrow Road to the Interior* (1702), selection

September 28: Codes of Honor and the 47 Ronin
Yamamoto Tsunetomo, *Hagakure*, selection

September 30: Edo Period Prose Literature
Ueda, Akinari, *Tales of Moonlight and Rain* (1776), selection
Ihara Saikaku, *Japan’s Eternal Storehouse* (1688), selection

October 5: No Class (Rosh Hashanah)

October 7: Edo Period Music and Theater
Addiss et. al., eds., 193-224.
October 9: Zen and Tea
    Addiss et. al., eds., 129-136.

October 10: MIDTERM EXAM
October 12: No Class (Yom Kippur)
October 14: Meiji Restoration, Fukuzawa Yukichi
    Fukuzawa, “An Exhortation to Learning” (1872), selection

October 17: Natsume Soseki
    “The Civilization of Modern-Day Japan” (1911)
October 19: Taisho Japan, Modernism in Art and Architecture
    Gardner, William, “Media and Modernism”
October 21: Rise of Japanese Film
    Tanizaki, Jun’ichiro, “The Present and Future of Moving Pictures” (1917)

October 24: Modernist Literature
    Yokomitsu, Riichi, “Machine” (1931)
October 26: Japanese Imperialism
    Koizumi Kikue, “Manchu Girl” (1938)
October 28: Japanese Experience of War
    Selden, Mark, “Japanese and American War Atrocities, Historical Memory and Reconciliation: World War II to Today”
    Sakaguchi, Ango. “The Idiot” (1947)

October 31: Wartime Responsibility and Rethinking “Japan”
    “Humanity Declaration” (1946)
    Hara, Tamiki. “Summer Flower” (1949)

November 2: Atomic Impacts
    In-class screening: Honda, Ishiro. *Godzilla* (1954) pt. 1

November 4: Atomic Impacts
    In-class screening: Honda, Ishiro. *Godzilla* (1954) pt. 2

November 7: The American Occupation through Literature and Film
    Oe, Kenzaburo, “Prize Stock” (1958)

November 9: Golden Age of Japanese Film
    In-class screening: Kurosawa, Akira. *Rashomon* (1950) pt. 1

November 11: Golden Age of Japanese Film
    In-class screening: Kurosawa, Akira. *Rashomon* (1950) pt. 2

November 14: Post-Postwar Japan & Two Nobel Prize Speeches
    Kawabata, Yasunari, “Japan, the Beautiful, and Myself” (1968)
    Oe, Kenzaburo, “Japan, the Ambiguous, and Myself” (1994)

November 16: The Shojo

November 18: The Shojo

November 21: Shojo, Kawaii Culture, and Female Consumption
    Kinsella, Sharon. “Cuties in Japan.”

    **November 23 – November 27: Thanksgiving Break**

November 28: Anime

November 30: Anime
December 2: Legacy of Manga and Rise of Otaku  
Craig Norris, “Manga, anime and visual art culture”

December 5: Japan as Minority Space  
Hideo Aoki, “Buraku Culture”

December 7: Cool Japan  
McGray, Douglas. “Japan’s Gross National Cool”

December 9: Japan in the World; Conclusions

December 12: Final Exam