

**EAJ 389**  
**Mothers, Mistresses and Militants:**  
**A History of Women in Modern Japan**  
Fall 2007, Call #8584

Instructor: David Eason  
Class Meetings: MWF 1:40-2:35pm  
Office Hours: MW 2:45-3:45pm  
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**Overview**

This course traces the complex history of women in modern Japan, ranging from factory workers to actresses and from self-proclaimed anarchists to powerful political leaders. In short, this class aims to highlight the diversity of women's experiences through a close examination of a variety of texts and images produced and consumed by women in modern Japan. Furthermore, in order to gain a better grasp of the challenges faced by women in Japan beginning at the end of the nineteenth century, we will also spend the first few weeks of class briefly examining women's place in society prior to the modern period. Though the readings for this course cover a broad selection of issues, we will proceed within a historical, largely chronological framework to closely examine a number of major themes that include domesticity, production, consumerism and sexuality as well as the ways that the notions and practices associated with each continue to shift and change over time.

**Texts Available for Purchase**

Vera Mackie. *Feminism in Modern Japan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.  
2003.

Mikiso Hane, ed. *Reflections on the Way to the Gallows: Rebel Women in Prewar Japan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.

Banana Yoshimoto. *Kitchen*. Berkeley: Grove/Atlantic, Inc, 2006.

### **Course Requirements**

Map Quiz	–	5%
Class Participation	–	15%
Weekly Reading Responses	–	15%
In-Class Midterm	–	30%
Research Paper	–	35%

### **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.

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 will be given a zero (0) for the assignment and may face other, more extensive forms of disciplinary action for having committed academic dishonesty.

### **Weekly Class Schedule and Readings**

● Please note that the following readings are not “suggested” nor are they in any way to be regarded as optional. Rather, I fully expect that everyone in class will read over each and every one of the assigned essays and chapters closely, carefully and thoroughly. This is not only so that you can keep pace with the material covered in lecture, but also in order

that everyone will come to class prepared to ask questions and share their comments. Active and lively participation is encouraged for this course, especially given the substantial amount of time that I have tried to set aside for us to engage in discussion at various points throughout the semester.

- Though the amount of information may appear excessive or overwhelming at first, all essays and articles originally contained within larger edited volumes have been listed with full citations. This has been done in order to help familiarize everyone taking this class with the many recent English-language publications concerning the history of women in Japan and to alert you to the breadth and diversity of this vast and expanding body of literature. Since this course also includes a required research paper, looking over the many book titles listed below should also aid you in gaining a better sense of what is available for use in your own research and writing.
- Reading responses are required for nine of the fifteen weeks during the semester – that is, in every week where a group discussion is scheduled, starting with Week #1 and including most of the weeks thereafter. Reading responses are to be turned in via email no later than 8pm on Thursday as a means of preparing for Friday’s in-class discussions. The point of each assignment is not to simply summarize the reading. Rather, in approximately two paragraphs, responses should touch upon major points in the readings that relate, diverge, or contradict with themes under discussion for the week, and what the major points in each article appear to be and how they relate to the larger history of women in modern Japan.

## Week #1 – By Way of a Beginning

8/27	Mon.	Introduction and Methodology
8/29	Wed.	“In the beginning, woman was the sun”
8/31	Fri.	Group Discussion

### Readings for Week #1

“The Earliest Records of Japan,” in Wm. Theodore DeBary, Donald Keene, George Tanabe, and Paul Varley, eds., *Sources of Japanese Tradition – Volume 1: From Earliest Times to 1600* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), pp. 3-16.

Joan R. Piggott, “Chieftain Pairs and Corulers: Female Sovereignty in Early Japan,” in Hitomi Tonomura, Anne Walthall and Wakita Haruko, eds., *Women and Class in Japanese History* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 1999), pp. 17-52.

## Week #2 – Women and Religion in Early Japan

9/3	Mon.	<b>No Class</b>
9/5	Wed.	Women’s Social and Political Position in Early Japanese History
9/7	Fri.	Shamans or Sinners? The Changing Religious Roles of Women

### Readings for Week #2

Haruko Okano, “Women’s Image and Place in Japanese Buddhism,” in Kumiko Fujimura-Fanselow and Atsuko Kameda, eds., *Japanese Women: New Feminist Perspectives on the Past, Present, and Future* (New York: The Feminist Press, The City University of New York, 1995), pp. 15-28.

“Sacred Sex or Sexual Pollution? *Asobi*, Shamans and Bodhisattvas,” in Janet R. Goodwin, *Selling Songs and Smiles: The Sex Trade in Heian and Kamakura Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), pp. 84-119.

### Week #3 – Patriarchy in Premodern Japan

9/10	Mon.	Warrior Rule and Women's Diminished Roles
9/12	Wed.	<b>No Class</b>
9/14	Fri.	<b>No Class</b>

#### Readings for Week #3

Hitomi Tonomura, "Sexual Violence Against Women: Legal and Extralegal Treatment in Premodern Warrior Societies," in Hitomi Tonomura, Anne Walthall and Wakita Haruko, eds., *Women and Class in Japanese History* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 1999), pp. 135-152.

Anne Walthall, "The Life Cycle of Farm Women in Tokugawa Japan," in Gail Lee Bernstein, ed., *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 42-70.

### Week #4 – Women and Modernity

9/17	Mon.	Women and the Meiji Restoration
9/19	Wed.	New Notions of Domesticity in Meiji Japan { <b>Map Quiz</b> }
9/21	Fri.	<b>No Class</b>

#### Readings for Week #4

Kathleen S. Uno, "Women and Changes in the Household Division of Labor," in Gail Lee Bernstein, ed., *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 17-41.

Jordan Sand, "At Home in the Meiji Period: Inventing Japanese Domesticity," in Stepehn Vlastos, ed., *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan* (Berkeley:

University of California Press, 1998), pp. 191-207.

### Week #5 – Motherhood and Politics

9/24 Mon. Political Reformers in the Meiji Period  
9/26 Wed. “Good Wife, Wise Mother”  
9/28 Fri. Group Discussion

#### Readings for Week #5

Vera Mackie, *Feminism in Modern Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 15-44.

Rebecca Copeland and Aiko Okamoto MacPhail, “Kishida Toshiko,” in Rebecca L. Copeland and Melek Ortabasi, eds., *The Modern Murasaki: Writing by Women of Meiji Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), pp. 62-71.

Kathleen Uno, “Womanhood, War, and Empire: Transmutations of ‘Good Wife, Wise Mother’ Before 1931,” in Barbara Molony and Kathleen Uno, eds., *Gendering Modern Japanese History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), pp. 493-519.

### Week #6 – Problematic Pupils

10/1 Mon. Educational Opportunities  
10/3 Wed. The Language of a New Consumerism  
10/5 Fri. Group Discussion

#### Readings for Week #6

Melanie Czarnecki, “Bad Girls from Good Families: The Degenerate Meiji Schoolgirl,” in Laura Miller and Jan Bardsley, eds., *Bad Girls of Japan* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan,

2005), pp. 46-63.

“From Schoolgirl Speech to Women’s Language: Consuming Indexicality in Women’s Magazines, 1890-1930,” in Miyako Inoue, *Vicarious Language: Gender and Linguistic Modernity in Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), pp. 108-59.

### Week #7 – Militant Women in the early 20th Century

10/8 Mon. Anarchists, Socialists and Violent Protest circa 1910  
10/10 Wed. Bluestockings and the World of Women’s Magazines  
10/12 Fri. Group Discussion

#### Readings for Week #7

Mackie, *Feminism in Modern Japan*, pp. 45-72.

“Reflections on the Way to the Gallows,” in Mikiso Hane, ed., *Reflections on the Way to the Gallows: Rebel Women in Prewar Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 53-74.

“The Bluestockings,” in Sharon L. Sievers, *Flowers in Salt: The Beginnings of Feminist Consciousness in Modern Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1983), pp. 163-88.

### Week #8 – Modes of Production and Consumption in the 20s and 30s

10/15 Mon. Women’s Changing Opportunities for Work  
10/17 Wed. The Café Waitress and the Modern Girl  
10/19 Fri. Group Discussion

#### Readings for Week #8

Mackie, *Feminism in Modern Japan*, pp. 45-72.

“From the Factories and Rice Paddies,” in Mikiso Hane, ed., *Reflections on the Way to the Gallows: Rebel Women in Prewar Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 175-203.

Miriam Silverberg, “The Modern Girl as Militant,” in Gail Lee Bernstein, ed., *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 239-66.

### Week #9 – Women and War

10/22 Mon. **In-Class Midterm**  
10/24 Wed. Women on the Homefront  
10/26 Fri. Government Policies and Neighborhood Associations

#### Readings for Week #9

“The Diary of an Evacuated Schoolgirl,” in Samuel H. Yamashita, *Leaves from an Autumn of Emergencies: Selections from the Wartime Diaries of Ordinary Japanese* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), pp. 269-307.

Thomas R. H. Havens, “Women and War in Japan, 1937-45,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 80, No. 4 (October 1975), pp. 913-34.

### Week #10 – Women and War Continued

10/29 Mon. Wives, Mothers and Prostitutes  
10/31 Wed. The Image and Reality of Women’s Sacrifices  
11/2 Fri. Group Discussion

#### Readings for Week #10

Mackie, *Feminism in Modern Japan*, pp. 99-119

Haruko Taya Cook, "Women's Deaths as Weapons of War in Japan's Final Battle," in Barbara Molony and Kathleen Uno, *Gendering Modern Japanese History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), pp. 326-56.

### Week #11 – The Postwar Family

11/5 Mon. Living through Defeat, Surrender and the Allied Occupation  
11/7 Wed. Economic Development, Education and the Domestic Sphere  
11/9 Fri. Group Discussion

#### Readings for Week #11

Andrew Gordon, "Managing the Japanese Household: The New Life Movement in Postwar Japan," in Barbara Molony and Kathleen Uno, *Gendering Modern Japanese History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), pp. 423-60.

Margaret Lock, "Centering on the Household: The Remaking of Female Maturity in Japan," in Anne E. Imamura, ed., *Re-Imagining Japanese Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 73-103.

### Week #12 – Politics, Feminism and Protest

11/12 Mon. Women's Political Participation in Postwar Japan  
11/14 Wed. 1960s Protest Movements and the Emergence of Feminism  
11/16 Fri. Group Discussion

#### Readings for Week #12

Mackie, *Feminism in Modern Japan*, pp. 120-43.

Sally Ann Hastings, "Women Legislators in the Postwar Diet," in Anne E. Imamura, ed.,

*Re-Imagining Japanese Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 271-300.

### Week #13 – Culture and Conformity

11/19 Mon. “Cuteness” Comes of Age

11/21 Wed. **No Class**

11/23 Fri. **No Class**

#### Readings for Week #13

Sharon Kinsella, “Cuties in Japan,” in Lise Skov and Brian Moeran, eds., *Women, Media and Consumption in Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995), pp. 220-54.

Yoshimoto Banana, *Kitchen* (Berkeley: Grove/Atlantic, Inc., 2006), Read all of the short story “Kitchen.”

### Week #14 – Image-Consciousness at the Close of the Century

11/26 Mon. Economic Expansion, Disposable Income and Working Women

11/28 Wed. Girls and Youth Culture at the end of the 20th century

11/30 Fri. Group Discussion

#### Readings for Week #14

“The Language of Esute” and “Esute Power,” in Laura Miller, *Beauty Up: Exploring Contemporary Japanese Body Aesthetics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), pp. 176-206.

Sharon Kinsella, “Black Faces, Witches, and Racism Against Girls,” in Laura Miller and Jan Bardsley, eds., *Bad Girls of Japan* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), pp. 142-57.

## Week #15 – Transcending Binaries

12/3      Mon.      A New Millennium

12/5      Wed.      Japan and Beyond

### Readings for Week #15

Mackie, *Feminism in Modern Japan*, pp. 202-35.

**The final paper is due on Monday, December 10, no later than 5pm.**