EAJ 437: History of Japanese Thought

University at Albany, Spring 2017
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Office Hours: HU 242, Tuesdays 10 – noon, or by appointment

In this course we will explore the field of “Japanese Thought” through a broad survey of texts written by (mostly) Japanese intellectuals, primarily in the modern era. We will take a historical approach to these texts, with an eye towards attempting to understand how different readers in different contexts tried to harness the power of “thought” in effecting change in their society. As it will become clear early on in the course, what constitutes “Japanese thought” is far from self-evident. What kind of “thinking” can be reasonably included as “Japanese thought”? What are some of the strategies that we might take in effectively contextualizing the emergence and development of this field of intellectual activity? Is “thought” in these very particular historical contexts useful to us? Any attempt to grapple with these questions will require a careful reading of the assigned materials that takes into account the history of the concepts that are used in building the arguments forwarded in the texts. Beyond gaining an introductory knowledge of “Japanese thought,” this class will train you to read texts critically and effectively.

Course Requirements & Policies

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

- Attendance: 20%
- Homework Assignments: 20%
- Writing Assignments: 30%
- Final Paper: 30%

ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY: Students must inform the instructor prior to class if they plan 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. Please notify the instructor before class if you absolutely must miss class due to a family emergency or illness.

CLASS PREPERATION: 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 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:

Azuma Hiroki, *Otaku: Japan’s Database Animals* (University of Minnesota Press, 2009)
Nakae Chomin, *A Discourse By Three Drunkards on Government* (Weatherhill, 1992)
COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to revision):

“Civilization” & Thought

Week 1
January 23: Course Introduction

January 25: Thought and Civilization: Fukuzawa Yukichi
   Fukuzawa Yukichi, *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization*, excerpts (1875)
   Kato Hiroyuki “An Abridged Translation from Bluntschli’s “Allgemeines Staatsrecht” on the
   Inappropriateness of Establishing a Popularly Elected Assembly” from *Meiroku Zasshi*
   p.47-49

Week 2
January 30: Is “philosophy” in Japan possible?
   Inoue Enryō, Selected writings from *Japanese Philosophy: A Sourcebook*, 619-630. (1893)
   Godart, Gerard Clinton, “‘Philosophy’ or ‘Religion’? The Confrontation with Foreign Categories
   in Late Nineteenth Century Japan.” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 69/1 (January 2008)
   February 1: Civilization & the “East”
   Nakae Chōmin “A Discourse by Three Drunkards on Government”

Week 3
February 6: Japan and Modernity
   Finish Discussing Nakae Chōmin
   Natsume Sōseki, “The Civilization of Modern-Day Japan” (1911)
   February 8: Nishida Kitarō & the “Kyoto School”
   Nishida Kitarō, *An Inquiry into the Good* excerpts (1911)

Week 4
February 13: Writing Workshop / Peer Reviews
February 15: Conceptualizing “Asia”
   Matsuda Koichiro, “The Concept of ‘Asia’ before Pan-Asianism”
   Okakura Tenshin, “Asia Is One” 1903-1906
   Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (excerpts)

1st Writing Assignment Due: February 17

Orientalism, Asia, Japan

Week 5
February 20: Pan-Asianism & Imperialism
   Sun Yat-sen, “Speech on Pan-Asianism” (1924)
   Konoe Fumimaro, “Declaration of a New Order in East Asia” (1938)
Nishida Kitaro, “Fundamental Principles of a New World Order”

February 22: Interrogating the conceptual schema of East vs. West

Week 6
February 27: War and Culture
Sakaguchi Ango, “On Decadence” (1946)
March 1: War and Gender
Ueno Chizuko, Nationalism and Gender excerpts (1998)

Week 7
March 6: Maruyama and the probing of Japan’s modernity
Maruyama Masao, “Patterns of Individuation and the Case of Japan: A Conceptual Scheme” (1965)
March 8: Reactions to Maruyama

Spring Break (March 11 – 19)

Week 8
March 20: Hyperart
Akasegawa Genpei, Hyperart: Thomasson (1987)
March 22: Writing Workshop / Peer Reviews / Discuss Final Paper Topics

Postmodern & Japan

Week 9
March 27: “Japan” & High Growth Economics
Asada Akira, “Infantile Capitalism and Japan’s Postmodernism: A Fairy Tale” (1987)
Marilyn Ivy, “Critical Texts, Mass Artifacts: The Consumption of Knowledge in Postmodern Japan”
March 29: Post-Cold War Japan

2nd Writing Assignment Due: March 31

Week 10
April 3: Otaku Culture
Azuma Hiroki, “The Otaku’s Pseudo-Japan” from Otaku: Japan’s Database Animals
April 5: Narratives & Consumption

**Week 11**

**April 10:** Passover (No class)

**April 12:** Database & Consumption

Azuma Hiroki, “Database Animals” in *Otaku: Japan’s Database Animals*

**Week 12**

**April 17:** Otaku Culture & Sexuality


**April 19:** Continue *Beautiful Fighting Girl*

Discuss Research topics

**Week 13**

**April 24:** Creativity & Generativity


**April 26:** Manga & the Postmodern


Submit initial bibliography for final paper

**Week 14**

**May 1:** Nationalism in the Internet Age

Kitada Akihiro, “Japan’s Cynical Nationalism” (2005)

Akagi Tomohiro, “War is the Only Solution” (2007)

Tamogami Toshio, “Was Japan an Aggressor Nation?” (2008)

**May 3:** Database & Democracy


**Week 15**

**May 8:** 3.11 and Thought

Takekuma Kentarō, “The Day the ‘Endless Everyday’ Ended” (Autumn 2011)

Karatani Kōjin, “Earthquake and Japan” (March 16, 2011)

Koizumi Yoshiyuki, “In Eventful Times: Concerning Capitalism, Electric Power, and Well-intentioned Nationalism” (2011)

**May 10:** Wrapping up & discussion of final papers

**Final Paper Due:** May 16