Japan: Its Culture and Heritage (AEAJ 170)

University at Albany, Fall 2019
Instructor: John D. Person, Assistant Professor, Department of East Asian Studies
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Room: HU 128, TuTh 11:45 am – 1:05 pm
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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:

- Attendance and Participation 20%*
- Map and Era Chart Quiz 5%
- Quizzes 20%
- Midterm Exam 25%
- Final Exam 30%

GRADING STANDARD:

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

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, total 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. Students unable to attend class on certain days because of religious beliefs will be excused per NYS
law, Section 224-A. Students are asked to inform the instructor in advance if they plan to miss class for religious reasons.

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.

**WEEK 1**

August 27: Introduction
August 29: What is “Japan”? What is “Culture”? What is “Heritage”?

Harumi Befu, “Concepts of Japan, Japanese culture and the Japanese”

**WEEK 2**

September 3: Early Japan


**Syllabus Quiz**

September 5: Japanese Mythology & Shinto


**Map and Era Chart Quiz**

**WEEK 3**
September 10: Buddhism in Japan
   Addiss et. al., eds., 21-26.
   De Bary et. al., eds., 100-106, 120-121.
September 12: Development of Japanese Writing & Heian Literary Forms, *The Tale of Genji*
   Addiss et. al., eds., 26-48.
   Hugh Clarke, “Language”

**WEEK 4**
September 17: Heian Era Aesthetics and Kamakura era developments
   Addiss et. al., eds., 48-90.
   *The Tales of Heike*, selection
September 19: Kamakura/Muromachi Period Music and Theater and the Tea Ceremony
   Addiss et. al., eds., 111-136.

**WEEK 5**
September 24: The Warring States Era and the Early Modern
   Addiss et. al., eds., 137-151.
September 26: Edo Politics, Class System, Bashō
   Matsuo Bashō, *The Narrow Road to the Interior* (1702), selection

**WEEK 6**
October 1: Codes of Honor and the 47 Ronin
   Yamamoto Tsunetomo, *Hagakure*, selection
October 3: Edo Period Prose Literature
   Ueda Akinari, *Tales of Moonlight and Rain* (1776), selection
   Ihara Saikaku, *Japan’s Eternal Storehouse* (1688), selection

**WEEK 7**
October 8: Edo Period Music and Theater
   Addiss et. al., eds., 193-224.
October 10: **MIDTERM EXAM**

**WEEK 8**
October 15: **NO CLASS (Fall Break)**
October 17: Meiji Restoration, Fukuzawa Yukichi
   Fukuzawa, “An Exhortation to Learning” (1872), selection

**WEEK 9**
October 22: Taisho Japan, Modernism in Art and Architecture
   “The Civilization of Modern-Day Japan” (1911)
   Gardner, William, “Media and Modernism”
October 24: Modernist Literature
Yokomitsu Riichi, “Machine” (1931)

WEEK 10
October 29: Japanese Imperialism
Koizumi Kikue, “Manchu Girl” (1938)
October 31: Japanese Experience of War & Wartime Responsibility and Rethinking “Japan”
“Humanity Declaration” (1946)
Hara Tamiki. “Summer Flower” (1949)

WEEK 11
November 5: Atomic Impacts
In-class screening: Honda Ishirō. Godzilla (1954)
November 7: The American Occupation through Literature and Film
Ōe Kenzaburō, “Prize Stock” (1958)

WEEK 12
November 12: Golden Age of Japanese Film
In-class screening: Kurosawa Akira. Rashomon (1950)
November 14: Post-Postwar Japan: Olympics, Japan Expo, and the Bubble
Hideo Aoki, “Buraku Culture”

WEEK 13
November 19: The Shōjo
November 21: Shōjo, Kawaii Culture, and Female Consumption
Kinsella, Sharon. “Cuties in Japan.”

WEEK 14
November 26: Anime: In-class Screening: Shinkai Makoto. Your Name (2016)

Thanksgiving Break: November 27 – December 1 (No Classes)

WEEK 15
December 3: Legacy of Manga and Rise of Otaku
Craig Norris, “Manga, anime and visual art culture”
December 5: Cool Japan
Douglas McGray, “Japan’s Gross National Cool”

Final Exam: December 17 (Tue) 1:00 – 3:00pm