Japan: Its Culture and Heritage (AEAJ 170)

University at Albany, Fall 2018
Instructor: John D. Person, Assistant Professor, Department of East Asian Studies
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Room: AS 014, MWF 10:25 – 11:20
   Office Hours: HU 242, MW 1:30pm – 2:30pm, 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 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 25%*
   Quizzes 20%
   Midterm Exam 25%
   Final Exam 30%

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.

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 27: Introduction
August 29: What is “Japan”? What is “Culture”? What is “Heritage”?
   Harumi Befu, “Concepts of Japan, Japanese culture and the Japanese”
   **Syllabus Quiz**
August 31: Early Japan

September 3: **Labor Day (No Class)**
September 5: Japanese Mythology
September 7: Shinto
   **Map and Era Chart Quiz**

September 10: **Rosh Hashanah (No Class)**
September 12: Buddhism in Japan
   Addiss et. al., eds., 21-26.
   De Bary et. al., eds., 100-106, 120-121.
September 13: Development of Japanese Writing & Heian Literary Forms
   Addiss et. al., eds., 26-48.
   Hugh Clarke, “Language”

September 17: *The Tale of Genji*
September 19: Yom Kippur (No Class)
September 21: Heian Period Music and Theater & the Development of Japanese Aesthetics
   Addiss et. al., eds., 48-80.

September 24: Kamakura/Muromachi Period: *The Tales of Heike*
   Addiss et. al., eds., 81-90.
   *The Tales of Heike*, selection
September 26: Kamakura/Muromachi Period: Music and Theater
   Addiss et. al., eds., 111-128.
September 28: Edo Politics, Class System, Basho
   Addiss et. al., eds., 137-151.
   Matsuo, Basho, *The Narrow Road to the Interior* (1702), selection

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
October 5: Edo Period Music and Theater
October 8: Zen and Tea  
Addiss et. al., eds., 129-136  
October 10: Meiji Restoration, Fukuzawa Yukichi  
Fukuzawa, “An Exhortation to Learning” (1872), selection  
October 12: MIDTERM EXAM

October 15: Natsume Soseki:  
“The Civilization of Modern-Day Japan” (1911)  
October 17: Taisho Japan, Modernism in Art and Architecture  
Gardner, William, “Media and Modernism”  
October 19: Rise of Japanese Film  
Tanizaki, Jun’ichiro, “The Present and Future of Moving Pictures” (1917)  
October 22: Modernist Literature  
Yokomitsu, Riichi, “Machine” (1931)  
October 24: Japanese Imperialism  
Koizumi Kikue, “Manchu Girl” (1938)  
October 26: 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 29: Wartime Responsibility and Rethinking “Japan”  
“Humanity Declaration” (1946)  
Hara Tamiki. “Summer Flower” (1949)

October 31: Atomic Impacts  
In-class screening: Honda, Ishiro. Godzilla (1954) pt. 1  
November 2: Atomic Impacts  
In-class screening: Honda, Ishiro. Godzilla (1954) pt. 2

November 5: The American Occupation through Literature and Film  
Oe, Kenzaburo, “Prize Stock” (1958)  
November 7: Golden Age of Japanese Film  
In-class screening: Kurosawa, Akira. Rashomon (1950) pt. 1

November 9: Golden Age of Japanese Film  
In-class screening: Kurosawa, Akira. Rashomon (1950) pt. 2

November 12: Two Nobel Prize Speeches  
Kawabata, Yasunari, “Japan, the Beautiful, and Myself” (1968)  
Oe, Kenzaburo, “Japan, the Ambiguous, and Myself” (1994)

November 14: The Shojo  
In-class screening: Somai, Shinji. Sailor Suit and Machine Gun (1981), pt. 1

November 16: The Shojo  
In-class screening: Somai, Shinji. Sailor Suit and Machine Gun (1981), pt. 2

November 19: Shojo, Kawaii Culture, and Female Consumption  
Kinsella, Sharon. “Cuties in Japan.”

November 21 – 25 Thanksgiving Break (No Classes)

November 26: Post-Postwar Japan: Olympics, Japan Expo, and the Bubble  
November 28: Anime  
In-class Screening: Shinkai Makoto. Your Name (2016), pt. 1

November 30: Anime
In-class Screening: Shinkai Makoto. *Your Name* (2016), pt. 2

December 3: 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  
Douglas McGray, “Japan’s Gross National Cool”

December 10: Japan in the World

**Final Exam: December 18 (Tues.), 10:30am – 12:30pm (AS 014)**