History of Modern Japan
AEAJ/AHIST 385

University at Albany, Spring 2018
Instructor: John Person, Assistant Professor, Department of East Asian Studies
e-mail: jperson@albany.edu
MWF 10:25 – 11:20
Room: ED 120
Office Hours: Tuesdays 10:00 – noon or by appointment (HU 242)

This course is a survey of the history of Japan from the mid-18th century to the present. We will examine the political, economic, social, and cultural institutions of Japan in relation to the everyday lives of its inhabitants. Though scholars typically call these periods the early modern and modern era of Japanese history, the way in which scholars, critics and popular discourse have understood the words “modern” and “Japan” have gone through many changes, as has the basic assumptions that govern the field of Japanese history. We will focus on these issues as we attempt to formulate our own narratives of the history of Japan throughout the semester.

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: 15%
- Quizzes: 15%
- Essay Writing Assignments: 20%
- Midterm Exam: 20%
- Final Exam: 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. *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 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. Unless otherwise noted, in-class quizzes will be based upon the reading 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:

MIZUKI Shigeru, Onwards Toward Our Noble Deaths
Andrew GORDON, A Modern History of Japan
KATSU Kokichi, Musui’s Story
*All books are available through the bookstore. All other readings will be provided as PDFs.

COURSE SCHEDULE

*Please be prepared to see changes in the syllabus throughout the semester. I will update you as I update the syllabus.

Week 1:
Jan. 24: Introductions & Syllabus Review

Jan. 26: Introduction to the History of Modern Japan
   Gordon, A Modern History of Japan (MHJ), chapters 1 – 3

Week 2:
Jan. 29: Tokugawa Order & the Bakuhan System
   Begin reading Musui’s Story

Jan. 31: Feudal? Early Modern? Capitalism and pre-Meiji Japan
   Hiraga Gennai “On Farting”

Feb. 2: Writing a History Paper
   Discuss Musui’s Story

Week 3:
Feb. 5: Peer Review Session for Essay Assignment

Feb. 7: Internal Troubles, External Threats
   John Manjrō, Drifting Towards the Southeast (Excerpts)

Feb. 9: Meiji Japan: Revolution or Restoration?
   MHJ, chapter 5; Fukuzawa Yukichi, “Goodbye to Asia”

Musui’s Story Essay Due: Friday 2/9
   submit as word document by email to jperson@albany.edu
Week 4:
Feb. 12: Civilization and Enlightenment in the Meiji Transition
    MHJ, chapter 6 – 7

Feb. 14: The lives and deaths of Saigō Takamori
    Mark Ravina, “The Apocryphal Suicide of Saigō Takamori”

Feb. 16: Late Meiji and the idea of a Japanese nation
    Benedict Anderson: *Imagined Communities* (excerpts)

Week 5:
Feb. 19: What is “Modernity”?
    Stuart Hall, “The West and the Rest” in *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies*

Feb. 21: Pan-Asian Utopias & Colonial Subjectivities
    MHJ, chapters 8 – 10

Feb. 23: Ideologies of Peace I: The Peace Preservation Law & Imperial Democracy
    Kaneko Fumiko “The Road to Nihilism” (1923)

Week 6:
Feb. 26: Urban development on the archipelago
    MHJ, chapter 11

Feb. 28: Taisho Modernisms & The discourse of “modern girl”
    Miriam Silverberg, “Modern Girl as Militant”

March 2: Okinawans as Japanese Imperial Subjects
    Alan Christy, “The Making of Imperial Subjects in Okinawa”

Week 7:
March 5: Colonial Subjectivities & Urban development in the Empire of Japan
    Yuasa Katsuei, *Kannani* (1934)

March 7: The War
    *Japan at War: An Oral History* (excerpts)
    MHJ, chapter 12

March 9: First Half in Review: Designing the Midterm

Spring Break: March 12 – 18

Week 8:
March 19: Hand out midterms

March 21: Experiences of the “end” of the war in the Japanese Empire
    MHJ, chapter 13
March 23: Comfort Women, Memory, and History

   Midterm exam due: 3/25
   Send exams as a word file via email to jperson@albany.edu

Week 9:
March 26: Occupied Japan: Liberation or Repetition?
   Bruce Cumings, “Japan’s Position in the World System” (1993)

March 28: The 1955 System: America in Japan in the Cold War
   MHJ, chapter 14

March 30: The Invention of Traditions
   Carol Gluck, “The Invention of Edo” (1998)

Week 10:
April 2: Easter (No class)

April 4: Ideologies of Peace II: “Atoms for Peace”

April 6: The Liberal Democratic Party & the Construction State
   Hideo Aoki, “Buraku Culture” (2009)

Week 11:
April 9: The Economic Miracle and its underside
   MHJ, chapter 15

April 11: Global Revolutions: 1968

April 13: Memories of the War
   Mizuki Shigeru, Onwards Towards Our Noble Deaths (1973)

Week 12:
April 16: Peer Review Session II

April 18: Showa Popular Culture

April 20: Postwar Histories
   Carol Gluck, “The Past in the Present” (1993)

Onwards Towards Our Noble Deaths Essay Due: Sunday 4/22
   submit as word document by email to jperson@albany.edu

Week 13:
April 23: Pax-Nipponica
   MHJ, chapter 16
April 25: Historicizing Japanese managerial practices

April 27: The Cold War & the Politics of “Area Studies”

Week 14:
April 30: The “Lost” Decade vs. “Lost” Generation
   Saitō Tamaki, Hikikomori: Adolescence without End (excerpts)
   MHJ, chapter 17

May 2: Otaku Culture
   The Moe Manifesto, selections

May 4: Fukushima as History
   Tessa Morris-Suzuki, “Touching the Grass: Science, Uncertainty, and Everyday Life from Chernobyl to Fukushima”

Week 15:
May 7: Review for Final Exam

May 9: Wrapping Up / Hand out final exams
   MHJ, chapter 18

Final Exam Due: May 16 @ 5pm