Japanese Civilization

History, Culture, Identity

EALC 132, Fall 2017

T/Th: 11:30–1pm
Stokes 102

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Office Hours: By appointment
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Course Description:
This course will introduce the major historical, cultural, and artistic traditions of Japan from the Neolithic period to the present. Our approaches will be both chronological and thematic. First, we will consider how Japanese civilization developed in and through history. While this course is a survey it is not meant to be comprehensive or to tell “the story of Japan” in an unbroken narrative. Instead we will focus on specific epochs and moments in Japanese history that reflect the changing status and roles of aristocratic, monastic, Shogunal, and merchant culture; the transition from a feudal to a modern society; war and recovery; natural and manmade disasters, and the formation of the modern Japanese nation as we know it today. Second, in our study of Japanese civilization we will also engage with six major themes: 1) cultural encounters; 2) national identity; 3) religion; 4) gender; 5) war; and 6) the environment. Throughout the semester we will examine how these themes express the changing social and political landscape of Japan. We will also use these six themes to engage fundamental questions such as: What
is the nation of Japan? Who are the Japanese? Is “Japanese-ness” a cultural or ethnic designation? Is there such thing as a national character? In addition to these objectives, this course will serve as an introduction to humanistic inquiry by helping students develop basic academic skills that will help them throughout their college career and beyond. These skills include the ability to identify and use of primary and secondary sources; critical thinking, writing, and looking; and, a facility for expressing ideas orally to peers, both in formal and informal settings.

Course Goals:
• To study keys aspects of the history and development of Japanese civilization.
• To develop critical and analytical tools for looking, reading, and writing about Japanese history and culture.
• To identify and differentiate between primary and secondary sources as well as learn how to use them.
• To understand the historical relationship between texts, objects, and images, as well as our own relationship to those objects.
• To become comfortable and fluent in expressing your ideas aloud in front of others.

Readings:

*Other required readings will be available as articles in PDF format on the Moodle course page.

Moodle:
Our Moodle course page includes copies of the syllabus, exam study guides, handouts, etc., from class; links to assorted interesting and useful websites; and all articles and other readings listed. We will also use Moodle to submit blog posts and complete other assignments as necessary.

Assignments & Assessment:
1) Attendance and Participation: 15%
This course consists of lectures, discussions, film screenings, and occasional in-class presentations. We learn from one another, and teach each other, by active and thoughtful listening and speaking. Your contributions to the class will be an important part of your work for this course. Class participation includes regular attendance (you can’t participate if you’re not here!) and engagement in small and large group discussions, reading analyses, film screenings, and other related activities.

2) Blog-posts: 15%
You are responsible for writing eight blog-posts to Moodle in the form of a short written response (min. 350 words) to the weekly reading assignments. These informal responses are an exercise in generative writing and are meant to get you thinking and facilitate in-class discussion. They are also an opportunity to reflect more deeply upon the themes and content covered during class each week. Discussion questions associated with the weekly
readings will be posted to Moodle Sunday night and responses must be published no later than 10am that Thursday.

3) **Exams:** 50% (Two exams each weighted 25%)
   There will be two exams scheduled during the course of the semester. These exams will build upon the major themes and content of course lectures, reading assignments, class discussion, and weekly blog posts. Each exam will comprise of identifications, short answers, and essay questions.

4) **Final Take-home Essay:** 20%
   Drawing upon the six major themes from this course, students will write a 5-page essay that demonstrates understanding and mastery over the material and ideas we have covered. The prompt for this final take-home essay will be available during the last week of class.

5) **Extra Credit:** 5%
   You may earn extra credit by attending a relevant lecture, special event, art exhibition, musical/dance performance, etc. at Haverford, Bryn Mawr, Swarthmore, or in the greater Philadelphia, New York, DC area and submitting a brief report (2 pages).

**Academic Resources:**
Students are encouraged to take advantage of the numerous academic resources here on Haverford’s campus. The Office of Academic Resources (OAR) and the Writing Center offer a variety of workshops, online and print resources, individual consultations, and appointments to help students strengthen and develop their academic and writing skill sets. For more information please visit the following websites:

- **The Writing Center:** [http://www.haverford.edu/writingcenter/](http://www.haverford.edu/writingcenter/)

**Email and Office Hours:**
Please allow 24 hours for a response to your emails. To help us make the best use of our email exchanges, before emailing, please consider whether the answer to your question can easily be found at the library, on your syllabus, or even in your own head! If you would like to discuss your work, please make an appointment at office hours, and we will discuss your questions there. Conversations are usually most productive if you prepare your questions in advance.

**N.B.**
1) **Always bring a hard copy/printed copy of the current reading materials to class.** If you do not have the reading in hand, you will be marked absent.

2) **Late work will be marked down 2/10 of a point for each day that it is late** (for example, a blog post that merits a “3.7” but is submitted two days late will earn a “3.3”).

3) **Attendance is required for this class and it will count toward your participation and final grade.** If you know you must miss a class due to illness, please contact the
instructor ahead of time and then arrange with your classmates to make up work. More than two unexcused absences and your Dean will be notified.

4) Make sure that you are on our Moodle course list as I use this list to post announcements and send emails to the class. In addition, please check Moodle regularly for access to weekly reading assignments, blog posts, etc.

5) TURN OFF YOUR CELL PHONE! It should go without saying that students will not receive/make calls or texts during the class period.

6) If you require the use of a laptop to take notes please be aware that e-mailing, chatting, surfing the internet, and other such activities are not tolerated. Students who engage in these activities during class will receive a penalty to their grade.

The Haverford College Honor Code:
The faculty takes the Honor Code very seriously and we expect the same from our students. This means that cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated – all work submitted must be your own! The Honor Code applies to all work for this class. If you are unsure about what the Honor Code involves – particularly in relation to Academic Concerns – as well as what might constitute a violation of the Code, please refer to: http://honorcouncil.haverford.edu/the-code/

SCHEDULE:

Week One: Introduction

9/5 (Tues.) – Course Overview, Syllabus, and Classroom Policies

9/7 (Thurs.) – Out of Myth and into Archeological Record

Readings:

Week Two: Shintō and the Introduction of Buddhism

9/12 (Tues.) – Shintō & Ise Shrine

9/14 (Thurs.) – Hōryū-ji & Tōdai-ji

Readings:
- Kojiki (An Account of Ancient Matters), Book 1, (2014), pp. 7-27 [Moodle]
Week Three: Cannons of Courtly Taste

9/19 (Tues.) – Life at Court: The Creation of Yamato-e and a Native Aesthetic

9/21 (Thurs.) – Byōdō-in: Pure Land Buddhism and the Concept of Mappō

Readings:
- Murasaki Shikibu, “‘The Oak Tree,’ from The Tale of Genji” in Asian Art (2006), pp. 311-324 [Moodle]
- James Dobbin’s “Genshin’s Deathbed Nembutsu Ritual in Pure Land Buddhism” in Religions of Japan in Practice (1999), pp. 166-175 [Moodle]

Week Four: The Dawn of the Samurai

*A Taste of Japan Film Series – Begins! Attendance is required.*

9/26 (Tues.) – Zen and the Development of Warrior Culture

9/27 (Wed.) – A Drop of the Grapevine (Budō no namida, 2014) dir. Mishima Yukiko
*VCAM Screening Room, Haverford College, 7pm.*

9/28 (Thurs.) – Tale of the Heike

Readings:
- Paul Varley, Ch. 4: “The Advent of a New Age,” in Japanese Culture (2000), pp. 77-89
- Thomas Conlan, “Medieval Warfare” in Japan Emerging: Premodern History to 1850 (2012), pp. 244-253 [Moodle]

Week Five: Medieval Warfare

10/3 (Tues.) – The Mongol Invasions

*VCAM Screening Room, Haverford College, 7pm.*

10/5 (Thurs.) – The Three Great Unifiers: Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and Tokugawa Ieyasu

Readings:

**Week Six: Urbanization, Trade, & the New Merchant Class**

10/10 (Tues.) – Japanese Civ. Exam I

10/11 (Wed.) – *Silver Spoon (Gin no saji, 2014)*, dir. Yoshida Keisuke
*VCAM Screening Room, Haverford College, 7pm.*

10/12 (Thurs.) – Tokugawa period – Pleasures of the Floating World

Readings:

**Week Seven: Fall Break – No class!**

*Read Musui’s Story during the Fall Break*

**Week Eight: Looking West**

10/24 (Tues.) – The Meiji Restoration: “Civilization and Enlightenment”

10/26 (Thurs.) – Early Japanese Photography
*Visit to Special Collection in Magill Library*

Reading:

**Week Nine: Forging a Modern Identity**

10/31 (Tues.) – Taishō Modernism

11/2 (Thurs.) – Consumerism and Mass Culture

Readings:
- Gennifer Weisenfeld, “Selling Shiseido: Cosmetics, Advertising, and Design in Early 20th Century Japan,” in *MIT Visualizing Cultures* [Moodle]
Week Ten: Imperialism and War

11/7 (Tues.) – Empire Building
*Visit to Special Collections in Magill Library

11/9 (Thurs.) – The Pacific War

Readings:
- Harumi Befu, “Nationalism and Nihonjinron” in *Cultural Nationalism in East Asia: Representation and Identity* (1993), pp. 107-135 [Moodle]

Week Eleven: The Bomb

11/14 (Tues.) – Hiroshima and Nagasaki

11/16 (Thurs.) – Embracing Defeat: The Aftermath of War

Readings:

View:
- *MIT Visualizing Cultures:* Unit – *Ground Zero 1945*; and Unit – *Ground Zero 1945: A School Boy’s Story*
  http://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/home/vis_menu_02.html
  *Please view all image galleries for these units and read the accompany text.

Week Twelve: The Postwar Period

11/21 (Tues.) – Reform and Reconstruction: The US Occupation

11/23 (Thurs.) – Thanksgiving Holiday – No class!

Reading:
Week Thirteen: The Atomic Age

11/28 (Tues.) – Hiroshima and Japan’s Postwar Identity

11/30 (Thurs.) – No class: Prepare for Exam II (study guide to be distributed)

Readings:
- Kawabata Yasunari, “Japan the Beautiful and Myself,” *Nobel Prize Lecture*, December 12, 1968 [Moodle]

Week Fourteen: Popular Culture

12/5 (Tues.) – Japanese Civ. Exam II

12/7 (Thurs.) – Manga and Anime

Film Screening:
- *Sen to chihiro Sen to Chihiro no Kamikakushi* (Spirited Away), dir. Miyazaki Hayao, 2001, 125 min.

Readings:

Recommended:

Week Fifteen: Tsunami and Beyond

12/12 (Tues.) – The Tōhoku Earthquake and its Aftershocks

12/15 (Thurs.) – Conclusion & Hand out Take Home final essay guidelines

Readings:

Week Sixteen: Exam Period – Take Home final essay due by December 22nd at 12pm