

HI 369 Modern Japanese History

Fall 2014

Professor Richardson

STH 618

617 721 2268

Office hours By Appointment

Course Description

This course constitutes an engagement with the *Japanese past*. What this *essentially* means is that we start with a certain *notion* in mind, a generalized idea of what Japan is and of what something like a Japanese past may resemble. This generalized idea contains a common sense of what is meant by the terms *past*, *the past*, *history*, *present* and *the present*. Thus, we come to the “history of Japan” with expectations that there is something *there* to be presented and or discovered that will clarify what present Japan is and how it got to be that way. We have a sense that the *past* is over, except in so far as it “lives in the present”, but that it was a coherent whole, a thing that once existed and that can be reconstituted in mind by historical thought, including research and writing. This course will question and undermine each of these generalized assumptions, including the idea that there ever was a past that was once a present and before that a future. In other words we will critically examine our generalized and common idea of temporality.

Thus, this course will not present the standard and oft expected chronological narrative of events that are said to explain something called historical development. Instead we will seek to uncover ways of being human that appear to have existed in the place that is now called Japan. We will use the chronological markers “1600” and the “present” as temporal boundaries for our efforts keeping in mind that they must be regarded as purely nominal terms that do not necessarily tell us anything about ways of being in Japan.

This course will be conducted as a lecture/discussion with primary emphasis on discussion; that means our work will proceed through discourse not me speaking and you listening and taking notes. So, the primary

requirement for the course is that you participate actively in each class discussion. You will also be required to do a fair amount of reading and thinking. In addition, you will each be required to develop a character based on research into “Japanese History.” Your character development will be directed to illustrating a way of being in Japan during period covered by this course. We will discuss this project in class at which time I will give you more details. The basic idea is that through the course of the semester we will be “staging” Japan as you develop fictive characters and bring them into interaction. Each of you will produce a ten to fifteen page paper summarizing the research that you did in order to produce your character. You will also produce either an actual extensive and in depth description and analysis of the character or render your character in the form of dramatic or fictional prose. In either case we will bring our characters into interaction in the form of a dramatic performance. This latter project will be discussed extensively in class and I will shortly provide you with a written description of what we will be about in constructing a dramatic performance. Each of you will also make a ten to fifteen minute oral presentation of your character to the class. Your grade will be calculated as follows:

Class Participation, including your oral presentation 50%

Character Research Report 25%

Character description or dramatic or fictional rendering 25%

Required Texts

The following texts are required for this course:

Jippensha Ikku, *Hizakurige or Shanke's Mare*.

Yanagita Kunio, *The Legends of Tono*.

Katsu Kokichi, *Musui's Story, The Autobiography of a Tokugawa Samurai*.

Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan*.

Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, *Modern Japanese Thought*.

Stephen Vlastos, *Peasant Protests and Uprisings in Tokugawa Japan*.

Tetsuo Najita, *The Intellectual Foundations of Modern Japanese Politics*.

Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, *The Monkey as Mirror*.

Emily Groszos Ooms, *Women and Millenarian Protest in Meiji Japan*.

Gerald Figal, *Civilization and Monsters, Spirits of Modernity in Meiji Japan*.

Course Outline

Session One: Orientation: What is this course about? What is this course not about?

Part One

The Great Highway of the World

Session Two: Movement in Tokugawa Japan.

Reading: Gordon, *Japan*, chapter 2.

Session Three: A People's Highway.

Reading: Jippensha, *Hizakurige*.

Part Two

Things Seen and Unseen

Session Four: Permeable Boundaries.

Reading: Yanagita, *The Legends of Tono*.

Session Five: Where Heaven and Earth Meet.

Reading: Hori, *Folk Religion in Japan*.

Session Six: Symbolic Transformations.

Reading: Ohnuki-Tierney, *The Monkey as Mirror*, chapters 2,3, and 6.

Part Three

Oppression

Session Seven: The Old Repression: The Tokugawa Regime:

Reading: Gordon, Japan, Chapter One.

Session Eight: Popular Resistance Under the Old Order:

Reading: Stephen Vlastos, Peasant Protests and Uprisings in Tokugawa Japan.

Session Nine: The New Repression: The Samurai Revolution:

Readings: Najita, The Intellectual Foundations of Modern Japanese Politics.

Session Ten: Creating a Predatory State: Mental Ordering:

Reading: Gordon, Japan, Chapters 4 and 5; Wakabayashi, Modern Japanese Thought, chapters 1, 2 and 3.

Session Eleven: Towards Empire:

Reading: Gordon, Japan, chapters 6, 7 and 8; Wakabayashi, Modern Japanese Thought, chapter 5.

Session Twelve: Closing the Other World:

Reading: Figal, Civilization and Monsters, Spirits of Modernity in Meiji Japan.

Session Thirteen: Defending the Other World:

Reading: Ooms, Women and Millenarian Protest in Meiji Japan.

Part Four

Empire and Aftermath

Session Fourteen: Imperial Japan and its Nemesis

Reading: Gordon, Japan, Part Three.

