

CAS/HI 369
Modern Japanese History
Fall 2019
Tuesday 12:30-3:15pm

Professor Richardson

STH 618

Cell Phone 617 721 2268

Office hours Monday 1-2:30pm; Tuesday 3:15-4:45pm

Or By Appointment

Course Description

This course constitutes an engagement with the *Japanese past*. What this 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 *history, past, the past, present, the present, future and the future*. 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 on through its influences in the present* but that it once was a coherent whole, something that existed that can be reconstituted in-mind by historical imagination, including research and writing. This course will question 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.

Accordingly, 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, in and of themselves, tell us anything about *ways of being* in *Japan*.

The course will cover the following subjects largely through lectures: an introductory section on ancient and medieval Japan; early modern Japan; the Meiji Restoration and the construction of 'modern' Japan; Taisho Democracy; the China and Pacific Wars; early postwar Japan.

This course will be conducted as a lecture/discussion with a good deal of emphasis on discussion; that is our work will occur through discourse, not merely by me speaking and you listening and taking notes. Thus a major requirement of 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. Each of you will make a thematic presentation to the class on one of the required readings. In addition, you will be required to complete either a historical essay based on research into a topic in Japanese history or a creative project. The creative project will focus on developing a script for theater or film based on research into Japanese History. Your script development will be directed towards illustrating a way of being in Japan during the period covered by this course. You will have to situate your creative work in a specific historical era, such as, for example, the early 17th century, and show how the historical dynamics of that era, such as gender, class, ethnicity, foreign relations constrained and enabled your characters' development and how your characters opened and closed their awareness of ways of being. This may appear confusing at the moment but we shall discuss the nature of the project in greater detail in class. **You will accompany your completed creative project with a research report** summarizing the research that you did in order to produce your script. Each of you will make a ten minute presentation to the class describing your creative project. Within the time constraints of the course we will try to provide time for you to share and read portions of your scripts out loud in class so that you may have the benefit of helpful comments by your colleagues.

Your grade will be calculated as follows:

Class Participation including your oral presentations: 50%

Historical essay or Creative Project and accompanying research report: 50%

Due Dates:

Selection of Creative Project Topic and Historical essay topic: September 24.

Presentation of Historical Essays and Creative Projects in Class: December 10.

Completed Creative Project and Historical Essays Due: December 10. **Email your completed work to me as a Word Document as an email attachment. Do not use google documents or any other form of transmission or your work will not be read.**

Required Texts

We will normally be reading selected chapters from the following texts, except for the books I specify to be read in their entirety. I have ordered them from the university bookstore; however, I urge you to find them in eBook format through Mugar library, on Kindle or another such venue or order them used.

Jippensha Ikku, *Hizakurige* or *Shanke's Mare*. (The Bookstore cannot get this text but you can buy it used on Amazon. You should order it right away).

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

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

George M. Wilson, *Patriots and Redeemers in Japan*

Anne Walthall, *Peasant Uprisings in Japan*

Laura Nenzi, *The Chaos and Cosmos of Kurosawa Tokiko*

Amy Stanley, *Selling Women*

Dina Lowy, *The Japanese "New Woman"*

James L. Huffman, *Down And Out in Late Meiji Japan*

Shigeru Mizuki, *Showa*, 1926-1939

Attendance

Attendance for this course is mandatory. I reserve the right to fail any student who misses 3 unexcused class meetings.

Academic Conduct

Be advised that this course follows College of Arts and Science Guidelines on Academic Conduct. Plagiarism may lead to a failing grade and may be reported to the dean. You may access the Academic Conduct Code at this website:

<http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/>

Course Outline

September 3: Session One: Orientation: What is this course about? What is this course not about?

Part One

An Overview of Japanese History

September 10: Session Two:

Reading: Najita, The Intellectual Foundations, Chapter 2.

September 17: Session Three:

Reading: Jippensha, Hizakurige.

Part Two

The Lower Depths

September 24: Session Four: Village Society.

Reading: Reading: Down and Out, Chapters 1 & 7

October 1: Session Five: Poverty, Oppression and Resistance.

Reading: Down and Out, Chapters 2 through 5.

October 8: Session Six: Peasant Protest.

Reading, Walthall, 1, 3 & 6.

Part Three

Permeable Boundaries: Other Worlds in This World

October 22: Folk Religion: kami, Buddhas and other powers.

Reading: Figal, Civilization and Monsters, Prologue & Chapter 1.

Part Four

'The Problem of Woman'

October 29: 'The Problem of Women' in Early Modern Japan.

Reading: Stanley - Selling Women (I will specify chapters in class)

November 5: Kurosawa Tokiko: A Case Study.

Reading: The Chaos and Cosmos of Kurosawa Tokiko (I will specify chapters in class).

November 12: Session Nine: New Women?

Reading: Lowy, The Japanese “New Woman”.

Part Five

Social Transformations

November 19: Session Ten: Creating a Predatory State: Ideology and Institutions.

Reading: Najita, The Intellectual Foundations of Modern Japanese Politics, Chapters 3-7.

November 26: Session Eleven: Spiritual Mobilizations.

Reading: Figal, Civilization and Monsters, Chapters 1, 5 & 6.

December 3: Mobilization and the Pacific War

Reading: Mizuki, Showa 1926-1939

December 10: **Final papers due, and presentation of projects**