

Fall 2009  
Harvard University  
History 1623  
M, W, 12:00 am

Prof. Andrew Gordon  
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496-4729

## Twentieth Century Japan

The history of Japan in the twentieth century is doubly fascinating, both in its own right and as a point of departure for comparative reflection on great themes of modern global history: the social upheavals and transformations of capitalism and democracy, the fate of modern imperialism, the experience of total war, the spread of mass consumer culture. We take up these themes through an inquiry into experience in Japan over the past 100+ years. The course emphasizes two sorts of diversity: the wide range of experience and understandings held by historical actors themselves, and the varied opinions of historians seeking to make sense of the past. It places Japanese experience in two sorts of contexts, Asian and global, with attention to cultural as well as economic and geo-political interaction. We give attention to differences of region, of city and country, of gender and social class with Japan. We examine the ways such differences have been construed and manipulated by historical actors and by historians.

In addition to reading secondary historical literature, students for their papers and in some section discussions will make use of Japanese documentary sources in translation or documents originally recorded in Western languages.

### Lectures and Readings:

#### **Weeks 1 and 2: Building Nation and Empire**

(W) 9/2 Introduction: Challenges of Modern Japanese History

(F) 9/4 Legacies of the Meiji Revolution [Note: **Friday class** this week (CGIS s153)]

\*Irokawa, *The Culture of the Meiji Era*, introduction pp. 3-18. \*Veblen, "The Opportunity of Japan" in *Essays on Changing Order*. \*\*Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan* (MHJ), Chs. 5-7.

(W) 9/9 Establishing Empire and Domestic Order [First section, Friday 9/11]

\*Pyle, "The Technology of Japanese Nationalism," in *Journal of Asian Studies*, 1974. \*Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*, ch. 4, 73-101. MHJ, Ch. 8. The Meiji Constitution (on website).

#### **Weeks 3 to 5: State and Society in the Era of Imperial Democracy**

(M) 9/14 National Politics: Parties and Parliament

(W) 9/16 Micropolitics: The State and Daily Life [plus in-class map QUIZ]

\*Duus, *Party Rivalry and Political Change*, Chs. 1-3, pp. 1-82. \*\*Garon, *Molding Japanese Minds*, Intro and ch. 1. MHJ, Ch. 9. \*Nolte and Hastings, "Meiji State's Policy Toward Women," in Bernstein, ed., *Recreating Japanese Women*, 151-74.

(M) 9/21 Tenants and Landlords  
(W) 9/23 Workers and Managers

\*Waswo, "In Search of Equity" in Conflict in Modern Japanese History, pp. 366-411. \*Gordon, Imperial Democracy Chs. 6-7, pp. 144-203.

(M) 9/28 Women in Culture and Society  
(W) 9/30 Managing Empire

\*\*Sheldon Garon, Molding Japanese Minds, chs. 3-4, pp. 88-145. \*Silverberg, "Modern Girl as Militant" in Erotic Grotesque Nonsense, ch. 1, pp. 51-72. Robinson, "Broadcasting in Colonial Korea," in Minichiello, ed., Japan's Competing Modernities, pp. 358-78. MHJ, Ch. 10.

### **Weeks 6 to 8 Converging Crises of Capitalism and Empire**

(M) 10/5 The Depression Crises  
(W) 10/7 Repudiation of Imperial Democracy

\*Smith, "Rural Revitalization in the 1930s" in Public Spheres, Private Lives, pp. 117-52. \*Young, Japan's Total Empire, Chs. 3-4, pp. 55-180. MHJ, Ch. 11.

(W) 10/14 Mobilization and the New Order

\*Chalmers Johnson, MITI and the Japanese Miracle, Chs. 3-4, pp. 83-156. \*Louise Young, "Colonizing Manchuria" in Vlastos, Mirror of Modernity, pp. 95-109. \*\*Ted Cook and Haruko Cook, Japan at War, Intro and Part I, pp. 3-68. MHJ, Ch. 12.

(M) 10/19 Wartime Modernity  
(W) 10/21 Politics of Defeat

\*\*Cook and Cook, Japan at War, pp. 99-120, 169-98, 231-58, 305-72. \*Silverberg, Erotic Grotesque Nonsense pp. 231-57 (Modern Nonsense). \*Herbert Bix, "Japan's Delayed Surrender: A Reinterpretation," in Diplomatic History (Spring, 1995) pp. 197-225.

### **Weeks 9 to 11 Remaking the Nation**

(M) 10/26 The Occupiers [Guest lecture: Konrad Lawson]  
(W) 10/28 The Occupied [Guest lecture: Hiromu Nagahara]

\*\*John Dower, Embracing Defeat: Japan after WWII Parts I-III. MHJ, Ch. 13.

(M) 11//2 Unequal Treaties Again? Cold War Alignments  
(W) 11/4 Economic Recovery and the Rise of Consumer Society

\*Dower, "Peace and Democracy" in Gordon ed., Postwar Japan as History, Ch. 1. \*\*Garon, Molding Japanese Minds, Chs. 5-6, pp. 150-205. \*\*Chalmers Johnson, MITI and the Japanese Miracle, Chs. 5-6, 157-241.

- (M) 11/9 Education and Family: The Heyday of Middle Class Society:  
(F?) 11/13 Working Men and Women: The Corporate Centered Society:

\*Kelly, "Finding a Place," and Uno, "Death of Good Wife, Wise Mother?" in Gordon, ed., Postwar Japan as History, Chs. 8, 11. \*\*Makoto Kumazawa, Portraits of the Japanese Workplace, chs. 7-9, pp. 159-247. MHJ, Chs. 14-15.

## Weeks 12 to 14 Japan in the Contemporary World

- (M) 11/16 Citizen Movements and the State  
(W) 11/18 The "Roaring '80s": Coping with Plenty at Home and in the World

\*Upham, "Unplaced Persons," Koschman, "Intellectuals" and White, "Dynamics of Opposition, in Postwar Japan as History, Chs. 12, 15, 16. \*\*Shōtarō Ishinomori, Japan Inc (entire). \*Chalmers Johnson, "Comparative Capitalism: The Japanese Difference," in Johnson, Japan: Who Governs?, pp. 51-68. MHJ Ch 16.

- (M) 11/23 Japan's "Lost Decade:" Economy and Politics

MHJ, Ch. 17. \*Cumings, "Japan's Position in the World System" in Gordon, ed., Postwar Japan as History, ch. 2. Richard Katz, "The Japan Fallacy" *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2009) via HOLLIS. R. Taggart Murphy, "Rethinking the Lessons for the US and the World of Japan's 1990s Collapse," *Japan Focus* [www.japanfocus.org].

- (M) 11/30 The Death of the Middle Class?  
(W) 12/2 The History Issue, and the History of Present and Future Issues

Gluck, "Past in the Present" in Gordon, ed., Postwar Japan as History, ch. 3. Toru Shinoda, "Which Side Are You On, "Hakenmura and the Working Poor as a Tipping Point in Japanese Labor Politics" *Japan Focus*. Yoshiko Nozaki and Mark Selden, "Japanese Textbook Controversies, Nationalism, and Historical Memory: Intra- and Inter-national Conflicts" *Japan Focus*.

**Writing Assignments:** There are two types of writing required: occasional postings (five in all) to the class website, and a reading period term paper.

For the **postings** you are required to write one for each of the five units of the course, indicated in bold on this syllabus. You can post for whichever week of that unit you like. A posting should be 700 to 1000 words in length (depending on font, about 2-3 double spaced pages). It should identify a problem of historical understanding or explanation raised in the readings which you believe merits further discussion. What perspectives are presented in the readings? What are their pros and cons, or the points which should be discussed? You need not offer a full answer, but can try to if you like. Most important is to raise and begin to explore a question worth discussing further. These should be posted by 8 pm on Thursday, and you are expected to read and think about your classmates postings before the discussion section on that Friday.

The **term paper** should address a topic of historical interpretation of your own choosing, in consultation with the instructor. I will provide a list of possible topics early in the semester, but

you are not limited to these. You must discuss your topic with me before embarking on the paper. The paper should draw on relevant secondary works and consult primary documents, most likely in English (whether translated or originally in English). Students able to read Japanese or works in other languages relevant to the paper are of course welcome to use those languages. The paper should be roughly 4500 to 6000 words (15 to 20 pages in length), excluding bibliography.

**Exams:** There will be a final examination, and one map quiz. If you do not get 100 percent on the map quiz, you can retake it (once) anytime before the end of reading period.

**Grading** will be weighted as follows: Papers (30% each), map quiz (5%), Final exam (20%), Class participation (15%).

**Readings:** All readings marked with “\*” on the syllabus are available on e-reserves or on regular reserve in the Harvard-Yenching Library. See course website for the reserve list. All books marked with “\*\*” are available for purchase at the Coop, as follows:

Andrew Gordon, A Modern History of Japan (Oxford UP)  
Sheldon Garon, Molding Japanese Minds (Princeton UP)  
Ted Cook and Haruko Cook, Japan at War (The New Press)  
John Dower, Embracing Defeat: Japan after WWII Parts I-III  
Chalmers Johnson, MITI and the Japanese Miracle (Stanford UP)  
Makoto Kumazawa, Portraits of the Japanese Workplace (Westview Press)  
Shōtarō Ishinomori, Japan Inc (U. Cal Press)

**Sections:** for undergraduates, will meet most weeks, on Fridays at noon and for graduate students, Fridays at 1 pm, in Emerson 307 for both sections.

**Office Hours:** Mondays, 2-4, Tuesdays 1-2, by appointment. Contact Margot Chamberlain, at [chamber2@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:chamber2@fas.harvard.edu)

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**E-reserves list, in order assigned:**

Irokawa Daikichi, The Culture of the Meiji Era, introduction, pp. 3-18.

Thorsten Veblen, "The Opportunity of Japan"

Kenneth Pyle, "The Technology of Japanese Nationalism," in Journal of Asian Studies, Nov. 1974, pp. 51-65.

Carol Gluck, Japan's Modern Myths, ch. 4, pp. 73-101

Sharon Nolte and Sally Hastings, "Meiji State's Policy Toward Women," in Bernstein, ed., Recreating Japanese Women, 151-74.

Peter Duus, Party Rivalry and Political Change, Chs. 1-3, pp. 1-82.

Ann Waswo, "In Search of Equity" in Conflict in Modern Japanese History, pp. 366-411.

Andrew Gordon, Imperial Democracy Chs. 6-7, 9, pp. 144-203, 237-69.

Miriam Silverberg, "Modern Girl as Militant" in Erotic Grotesque Nonsense, Ch. 1 pp.51-72.

Michael Robinson, "Broadcasting in Colonial Korea," in Minichiello, ed., Japan's Competing Modernities, pp. 358-78.

Kerry Smith, "Rural Revitalization in the 1930s" in Bernstein, et. al, eds, Public Spheres, Private Lives, pp. 117-52.

Louise Young, Japan's Total Empire, Chs. 3-4, pp. 55-180.

Louise Young, "Colonizing Manchuria" in Vlastos, Mirror of Modernity, pp. 95-109.

Miriam Silverberg, Erotic Grotesque Nonsense, "Modern Nonsense", pp. xx-yy.

Herbert Bix, "Japan's Delayed Surrender: A Reinterpretation," in Diplomatic History (Spring, 1995) pp. 197-225.

Kelly, "Finding a Place," and Uno, "Death of Good Wife, Wise Mother?" in Gordon, ed., Postwar Japan as History, Chs. 8, 11

Makoto Kumazawa, Portraits of the Japanese Workplace, chs. 7-9, pp. 159-254

Upham, "Unplaced Persons," in Postwar Japan as History, Chs. 12.

Chalmers Johnson, "Comparative Capitalism: The Japanese Difference," in Johnson, Japan: Who Governs?, pp. 51-68

Cumings, "Japan's Position in the World System" and Gluck, "Past in the Present" in Gordon, ed., Postwar Japan as History, Chs. 2, 3.