

NOTE: This is a preliminary version of the course syllabus. The final version will be distributed during the first day of class.

THE WARRIOR TRADITION IN JAPAN

Fall 2015

Monday and Thursday 2:55 – 4:25 p.m.

Mark Lincicome

OBJECTIVES AND CONTENT

One of the most popular and durable of Japanese icons is the *samurai* warrior. Like all traditions, that of the Japanese warrior has evolved over time through a combination of fact and fiction, reality and myth. That is, the warrior class and the warrior tradition each have their own history, and while the two histories often overlap, they are not identical. This course will examine both of these histories: the rise and fall of the warrior class between about the tenth century and the 1870s; and the evolution of the warrior tradition, which arguably began even earlier and persists today. Each of these histories has, in its own way, contributed to the larger political, social, economic and cultural history of Japan.

Kyoto's reputation as Japan's "old imperial capital" obscures its place in the history of the samurai. They fought ruthless battles in the city's streets and palace precincts, but they also sponsored the construction of grand villas, temples and shrines. Kyoto was the scene of samurai political plots and intrigue, but also a major center for their practice of the peaceful arts and Zen meditation. Thus, through our study of the samurai, students in this course will also survey the history of Japan and its "old imperial capital."

FORMAT

Class meetings will alternate between lectures, student-led discussions, and field trips to relevant sites in Kyoto, where students will help to guide our visits. (The KCJS Fall Trip to Okayama will also be regarded as a class field trip.) Please note that two of the field trips and two make-up classes (for those missed due to national holidays) are scheduled on Tuesdays between 2:55 and 4:25 p.m. Attendance at selected co-curricular events is also required.

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING POLICY

1. **READING AND FILM ASSIGNMENTS** The following books (listed in alphabetical order by author) are required for the course, and should be available for purchase through the bookstore:

- a. Oleg Benesch, *Inventing the Way of the Samurai: Nationalism, Internationalism and Bushido in Modern Japan*, Oxford University Press, 2014 (ISBN 978-0198706625)
- b. Hiroaki Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, Overlook Press, 2012 (ISBN 978-1590207307)
- c. Conrad Totman, *Japan Before Perry: A Short History*, University of California Press, 2008 (ISBN 978-0520254077)

A small number of additional required readings are available on Courseworks. Weekly reading assignments are listed below (see "Class Schedule"). Several short films or film excerpts will be shown in class, and DVD copies of several other films will be placed on reserve for you to view outside of class time.

2. **ATTENDANCE** counts for 10% of the course grade. Regular attendance at all scheduled class meetings and field trips is required. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class and field trip. Unexcused absences will lower your course grade.

Once class has started, please turn off cell phones and refrain from exiting and re-entering the classroom to use the restroom, etc. because it disrupts the proceedings.

3. CLASS PARTICIPATION is a vital component of this course: active student involvement in discussions and other planned presentations is essential to its success. Both the students and the instructor will be learning from each other's interpretations of the material. Therefore, it is important that you have all reading and film screening assignments prepared on time (see "Class Schedule" below for due dates).

You will be graded on two types of class participation:

- (a) Oral comments and questions during class discussions and field trips count for 12% of the course grade.
- (b) Oral presentations (see 4c. and 4d. below) count for 8% of the course grade.

4. PAPER ASSIGNMENTS

- (a) One essay (5 pages) on an assigned topic is due in class on October 1 and counts for 10% of the course grade.
- (b) One discussion paper (4 pages) based on an assigned reading, which you will present in class to lead that day's class discussion. Due dates to be determined. This paper counts for 7% of the course grade.
- (c) One essay (5 pages) related to your role as Kyoto field trip guide. Due dates vary for this paper, which counts for 10% of the course grade.
- (d) Students will keep a journal throughout the semester to record their own encounters with the samurai tradition in contemporary Japan, including notes (and photos) of all field trip visits, as well as personal observations outside of class (e.g., samurai-themed television dramas, advertisements, video games, manga, etc.). Journals will be collected and reviewed periodically by the professor. This assignment counts for 15% of the course grade.

5. EXAMS

- (a) A Mid-Term Exam will take place in class on October 29 and counts for 15% of the course grade. A study guide will be distributed in advance.
- (e) A Take-Home Final Exam will consist of an essay question to be answered in 6 pages. The essay question will be distributed in class on December 7. Your essay will be due on the last day of the exam period (December 17). This exam counts for 13% of the course grade.

Policy on Late Assignment Submissions. Papers will be penalized one-third of a letter grade (e.g., from "A+" to "A,") for each day they are late. Take-Home Final Exams submitted after the deadline will not be accepted.

Academic Honesty. Plagiarism—the deliberate act of taking the words, ideas, data, illustrative material or statements of someone else, without full and proper acknowledgement, and presenting them as one's own—is a serious offense. It is your responsibility to become familiar with the details of how plagiarism is to be avoided, and the proper forms for quoting, summarizing, and paraphrasing, which are presented in books such as the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Please see the instructor if you have any questions.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Section I. Early and Classical Periods (5th – 12th Centuries)

- September 7-10 Course Overview; Early Japan: Historical Background and Early Warrior Legends
Reading: *Japan Before Perry*, pp. 1-17; Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, pp. 3-15
- September 14 Political, Social and Cultural Currents in the Classical Period
Reading: *Japan Before Perry*, pp. 18-69

- September 17 The Warrior in Classical Japan (I)
Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, pp. TBA
- September 21 NO CLASS
- September 24 The Warrior in Classical Japan (II)
Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, pp. 21-51, 65-67, 80-87 (on reserve)

Section II. The Medieval Period (13th – mid-15th Centuries)

- September 28 Medieval Political, Social and Cultural Currents
Reading: *Japan Before Perry*, pp. 70-132
- October 1 Early Literary Representations of the Warrior Tradition
Essay Paper due in class
Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, pp. TBA
- October 2 – 4 **Fall Trip to Okayama**
- October 5 (1) Reflections on Okayama Trip; (2) *Tale of the Heike*
Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, pp. TBA; excerpt from *Tale of the Heike* (on Courseworks)
- October 8 *Tale of Great Peace (Taiheiki)*
Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, pp. TBA; excerpt from *Taiheiki* (on Courseworks)
- October 12 NO CLASS (National Holiday)
- October 13 (Make-Up Class) Religion and the Sword
Field Trip to Shokokuji
Reading: TBA

Section III. The Warring States Period (late-15th - 16th Centuries)

- October 15 Domestic Political, Social and Cultural Currents
Film: “Daimyo” (shown in class)
Reading: TBA
- October 19 International Political, Social and Cultural Currents
Field Trip to Toyokuni Jinja
Reading: TBA
- October 22 Pacifying the Realm
Film Viewing Assignment: “Ran” (on reserve)
Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, pp. TBA
- October 26 **Field Trip to sites of Christian practice and martyrdom**
- October 29 **Mid-Term Exam**

Section IV. The Early Modern Period (17th – Mid-19th Centuries)

- Oct. 31–Nov. 8 NO CLASSES (Fall Break)

- November 9 Early Modern Political, Social and Cultural Currents
Reading: *Japan Before Perry*, pp. 133-187
- November 12 Redefining Samurai Authority, Inventing Samurai Tradition
Field Trip to Nijojo
Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, pp. TBA; excerpt from *Hagakure* (on Courseworks)
- November 16 Samurai Influences on Art and Culture
Reading: *Japan Before Perry*, pp. 188-232; short stories from Ihara Saikaku, *Great Mirror of Male Love* (on Courseworks)
- November 19 Challenges to Samurai Authority and Tradition
Field Trip to Ryozen Gokoku Jinja
Reading: Benesch, *Inventing the Way of the Samurai*, pp. 1-41

Section V. The Modern Period

- November 23 NO CLASS (national holiday)
- November 24 (Make-Up Class) Film: “The Meiji Revolution” (on reserve)
Reading: Benesch, *Inventing the Way of the Samurai*, pp. Introduction and Chapter 1
- November 26 Nationalism, Internationalism and the Way of the Warrior
Reading: *Inventing the Way of the Samurai*, Chapters 2-3; excerpt from Nitobe, *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* (on Courseworks)
- November 30 Imperialism and the Way of the Warrior
Reading: Benesch, *Inventing the Way of the Samurai*, Chapters 4-6
- December 3 Competing Legacies in Postwar Japan
Field Trip to Kyoto Museum for World Peace (Ritsumeikan University)
Reading: Benesch, *Inventing the Way of the Samurai*, Chapter 7 and Conclusion; excerpt from Mishima, *The Way of the Samurai* (on reserve)
- December 7 Fact or Fiction: American Portrayals of the Samurai (I)
Film: “Know Your Enemy – Japan” (shown in class)
- December 10 Fact or Fiction: American Portrayals of the Samurai (II)
Film Viewing Assignment: “Last Samurai” (on reserve)

(Take-Home Final Exam assignment distributed in class)
- December 17 **Take-Home Final Exam due**