

THE WARRIOR TRADITION IN JAPAN

Kyoto Consortium for Japanese Studies

Spring 2018

(revised 12/17)

Tuesday and Thursday 2:55 – 4:25 p.m.

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OBJECTIVES AND CONTENT

One of the most popular and durable 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 originated 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 former 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. One scholar has even dubbed Kyoto the country's first "castle town." Thus, through our study of the samurai, students in this course will also survey the history of Japan and Kyoto.

Approximately half of the required readings are primary sources (in English translation), including an 8th-century gazetteer, excerpts from medieval-era war tales, domain precepts and "house laws," and works of fiction. We will consider the value, and the challenges, of using such sources for the study of history.

FORMAT

Class meetings will alternate between lectures, student-led discussions, several film showings, eight field trips to relevant sites in Kyoto, and a Zen meditation session at Tenryuji.

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING POLICY

1. **READING AND FILM ASSIGNMENTS** The following books (listed in alphabetical order by author) are required for the course. Copies of these texts are available for purchase through KCJS. Reserve copies will also be placed in the KCJS staff office.

- a. Oleg Benesch, *Inventing the Way of the Samurai: Nationalism, Internationalism and Bushido in Modern Japan*, Oxford University Press, 2014 (ISBN 978-0198754251)
- 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 number of additional required readings will be distributed by the professor in pdf format for you to read on a computer and/or print out on your own. Weekly reading assignments are listed below (see "Class Schedule"). A few 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. Unexcused absences will lower your attendance grade, as follows: 1 = 90/A-; 2 = 80/B-; 3 = 70/C-; 4 = F.

Once class has started, please turn off and put away cell phones, and refrain from exiting and re-entering the classroom to use the restroom. Use of laptop computers during class is restricted to course-related activities such as taking notes, referring to reserve readings under discussion, etc.

3. CLASS PARTICIPATION is a vital component of this course: active student involvement in discussions and other planned activities 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 essential 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) Serving as discussion leader for one class (see 4b. below), which counts for 5% of the course grade.

4. WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

- (a) One essay (5 pages) on an assigned topic is due in class on January 30 and counts for 10% of the course grade.
- (b) One discussion paper (3-4 pages) based on an assigned reading, which you will present in class to lead that day's class discussion (see 3b, above). Due dates to be determined. This paper counts for 8% of the course grade.
- (c) One film analysis (3-4 pages) is due in class on February 8 and counts for 8% of the course grade.
- (d) Keep a journal throughout the semester to record your own notes and digital photos of all field trip visits. Journals will be submitted online to the professor on April 5. This assignment counts for 15% of the course grade.

5. EXAMS

- (a) A Mid-Term Exam will take place in class on February 22, which counts for 16% of the course grade. A study guide will be distributed in advance.
- (b) A Final Exam will take place in class on April 12, which counts for 16% of the course grade.

Policy on Late Assignment Submissions. Papers will be penalized one letter grade (e.g., from "A" to "B,") 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.

Accommodating Students with Disabilities. If you are a student with a disability and have a DS-certified 'Accommodation Letter' please come to my office to confirm your accommodation needs. If you believe that you have a disability that requires accommodation, you can contact your home school's Disability Services or Columbia's Disability Services at disability@columbia.edu. The Office of Global Programs (OGP) can also assist you to connect with Columbia's Disability Services if you wish.

CLASS SCHEDULE

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

- January 9 (1) Course Overview; (2) Early Japan: Historical Background
Reading: *Japan Before Perry*, pp. 1-17; excerpt from the *Kojiki* (pdf.)
- January 11 Early Warrior Legends
Tales of Wind and Earth (pdf); Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, pp. 3-15
- January 16 Political, Social and Cultural Currents in the Classical Period
Reading: *Japan Before Perry*, pp. 18-69
- January 18 The Warrior in Classical Japan
Field Trip to Rokuharamitsuji
Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, pp. 16-21, 34-51, 59-87

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

- January 23 Political, Social and Cultural Currents in the Medieval Period
Reading: *Japan Before Perry*, pp. 70-132; “Laws and Precepts of Warrior Houses,” pp. 413-427 (pdf)
- January 25 Early Literary Representations of the Warrior Tradition
Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, pp. 95-109; “The Way of the Warrior” (pdf)
- January 30 *Tale of the Heike (Heike Monogatari)* and Minamoto Yoshitsune
Essay Paper due in class
Reading: excerpt from *Tale of the Heike* (pdf); Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, pp. 110-156
- February 1 *Tale of Great Peace (Taiheiki)* and Kusunoki Masashige
Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, pp. 157-203
- February 4 (Sunday, 9:30 – noon) Buddhism and *Bushido* I
Field Trip to Tenryuji and Zen Meditation
Reading: King, *Zen and the Way of the Sword* (pdf)
- February 6 Buddhism and *Bushido* II
Walking Tour near Doshisha
Reading: Stavros, “Warriors in the Capital” (pdf)

Section III. The Warring States Period (1460s - 1570s)

- February 8 *Bushido* in the Age of *Gekokujo*
Film Discussion of “Ran” (on reserve)
Written Analysis of “Ran” due in class
Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, pp. 204-231, 249-251; “Laws and Precepts of Warrior Houses,” pp. 427-432 (pdf)
- February 13 *Bunbu Ryodo* (The Dual Way of the Martial and Cultural Arts)
Film: “Daimyo” (shown in class)
Reading: pp. Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, 232-246
- February 15 Samurai, Traders and Missionaries during Japan’s “Christian Century”
Reading: “The Evangelic Furnace” (pdf)

February 22 **Mid-Term Exam**

Feb. 24-Mar. 4 NO CLASSES (Spring Break)

Section IV. The Early Modern Period (1580s – 1867)

- March 6 Pacifying the Realm (I): Political Innovation and Consolidation
Field Trip to Hokoji, Toyokuni Jinja, Mimizuka, Rokujogahara
 Reading: Totman, *Japan Before Perry*, pp. 133-144; Stavros, “Castle-town Kyoto” (pdf)
- March 8 Political, Social and Cultural Currents in the Early Modern Period
Field Trip to Konchi-in
 Totman, *Japan Before Perry*, pp. 145-164; “Ieyasu and the Founding of the Tokugawa Shogunate” (pdf)
- March 13 Redefining Samurai Authority, Reinventing Samurai Tradition
Field Trip to Nijojo
 Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, pp. 254-304
- March 15 Samurai Influences on Art and Culture
 Reading: Totman, *Japan Before Perry*, pp. 164-199; short stories from Ihara Saikaku, *Great Mirror of Male Love* (pdf)
- March 20 Challenges to Samurai Authority and Tradition
 Film Viewing Assignment: “Mibu Gishi Den” (“When the Last Sword is Drawn”) (on reserve)
Field Trip to Ryozen Gokoku Jinja
 Reading: Totman, *Japan Before Perry*, pp. 199-232; excerpt from *Musui’s Story* (pdf)

Section V. The Modern Period

- March 22 Film: “The Meiji Revolution” (shown in class)
 Reading: Benesch, *Inventing the Way of the Samurai*, pp. Introduction and Chapter 1
- March 27 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* (pdf)
- March 29 Imperialism and the Way of the Warrior
 Reading: Benesch, *Inventing the Way of the Samurai*, Chapters 4-6
- April 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* (pdf)
- April 5 American Portrayals of the Samurai (I)
 Film: “Know Your Enemy – Japan” (shown in class)
Journals due (online submission)
- April 10 American Portrayals of the Samurai (II)
 Film Viewing Assignment: “Last Samurai” (on reserve)
- April 12 **Final Exam**