

# The Rise of Modern Japan: Politics of Time and Space, 1800-1945

Fall 2012, KCJS  
Course number: KC3993  
Instructor: Katsuya Hirano  
Kh326@cornell.edu

Classroom: Fusokan 213  
Class days/hours: MW 1:15-2:45pm  
Office: F201a  
Office phone (075) 251-4998  
Office Hours: Monday, 3:30-5:00 or  
by appointment

---

## 1. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed to give an introduction to the history of modern Japan from the late Tokugawa period (1800) to the Asia-Pacific War. It investigates the process of Japan's transformation into a modern capitalist nation-state and its historical consequences, which are indispensable for understanding contemporary Japanese society. We will pay special attention to the complex interplay between time and space articulated in a variety of discourses. Such articulations often revealed Japan's self-understanding of its ambiguous place in the modern world: Japan as a modernizing country that aggressively sought after values and modes of Western modernity and Japan as a country that asserted and preserved its cultural distinctiveness, refusing to assimilate to the world dominated by Western modernity. To help us understand such a seemingly contradictory ambiguity, we will address the following questions: What were the historical conditions that drove Japan to embark on capitalist modernization with such an unprecedented pace? How did Japanese society understand radical changes taking place in its values and ways of life? And what effects did the pursuit of rapid modernization have on the subsequent development of Japanese politics, especially at the time when Japan was increasingly and more deeply involved in the war in Asia and later against the West?

Your final grade will be determined by class attendance, group discussion, and four short essays.

## 2. TEXTBOOKS

1. Harry Harootunian, *Empire's New Clothes*
2. Gordon, *The Modern History of Japan* (Oxford)
3. Mikiso Hane, *Peasants, Rebels, Women, and Outcasts* (Rowman & Littlefield)
4. *From Japan's Modernity* (Center for East Asian Studies, U of Chicago)
5. *Readings in Tokugawa Thought* (Center for East Asian Studies, U of Chicago)
6. Chomin Nakae, *A Discourse by Three Drunkards*
7. Natsume Soseki, *My Individualism*
8. Junichiro Tanizaki, *In Praise of Shadow*

### 3. FORMAT, REQUIREMENTS, AND GRADING

- The format of this course consists of **lecture and group presentations based on three study tours**. The class will meet twice a week. Students are expected to complete the reading assignments before class not only to obtain background knowledge of the lecture topics, but also to be able to actively participate in class discussion. Lectures are designed to provide a general outline and basic knowledge of each week's topic and group discussion and reading materials assigned for the discussion help deepen the students' understanding of it. In addition to the lectures and discussions, the course will have three study tours to gain know from the rich cultural and intellectual environment of Kyoto. Students will be asked to make presentations based on their findings about the historical sites after the tours.
- There are no prerequisites for this course. Students are expected to do the reading prior to lecture, and to do it in such a way that will enable them to raise critical questions. **Active participation in class discussion is necessary. Regular attendance at classes is mandatory. Please keep in mind that students must attend at least 4/5 (24 attendances out of 30) of the class. Otherwise they will automatically receive F (Please also note that those who meet this requirement will receive above B + for class attendance: 24-26:B+, 27-28: A-, 29-30:A).** Students who are more than 20 minutes late and who leave the class 20 minutes before dismissal without a legitimate reason will be marked "absent" for the class day. An excused absence is one caused by emergency or illness and must be documented by a doctor or other official.
- You will write 4 short essays, each of which is about 5-7 pages, instead of mid-term and final examinations. I will give the essay questions about 10 days before the due dates. No late papers are accepted without a legitimate reason and a proper arrangement made with the instructor a few days before the due dates, or, if it is an emergency, soon after the due dates are over.
- Since this syllabus is worked out in advance as a guide to the course, I reserve the right to modify it from time to time during the semester based on my assessment of class ability and progress. Should a change be made, an announcement will be given in advance.
- Plagiarism: "Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following: "a). The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or in part, without proper acknowledgment that it is someone else's. b), Copying of any source in whole or in part with only minor changes in writing or syntax even with acknowledgment. c), submitting as one's own work a report, exam paper, computer file, lab report or other assignments which has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased

from any other person or agency. d), The paragraphing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgment." **Plagiarism will result in a failure of the assessment or possibly of the course.** If you are unsure of how to cite a source, ask!

- Your final grade will be based on the assessment as below:

Class attendance including class presentations 30%; 4 Short Essays 70% (Essay 1 - 10%, Essay 2 – 20%, Essay 3 – 20%, Essay 4 – 20%)

---

#### 4. SCHEDULES:

September Introduction

##### Week 1

9/3

Politics of Interpretation

Reading: H. D. Harootunian, *Empire's New Clothes*, 1-6, 69-123.

9/5

Consciousness of Crisis – Knowledge or Identity? : Dutch Studies and National Studies

Readings: Najita "Ambiguous Encounters: Ogata Kōan and International Studies in Late Tokugawa Osaka" in *Osaka*; Harootunian "Consciousness of Archaic Form in the New Realism of Kokugaku" in *Japanese Thought in the Tokugawa Period*

Recommended: Motoori Norinaga, "The Spirit of Renovation (1771)" in *Readings in Tokugawa Thought*

##### Week 2

9/10

Radical Critique of the Tokugawa Regime (Naiyu/内憂)

Reading: Yasunaga "Andō Shōeki, Part 1" in *Andō Shōeki*

9/12

Peasant Uprisings and Oshio's Rebellion

Readings: Oshio Heihachiro *Gekibun* (1837) in *Readings in Tokugawa Thought*; Najita "Oshio Heihachiro" in *Personality in Japanese History*

#### A Tour to Osaka (Friday Sept 14) – Tekijuku, Kaitokudo, and Oshio's Revolt

##### Week 3

9/17

**No class (National holiday)**

9/19

Foreign Threat (Gaikan/外患), Loyalism, and Revolt

Readings: Watanabe, *On a Serious Matter* (1838) in *Reading in Tokugawa Thought*; Aizawa, *A New Thesis* (1825) in *Readings in Tokugawa Thought*; Koschmann "Tengu Insurrection" in *Conflict in Modern Japanese History*

9/21 Popular Unrest  
**Film:** *Ee ja nai ka?* Place and time (TBA)  
Readings: Wilson: “Pursuing The Millennium in the Meiji Restoration”  
in *Conflict in Modern Japanese History*

**1<sup>st</sup> assignment due**

**Week 4**

9/24 The Making of the Modern State  
Readings: Gordon “Samurai Revolution” in *The Modern History of Japan*; *The Charter Oath* (1868) (Handout); Documents of the Iwakura Mission (Handout)

Recommended: Berbarad Silberman, “The Bureaucratic State in Japan: The Problem of Authority and Legitimacy” in *Conflict in Modern Japanese History*

9/26 Discovery of Progress  
Readings: Fukuzawa Yukichi, *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization* (Chapters); Kato Hiroyuki *A Reconsideration of Human Rights* (1882) in *From Japan’s Modernity*.

**Meiji Ishin Tour in Kyoto (Friday 9/28)**

**Week 5**

10/1 The Emergence of the Colonial Rule  
Readings: Katsuya Hirano, “The Politics of Colonial Translation: On the Narrative of the Vanishing Ethnicity”; Chiri Yukie, Kyoko Seldon trans., “The Song the Owl God Himself Sang.”

10/3 Politics of Assimilation  
Tsurumi, “Colonial Education in Korea and Taiwan” in *The Japanese Colonial Empire*

**Week 6**

10/8 **No class (National holiday)**

10/10 The Contour of the National  
Karatani Kojin, *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, Chapters 2  
  
Katsuya Hirano, “Reconfiguring the Body in a Modernizing Japan” in *Politics of Dialogic Imagination*  
  
Recommended: David Howell, Ch. 4 in *Geography of Identity*; Mikiso Hane, “The Outcast in Japan” in *Peasants*

**Week 7**

10/15 The Meiji State and Production of Capitalism

E.H. Norman, Ch. V in *Japan's Emergence as a Modern State*;  
Mikiso Hane, "The Struggle for Survival" in *Peasants, Rebels, Women, and Outcasts*

Recommended: Mikiso Hane, "The textile workers" in *Peasants*

10/17 Popular Mobilization and the Meiji Ideology

Readings: Takashi Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy*, pp. 1-93.

**Week 8**

10/22 Film (TBA) **2<sup>nd</sup> assignment due**

10/24 Popular Rights Movement

Readings: Ueki Emori's essays in *From Japan's Modernity*; Irokawa, *The Culture of Meiji*, pp.151-95

**Week 9**

10/29 Imperial Constitution & Production of the Collective

Subject (*Shinmin*: 臣民)

Reading: *Imperial Constitution* (1889) (Handout); *Rescript on Education* (1890) (Handout); Inoue Tetsujirō "National Morality" in *From Japan's Modernity*

10/31 Question of the State and the Individual

Reading: Natsume Soseki *My Individualism*; Richard Reitan, "Volkerpsychologie and the Appropriation of "Spirit" in Meiji Japan."

**Week 10**

11/5 Japan at the Crossroad: Imperialism or Peace?

Nakae Chōmin, *A Discourse by Three Drunkards*

11/7 New Source of Conflict under Industrial Order – Environmental Pollution

Robert Stolz, On Tanaka Shōzō (book chapter?); Tanaka Shōzō's "Direct Appeal" (Handout)

**Week 11**

11/12 Empire and Hegemony

Readings: Gordon, "Empire and Domestic Order" in *The Modern History of Japan*; Morris Suzuki, "Becoming Japanese" in *Japan's Competing Modernities*

11/14 Immigrant Workers in the Empire

Reading: "Okinawa" by Ichirō Tomiyama; Ken Kawashima, "Intermediary Exploitation" in *The Proletarian Gamble*

(Taisho era, 1912-1926)

**Week 12**

11/19      A New Era/Taisho: Society in Conflict  
Gordon, “Democracy and Empire between the World Wars” in *The Modern History of Japan*; “Watsuji/Kawakami Exchange on the Student Arrest Incident” in *From Japan’s Modernity*;  
**3<sup>rd</sup> assignment due**

11/21      Women and Modernity  
Reading: Mikiso Hane, “Women Rebels” in *Peasants, Rebels Women, and Outcastes*, 247-270; Miriam Silverberg, “The Modern Girl as Militant” in *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945*.

**Week 13**

11/26      No Class (Fall Break 2)

11/28      No Class (Fall Break 2)

**Week 14**

12/3      The Rural Modernity and Crisis of Cultural Identity

**(Double block class 1:15-4:30)**

The Rural Modernity

Reading: Tamanoi, “The City and the Countryside” in *Japan’s Competing Modernities*; Harootunian, “Figuring the Folk” in *Mirror of Modernity*

Recommended: Mikiso Hane, “The Rural Women” in *Peasants*

(Showa era, 1927-1980s)

Crisis of Cultural Identity

Tanizaki Junichiro, *In Praise of Shadows*  
(double block class)

**A tour and optional lunch (details TBA) – Tuesday Dec 4?**

12/5      Cultural Resistance against the (Western) modernity  
Reading: Gordon, “The Depression Crisis and Responses” and “Japan in Wartime” in *The Modern History of Japan*; Harootunian and Najita, “Japan’s Revolt against the West” in *Cambridge History of Japan*

Recommended:

Reading: Saburo Ienaga, *The Pacific War* (Ch. 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 10, and 11); Miyake, “Doubling Expectations” in *Recreating Japanese Women*

**Week 15**

12/10      **4<sup>th</sup> assignment due.**