

Leslie Pincus / KCJS / Fall 2016

Doing Environmental History in Japan (provisional syllabus)

Time/Place: Mon / Thurs 1:10 – 2:40
Tel/Email: lpincus@umich.edu

Description

In this course, we explore concepts of nature and histories of the environment in Japan through a series of questions: What does “nature” signify in Japan and how have concepts of the natural world changed over time? How have people living on the Japanese archipelago interacted with the land, seas, and biota from the time of the Tokugawa shoguns to the Fukushima meltdown? What do these interactions tell us about Japanese understandings of the non-human living world, and how have these understandings changed under the pressures of “modernity”? Finally, how does the environment become a site of conflict and controversy in Japan?

This course will address these questions through specific explorations of concepts, places, episodes and agents from 1600 to the present. We begin with historical practices of representing and imagining the natural world in the visual arts, literature, and philosophy. The focus then shifts to more practical dealings with the land and the living world as manifested in agriculture and forestry during the Tokugawa era. As Japan moves into modernity, we trace the complex effects of industrialization and social modernization on the natural environment, both in imagination and in the physical world. In a series of case studies, from the Ashio copper mines pollution case at the turn of the 19th century and the Minamata mercury poisoning disaster in the postwar era to the earthquake/tsunami/nuclear disaster of 2011, we will consider how Japanese governments and citizens have created and responded to the change, degradation, and destruction of the natural world.

Expectations

This seminar-style course is a collaborative enterprise in exploring questions and issues emerging from the course materials. The task of presenting texts and facilitating discussion will be divided among members of the class, with students sharing areas of interest and background. Each week, 2 students will facilitate the class session, creating discussion questions in collaboration with the instructor to be posted online in advance of class. Everyone will be asked to read and respond to the postings, with assignments varying week to week. Needless to say, the success of this collaboration depends on the level of engagement each of you brings to the table; your presence, preparation, and participation are basic requirements. You will all be asked to undertake two writing projects for the course: 1) a brief “concept” essay, **due** ____; and 2) an exploratory essay on a place or an event where you will have an opportunity to do environmental history yourself, drawing both on course material and outside sources, **due** ____.

Required Texts

- 📖 Ishimure Michiko, *Paradise in a Sea of Sorrow: Our Minamata Disease*, Translated by Livia Monet (U-M Center for Japanese Studies Publications, 2003)

Other readings available electronically on CTools either as a PDF or as a URL reference.

Grading

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|---|----|----|
| • presence | 15 | |
| • preparation/engagement (forum/discussion) | 35 | |
| • first essay | 20 | |
| • second essay | | 30 |

Weekly Schedule

SECTION I: Resources and Concepts

Week 1 (Sept 5-9): Foundations: Environmental History, Nature, Japan **Readings:**

- 📖 Conrad Totman, “Geography, Climate, and Biota” in *A History of Japan* (Oxford, 2000), 11-19
- 📖 Arne Kalland and Pamela J. Askwith, “Japanese Perceptions of Nature: Ideals and Illusions,” *Japanese Images of Nature* (Curzon Press, 1997), 1-35.
- 📖 William Cronon, “The Uses of Environmental History” *Environmental History Review*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Autumn, 1993), 1-22.

SECTION II: Tokugawa “Nature”: Precedents and Legacies (1600-1867)

Week 2 (Sept 12-16) Tokugawa Forests and Farms: Changing Ecologies **Readings:**

- 📖 John Richards, *The Unending Frontier: An Environmental History of the Early Modern World*. Read Ch. 5, “Ecological Strategies in Tokugawa Japan” (148-192).
- 📖 Brett Walker, “Commercial Growth and Environmental Change in Early Modern Japan: Hachinohe's Wild Boar Famine of 1749” in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 60, No. 2 (May, 2001), 329-351.

Week 3 (Sept 19-23)

Monday (9/19) – National Holiday
Thursday (9/22) – National Holiday

Week 4 (Sept 26-30): Nature as Knowledge **Readings:**

- 📖 Tessa Morris-Suzuki, “Concepts of Nature and Technology in Pre-Industrial Japan” in *East Asian History*, Vol 1 (June 1991) 81-97.
- 📖 Federico Marcon, *The Knowledge of Nature and Nature as Knowledge in Early Modern Japan* (University of Chicago, 2015), Introduction (3-27), Ch. 7 “Inventorying Nature” (140-152)

Week 5 (Oct 3-7) Un/natural Representation: Meanings of Landscape Art **Readings:**

- ☞ Melinda Takeuchi, "City, Country, Travel, and Vision in Edo Cultural Landscapes" in Robert T. Singer, ed. *Edo: Art in Japan 1615-1868* (Washington DC: National Gallery of Art, 1998) 260-281.

Oct 6 (Thursday): Field trip to Saihoji and Ike no Taiga Museum

SECTION III: Modern Ecologies—Transformation & Crisis

Week 6 (Oct 10-14) Ezo / Hokkaido: Changes in the Land

Oct 10 – National Holiday

Readings:

- ☞ Michele Mason, *Dominant Narratives of Colonial Hokkaido and Imperial Japan* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). Read "Introduction: Peripheral Visions"; ch.1, "Harvesting History"; and ch.2, "Writing Ainu Out" (1-82).
- ☞ Brett Walker, "Meiji Modernization, Scientific Agriculture, and the Destruction of Japan's Hokkaido Wolf" in *Environmental History* 9 (April 2004)

Week 7 (Oct 17-21) Engineering Environmental Disaster in Meiji Japan

Readings:

- ☞ Kenneth Strong, *Ox Against the Storm: Tanaka Shōzō: Japan's Conservationist Pioneer* (Routledge, 1995). Chapters 1-8 (1-98); available electronically via Mirlyn:
<http://www.tandfebooks.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/isbn/9780203989470>
- ☞ Robert Stolz, *Bad Water: Nature, Pollution and Politics in Japan 1870-1950* (Duke University Press, 2014): Read "Introduction" (1-18) and Ch. 2 "Pollution and Peasants at the Limits of Liberalism" (51-84)

Week 8 (Oct 24-28) Environmental Movements and Visions in Early Industrial Japan

Readings:

- ☞ Kenneth Strong, *Ox Against the Storm: Tanaka Shōzō: Japan's Conservationist Pioneer* (Routledge, 1995). Chapters 8-14, epilogue (99-181); <http://www.tandfebooks.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/isbn/9780203989470>
- ☞ Robert Stolz: *Bad Water: Nature, Pollution, and Politics in Japan, 1870-1950* (Duke University Press, 2014). Read ch. 3 "Nature over Nation: Tanaka Shozo's Environmental Turn" (85-116)

Week 9 (Oct 31-Nov 4) FALL BREAK

Week 10 (Nov 7-11) Lake Biwa – Dilemmas of Water Control

Readings:

Readings to be arranged

Video Clips: *Japan's Secret Garden* (PBS Nova, 2000) & *Japan's Secret Watergarden* (BBC Natural World, 2006-7)

Nov 10 (Thursday): Field trip to Lake Biwa

SECTION IV: THE LONG POSTWAR: DEVELOPMENTALISM AND ITS DISCONTENTS

Week 11 (Nov 14-18) Heavy Industries and Delicate Ecologies

Readings

- ☞ Frank Upham, “Unplaced Persons and the Movement for Place” in *Postwar Japan as History* (Univ. of California Press, 1993). Focus on pp. 337-344
- ☞ Brett Walker, *Toxic Archipelago*, “Mercury’s Offspring” 137-175
- ☞ Ishimure Michiko, *Paradise in a Sea of Sorrow: Our Minamata Disease*, tr. Livia Monet (U-M Center for Japanese Publications, 2003). Read chs. I-II (3-127)

Week 12 (Nov 21-25) Local Landscapes and Imposing Sites

- ☞ Ishimure Michiko, *Paradise in a Sea of Sorrow: Our Minamata Disease*. Read chs. III (133-174), VI-VII (275-367)
- ☞ David Apter and Nagayo Sawa, *Against the State: Politics and Social Protest in Japan* (Harvard College, 1984). Read “Introduction” and Chs. 1-2, 4 (1-60, 79-109)
- ☞ David Aldrich, *Site Fights: Divisive Facilities and Civil Society in Japan and the West* (Cornell University Press, 2008). Read Ch. 3 “Occasional Turbulence: Airport Siting in Japan And France” (70-94)

Week 13 (Nov 28 – Dec 2) Fukushima: Dilemmas and Disasters

- ☞ Martin Dusinger & Daniel Aldrich, “Hatoko Comes Home’: Civil Society and Nuclear Power,” in *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 70, No. 3 (August) 2011: 683–705
<http://search.proquest.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/docview/894253224/fulltextPDF?accountid=14667#>
- ☞ David Lochbaum et al, *Fukushima: The Story of a Nuclear Disaster* (New Press, 2014) (part I)

Video Clips: [Nuclear Meltdown Disaster](#) (Nova, July 29, 2015, on PBS)

Dec 1 (Thursday): Field trip TBA

Week 14 (Dec 5 – 9) Fukushima: Dilemmas and Disasters (continued)

Readings:

- ☞ David Lochbaum et al, *Fukushima: The Story of a Nuclear Disaster* (part 2)
- ☞ Helen Caldicott, ed. *Crisis Without End* (New Press, 2014). Selections
- ☞ Recap and Review

Video: [Little Voices From Fukushima](#), dir. Kamanaka Hitomi

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES:

Carolyn Merchant’s “Environmental History” website at UC Berkeley:
<http://cnr.berkeley.edu/departments/espm/env-hist/>

H-Net Environment: www.h-net.org/~environ/

American Society for Environmental History (includes bibliographies and syllabi)
<http://www.aseh.net/>

Environmental History on the Internet: (an electronic bibliography of resources and readings)
<http://www.cnr.berkeley.edu/departments/espm/env-hist/eh-internet.html>

Bill Cronen et al., "Learning Historical Research"
<http://www.williamcronon.net/researching/index.htm>

Digital Archive of Japan's 2011 Disasters: <http://www.jdarchive.org/en/home>
(Harvard University,