1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course covers the history of the peoples living in the Japanese archipelago from 1200 to 1800. The history of pre-modern Japan is usually presented as a story of the origins and development of a homogeneous ethnic group called the Japanese. This kind of history always results in reinforcing the view that the Japanese were and will continue to be a unitary entity in that particular geographical place.

Our emphasis, instead, will be on history as a process of negotiation and contestation of heterogeneous social groups or individuals through creative activities (thus the emphasis will be placed mainly on cultural history). We will neither assume the unity of the “Japanese nation” nor the homogeneity of the “Japanese people.” Rather, we will look at the many different ways that people identified themselves in multiple spatial and temporal contexts, “Japanese” being only one of many possible categories of identification, and how such multiple identifications engendered dynamic power relations in society. The present-day Japanese will be understood not so much as the result of a natural progression from the past to the present but as the result of struggles in which heterogeneous social groups or individuals strived to live their lives in a variety of creative ways.

In order to help us envision this kind of history, we will examine the familiar histories of the ruling classes and their ideologies on the one hand, and the voices and practices of the ordinary people usually left out of the history books on the other. For this latter group, we will examine visual images, literature, religion and performing arts as materials for our interpretations.

Course Goals

Though this course consists of lectures, textbook readings and class discussions, by far the most important is the primary source readings and doing assignments. The paper questions will reflect a thorough understanding of these texts and the discussions based on them. Keep these tasks in mind when doing your reading:

Keep these tasks in mind when doing your reading:

a. Interpreting historical sources – mainly written documents but also visuals and fictions – as “text” to make and support an argument about how and why things
happened in the past. History is imagination reasoned by careful interpretation of historical documents and cogent explication. Historians want to know and explain not only what happened, but *how*, and very often *why*.

b. Analyzing historical sources on their own terms. This means avoiding *anachronism*, projecting our present values and perspectives onto the past, and *teleology*, which means seeing the present as the *intrinsic* result of the past – this slights actual historical struggles and reduces past actors to merely “keeping appointments.” Every human society, past and present, has its own values and ways of thinking – often different from our own. In our case, this further complicates by studying a non-Western nation where it is often inappropriate to project our “common sense” onto the thoughts and practices of historical actors. Do not assume that anyone thinks as you do.

c. Exercising critical judgment about what you read and hear. “Critical judgment” does not mean being negative. Rather, it means that you should always carefully weigh and consider the validity of what you read and are being told, in terms of not only factuality but also ethical and political implications of argument.

2. READING
Text Books:

1. Elizabeth Berry, *The Culture of Civil War in Kyoto*
2. Shusaku Endo, *Silence*
3. David Lu, *Japan: A Documentary History*
4. Michele Marra, *Representations of Power*
5. Tetsuo Najita, *Visions of Virtue in Tokugawa Japan*
6. Articles in PDF form

3. FORMAT, REQUIREMENTS, AND GRADING:
Format, Requirements and Grading

The course will consist of lectures and brief discussion of primary sources. Students are expected to complete the reading assignments (especially any primary texts), not only to obtain background knowledge for lectures, but also to be able to raise questions for discussion. This will go a long way toward developing critical skills necessary for the graded assignments.

You must attend 22 classes (there are 25 classes including film viewings) to PASS the course, and your failure to meet this requirement will result in F for the course. Students who are more than 20 minutes late and who leave the class 30 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.
There will be 3 essays in place of exams.

Final grades will be based on the following breakdown:

a. Class attendance and presentation 20 points.
b. 1st paper 10 points.
c. 2nd paper 20 points.
d. 3rd paper 25 points.
e. 4th paper 25 points.

90-100 points = A
86-90 points = A-
76-85 points = B+
71-75 points = B
66-70 points = B-
61-65 points = C+
56-60 points = C
51-55 points = C-
45-50 points = D
Below 45 or missing 4 or more classes = F

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!

4. SCHEDULES:

(Medieval Japan, 1200-1390s)
Week 1 1/15 Introduction
1/17 Politics of Origin


SJT: Chapter 2 “Early Shinto,” 17-31
Week 2  1/22  Yamato: State-building

East Asia: “Early State and Society in Japan,” 137-46.


1/24  Producing Barbarians


1/25  Field Trip to Nara & Your first essay is due.

Week 3  1/29 Creation of A New Capital

1/31 Buddhism and State

2/2  Field Trip to Mt. Hiei/Enryakuji

Week 4  2/5Warriors (samurai), their political and economic origins in medieval Japan


2/7 Samurai Identity and Conception of Honor in Later Times

Readings: Ekio Ikegami, “The Rise of Honorable Death: Warfare and Samurai Sensibility” from The Taming of the Samurai & Lu, Documentary History Doc?

Week 5  2/12 Revolutionary Buddhism(s)
Reading: Totman, pp. 93-106; Kitagawa “The Pure land, Nichiren, and Zen” in Religion in Japanese History


2/14 Nanbokucho Conflict from 1336 to 1392
Reading: Michele Marra’s Representation of Power: Introduction and Chapter 1

Lu Documentary Doc. 5, 6, 7, 9 and 12 pp. 153-160.

2/15 Field Trip to Chi’on-in and temples related to Shinran

Week 6
2/19 Power, Defilement, and Containment
Reading: Marra Chapter 2 & 3.

(From Medieval Japan to the Warring Period, 1390s-1570s)

2/21 Culture of Civil War
Reading: Elizabeth Berry, Ch 2; Discovering the Arts of Japan Ch 5.

Lu, Documentary Doc. 21 & 22 pp. 165-166 & Doc. 1 & 2 pp. 174-175.

Week 7
2/26 Popular Insurrection
Reading: Berry, Ch. 4

Your second Essay is due

2/28 Play and Its Politics
Reading: Berry, Ch. 7 & Conclusion

2/29 Field Trip to a Kiyomizu Potter and Pottery Museum

(Beginnings of Early Modern Japan, 1570s – 1620s)

Week 8
Spring Break March 5-7

Week 9
3/12 Toward the Unification: An End of the Warring Period & Emergence of a Hegemonic Power
Reading: Totman, pp. 133-144; Discovering Ch 6.

Lu Documentary 8, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18 and 19 pp. 187-197
3/14 **Setting up the Tokugawa system**

3/15 **Movie: Akira Kurosawa “Kagemusha” Time and Place TBA**

**Week 10**

3/19 **Containing and Expelling the “Other”**
Reading: Endo Shusaku’s *Silence*; Kitagawa pp. 136-149.

Lu *Documentary* Doc. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, & 25.

3/21 No class

**Week 11**

3/26 **The Tokugawa Ideology**
Reading: Kitagawa pp. 146-167 and Herman Ooms “Tokugawa Ideology” in Course Pack

Lu *Documentary* Doc. 4, 8, 10 & 12 pp. 209-220 & Doc. 1, 2, & 3 pp. 245-248.

**Your 3rd essay is due**

Reading: Totman, pp. 188-199; *Discovering the Arts of Japan* Ch. 7.


**Week 12**

4/2 **Withering High and Low Hierarchy**
Katsuya Hirano: “Politics and Poetics of the Body in Early Modern Japan”

4/4 **Age of the Dandy – Power and Popular Culture**
Reading: Cecilia Seigle, “Age of the Dandy: The Flowering of Yoshiwara Arts” (from *Yoshiwara*); Harry Harootunian, “Cultural Politics in Late Edo.”

**Week 13**

4/9 **The Merchant Academy in 18th Century Osaka**
Reading: Tetsuo Najita’s *Visions of Virtue*: Prologue and Chapter 2

4/11 **Politics of Eccentricity**
Reading: *Visions of Virtue*, Chapter 3 (Tominaga Nakamoto) and 5 (Nakai Chikuzan)
Week 14  

4/16  **Nature as the First Principle in the 19th Century**  
Reading: *Visions of Virtue*, Chapter 6 (Yamagata Banto)  
Lu, *Documentary* Doc. 10 pp. 264-266.

4/18  **Your Final Essay is due**