Modern Japan:
The Rise and Fall of the Japanese Empire, 1860s-1940s

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Meetings: The course meets Tuesday and Thursday from 11:00-12:20 in Fine Arts Building Room 227

Course Description
This course will survey the dramatic story of the rise and fall of the Japanese empire, from the mid-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. It was a period witnessed Japan opened to the modern world and made herself a member of it. It was also a period in which Japan transformed herself from a so-called “feudal” country to a modern nation-state, and her people forged the identity of Japaneseeness. In order to fully understand Japan in this period, we will not confine ourselves to her internal development, but also study the role of Japan in a context of world history.

This course aims not only to provide students with a comprehensive overview of Japanese political, military, diplomatic, and social as well as intellectual topics during the period under study but also to encourage students to explore and develop their own perspectives on modern Japanese history during our intellectual journey in this semester. Background in pre-modern Japanese history will be helpful, but not essential. A student willing to do the works, but having no background, can still hope to do very well.

The style of the course is half-lecture and half-seminar, with particular emphasis on the latter. Discussions will focus on original materials (English translation) and recent scholarly works. By reading primary sources, we can study how significant changes in Japanese history have been documented, understood, and represented by contemporary Japanese; by reading recent research, we can examine the development of modern historiography of Japan. Visual aids, such as films and animation may also be used in the class.
Required Texts
The following three books will be used as primary readings for the course and are recommended to be purchased (all available at the University Bookstore):


A good portion of our readings are in article or book-chapter forms, and will be accessible on the course website, i.e. Sakai.
Course Requirements

Grades will be determined as follows:

1. **Presentation and participation in discussion (30%)**
   Students are expected to finish assigned readings before class and equip themselves for discussion. Everyone will have at least one session of presenting and summarizing the readings of the day and of serving as discussion leader.

2. **Book report (25%)**
   Students are expected to choose one recent scholarly monograph from the recommended book list, which will be released in the second week of the course. After choosing a book, every student is required to write a 5-6 double-spaced pages report and present it in class as well. The grade of the book report will be determined by both written report (20%) and oral presentation (5%). It is expected to show the student’s critical reading and thorough understanding of the chosen book as well as other relevant material read in class.

3. **Two commentaries (20%; 10% each)**
   Students are expected to write their own commentaries on the two required texts: *The Autobiography of Yukichi Fukuzawa* and *Human Bullets: A Soldier's Story of the Russo-Japanese War*. The length of each commentary is 2-3 pages in double-spaced format. It should be the student’s own reflection of the texts and the times that produced the texts.

4. **Thought essay (25%)**
   Several historical documents will be provided and students are expected to choose one among them to write a thought essay. Topics and guidelines of final assignment will be distributed two weeks before the due date.

Due dates for each reports and associated presentation are in the schedule below. Late submission will not be accepted for any reasons other than documented emergencies.

**WARNING:** You are responsible for knowing how to adhere to the code of academic honesty. If you submit plagiarized work, you will fail the assignment, fail the course, and will be subjected to the university’s official adjudication process. If you are not sure of what constitutes plagiarism, consult the instructor before submitting your papers.
Schedule

Week 1  Introduction
Jan 22  Class description and policy briefing (no reading)
Jan 24  Japan Facing a Brave New World (*MJ*, Ch. 1; *HD*, pp. 1-7)

Week 2  The Edo Period
Jan 29  Pax Tokugawa
Jan 31  The Bakufu’s Twilight (*MJ*, Ch. 2-3; *HD*, Ch. 1-2; *FY*, Ch. I-IV)

Week 3  The Opening to the Modern World
Feb 5  The Thunderstorm comes with the Black Ship
Feb 7  The War Within
*MJ*, Ch. 2-3; *HD*, Ch. 1-2; *FY*, Ch. V-IX
*Negotiating with Imperialism*, Ch. 2 and 3

Week 4  A Revolution in the Name of Reform
Feb 12  Meiji Restoration
Feb 14  Japan Settling Herself in a New World
*MJ*, Ch. 5; *HD*, Ch. 3; *FY*, Ch. X-XII
*Negotiating with Imperialism*, Ch. 7

Week 5  Enriching the Country and Strengthening the Army
Feb 19  Building the Meiji State
Feb 21  Following the “Barbarian” Models
*MJ*, Ch. 6-7; *HD*, Ch. 3
Sven Saaler, “The Imperial Japanese Army and Germany”
Bernd Martin, “The German Role in the Modernization of Japan”

Week 6  A War between Dragon and Phoenix
Feb 26  Korea in Geopolitics
Feb 28  The First Sino-Japanese War, 1894-95
*MJ*, Ch. 8; *HD*, Ch. 4
*Kenkenroku*, pp. 164-225

Commentary on *The Autobiography of Yukichi Fukuzawa* due in class (Feb 28)
**Week 7**  
*Bear v.s. Monkey*  
Mar 5  
The Russo-Japanese War  
*MJ*, Ch. 9; *HD*, Ch. 4  
*Human Bullets: A Soldier's Story of the Russo-Japanese War*  

**Week 8**  
*Democracy in a Militarized State*  
Mar 12  
Taisho Democracy  
Mar 14  
Japan in the First World War  
*MJ*, Ch. 10-12; *HD*, Ch. 5  
Janis Mimura, *Planning for Empire: Reform Bureaucrats & the Japanese Wartime States,* Ch. 1

**Week 9**  
*The Taste of Empire (I)*  
Mar 26  
Colonial Korea (I)  
Mar 28  
Colonial Korea (II)  
Mark E. Caprio, *Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea (1910-1945)*, Ch. 3-4; Jun Uchida, Brokers of Empire: Japanese Settler Colonialism in Korea, 1876-1945, Ch. 3 and 5  
**Commentary on Human Bullets due in class (Mar 28)**

**Week 10**  
*The Taste of Empire (II)*  
Apr 2  
Manchuria between China and Japan  
Apr 4  
Manchukuo  
*MJ*, Ch. 12; *HD*, Ch. 5  
Week 11  The Dream of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere
Apr 9    Japan Marches West
Apr 11   An All-out War
          *MJ*, Ch. 13; *HD*, Ch. 6
          Peter Duus, “The Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere: Dream and
          Reality.”
          Mark R. Peattie, “The Dragon’s Seed: Origins of the War”
          Peter Zarrow, “War of Resistance”
          Movement,’ 1932-1937”; David P. Barrett, “The Wang Jingwei Regime,
          1940-1945: Continuities and Disjunctures with Nationalist China”

Week 12  From Regional War to World War
Apr 16   Japan and the United States before 1941
Apr 18   Movie showing
          *MJ*, Ch. 14; *HD*, Ch. 6
          Tosh Minohara, “Komura Jutaro and US-Japan Relations.”
          Tajima Nobuo, “The Berlin-Tokyo Axis Reconsidered”
          **Thought Essay Due in Class (Apr 18)**

Week 13  Endgame
Apr 23   Defeat and the Allied Occupation
Apr 25   Wrap up
          *MJ*, Ch. 15; *HD*, pp. 151-160
          Yoshikuni Igarashi, *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Postwar
          Lori Watt, *When Empire Comes Home: Repatriation and Reintegration in
          Postwar Japan*, pp. 1-55.

Week 14  Book Report Presentation
Apr 30 & May 2
          **Book Report Due by May 6, 10:00 am.**