THE RISE OF MODERN JAPAN

Department of History

Prof. Y. H. Tam
p.m. -4:30 p.m., T & Th, OM 10

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course aims at introducing the important aspects of political, economic, social and cultural changes in modern Japan from the 18th century to the present day. The focus is on the process of modernization in Japan. The course will stress the following problem areas: the Tokugawa (1600-1868) legacy, the Meiji Restoration of 1868, the Meiji state of 1881-1905, the Taisho Democracy, the military dominance in the 1930s, the invasion into China, the Pacific War, and Japan’s rise as a super economic power in the post-war era. Through readings, lectures, discussions and audio visual presentations students will also be introduced to issues in Japan’s international relations and globalization.

READINGS

There are several outstanding general, historical accounts, but the following books are chosen for most of the assigned readings:

Required books

Recommended Books (No need to purchase these recommended books; they will be put on reserve)

Additional readings, including journal articles, may be assigned from time to time. Students are expected to finish the required readings prior to class meetings.

REQUIREMENTS & ASSESSMENT

Map Exercise 5%
Attendance & Discussion Participation 20%
1 Class Debate on assigned topic 20%
2 Presentations (10-15 minutes each) on assigned topic 20%
1 Paper (10-12 pages) on title of own choice 35%

No mid-term and final exams

LATE PAPERS, PRESENTATIONS & READING SUMMARIES

Except for medical reasons or family emergencies about which the Dean of Students has been properly notified, late paper and presentations will receive a reduction of 20% in grading.

OFFICE HOURS
4:30 pm-6:00 pm, T & Th; and by appointment.
Office: 303, Old Main; 651-696-6262; tam@macalester.edu
Also, please feel free to call me at home (651-457-6529); the best time to get hold of me is 7:30-8:30 PM (except holidays & weekends)

CLASS SCHEDULE

SEPTEMBER

Week of September 1
02—Orientation Meeting
04—Land, people and geographical setting in Japan

No required readings for this week.

Recommended Readings: Hane, Modern Japan (Hereafter, Hane), Introduction; Hall, John W. & Richard K. Beardsley, Twelve Doors to Japan, 2-45

Discussion Topics: Compared with England, how “splendid” is the Japanese isolation in terms of political and cultural transformation? Why cherry blossoms and samurai are held in high esteem in Japan? What are the outstanding geographical features affecting developments in Japan?

Map Exercise begins, due September 11

Week of September 7
09—Traditional Japan in Review
11-- Legacy of Feudalism

Readings: Hane, chs. 1 & 2

Recommended Readings: Reischauer & Craig, Japan, 1-32; Duus, Peter. Feudalism in Japan, whole book

Discussion Topics: What are the significant features in the historical development in traditional Japan? What are the characteristics of Japanese feudalism vs. European feudalism? What are the legacies of Tokugawa Feudalism in terms of modernization in Japan?

Map Exercise due September 11

Week of September 14
16—Background of Meiji Restoration: Internal Crises & Coming of Perry

18—Meiji Restoration as history; Meiji transformation, I: Political changes

Readings: Hane, 31-83.

Recommended Readings: Reischauer & Craig, 91-133.


Week of September 21

23--Meiji Transformation, II--Social & Economic Development

25--Treaty Revision & Overseas Expansion; Crisis in Cultural Identity


Recommended readings: Carol Cluck, Japan’s modern myths; Kenneth B. Pyle, New Generation in Meiji Japan; Yue-him Tam, “Informal Groups....”

Discussion topics: Was the privatization a deliberate move? What were the causes for overseas expansion for Meiji Japan? How crucial was the role of the Meiji oligarchy in providing elitist leadership during the early phase of Japan’s modernization? Assess the contribution of the leaders: Kido Koin, Saigo Takamori, Okubo Toshimichi, Ito Hirobumi, Okuma Shigenobu, Yamagata Aritomo, or Ozaki Yukio. Assess the significance of the social and cultural changes. What was the Meiji Dream for Japanese of different status and orientation? How did the world look at Meiji Japan? How did the Japanese themselves evaluate their country? Was the identity crisis in the new generation in Meiji Japan real? And why? discuss the “myths” in Gluck’s hook.

Week of September 28

30--Changes in the Taisho (1912-1926) Era

OCTOBER_________________________________________________

02--The Left Wing & Right Wing Social Movements

Readings: Hane, Chs.10-12; Tsunoda, Chs. 26 & 28.

Recommended Readings: Bix., Hirohito, Part II

Discussion topics: What is significance of the Taisho Democracy? To what extent had the Japanese established democratic institutions and democratic patterns of behavior by the 1920’s? Was Hara Kei a democratic liberal”? What were the weaknesses of democracy in Taisho Japan? Comment on ideas of Yoshino Sakuzo, Minobe Tatsukichi, Shidehara Kijiro or Yamamuro Sobun. Consider the leftist
ideological disputes in pre-war Japan: mass versus class appeal: evolutionary versus revolutionary strategy; the significance of the right-wing ideology; legal versus illegal tactics.

Week of October 5

07--The Road to Militarism: What went wrong?

09--Invasion of China & the Pacific War

**Readings**: Hane Chs. 13-14: Tsunoda, ch. 27; E.O. Reischauer, What Went Wrong?” in James W. Morley ed. *Dilemmas of Growth in Prewar Japan*, 489-510

**Recommended Readings**: Bix, Part III.

**Discussion topics**: Discuss the causes of militarism in Japan. What were Japan’s aims and aspirations in seeking to establish a “new order” and atmosphere” in East Asia? What was the context of international relations that led to Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor? Was militarism a logical outcome of the Japanese-style modernization? Should Hirohito be tried as a war criminal?

Week of October 12

14--Occupation Reforms, I

16-- Occupation Reforms, II

**Readings**: Hane, Chs.14-15; and Hane, *Eastern Phoenix*, Ch.1

**Recommended readings**: Bix, Part IV

**Discussion topics**: Discuss the positive and negative changes in Japan during the occupation period.

Week of October 19

21--Postwar Reconstruction

23—*Fall Break, No Class*

**Readings**: Hane, *Phoenix*, chs. 2-3.

**Discussion topics**: Discuss the most impressive developments in postwar Japan, focusing on education, popular culture, literature, and the arts.

Week of October 26

28—Rapid Growth since 1970, I

30-- Rapid Growth since 1970, II
Readings:  Hane, Ch. 16; and Hane, *Phoenix*, Chs 4-7
Discussion topics:  Discuss the outstanding driving forces behind the rapid economic growth in Japan since 1970. Assess the contributions of the leaders in government and society.

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**NOVEMBER**  

**Week of November 2**

04—Japan in Recession since 1990, I

06-- Japan in Recession since 1990, II

Readings:  To be arranged.  
Discussion Topics:  Discuss the domestic and external factors responsible for the recession, including but not limited to the “Plaza Accord,” the unique banking system, the rise of China, India and other nations, etc.

**Week of November 9**

11—Pressing Issues in Contemporary Japan, I: Politics

13-- Pressing Issues in Contemporary Japan, II: Economy

Readings:  Hane, *Eastern Phoenix*, Ch. 8

Discussion topics:

**Week of November 16**

18— Pressing Issues in Contemporary Japan, III: Environment

20— Pressing Issues in Contemporary Japan, IV: Society

Readings:  To be announced.

Discussion topics:  To be announced.

**Week of November 23**

25— Pressing Issues in Contemporary Japan, V: International Relations

27— *Thanksgiving, No Class*
Readings: To be announced.
Discussion topics: To be announced.

Term paper due November 26

Week of November 30

DECEMBER

02–Modern Japan in Review, I
04—Modern Japan in review, II

No reading assignments.
Free discussion

Week of December 7
09--Modern Japan in review, III
11--No Class; end of semester

No reading assignments.
Free discussion

End