

Purdue University, Department of History
HISTORY 344
MODERN JAPAN

PLACE, TIME, AND INSTRUCTOR

Instructor: Dr. Subodhana Wijeyeratne (BRNG 6124)

Office hours: by appointment (swijeyer@purdue.edu)

Time and Location: Weatherill 160

COURSE GOALS

1. To convey information about the politics and society of modern Japan, to instill an appreciation of other cultures, and to create an understanding of historical methods.
2. To improve students' academic writing ability.

Previous study of Japanese history, culture or language is not required for this course.

Please notify me if you have a learning disability or have physical limitations that require accommodation. We will work together to develop a plan that suits your needs.

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. Gordon, Andrew. *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019)
2. Kon, Satoshi. 1997. *Perfect Blue*. United States: GKIDS.
3. Kon, Satoshi. 2003. *Tokyo Godfathers*. United States: Sony Entertainment.

You do not need to buy any other texts for this class. Readings will be provided in PDF form and will be accessible to all students via an online platform. Please bring a print and bring a copy of each required reading with you to class. [1/3: email me a picture of a dog]

CONTACT

I can be reached at subowijeyeratne@gmail.com. Please note that if I receive messages after 1800 I may not be able to reply until after 0900 the next day. Notification of absence or requests for extensions should be communicated as soon as possible; messaging immediately before the deadline is generally unacceptable except under extenuating circumstances.

Please take advantage of my office hours; I want to get to know you and I'm there to help. You may also email if you have questions or concerns, but I may not be able to respond to all emails. If it is important, please speak with me in person.

Emails exchanged between us will be professional communications and should therefore be composed politely and properly. This includes addressing them to me by my title and surname. Please do not message me as if composing a text to a friend. Explanations should be clear and concise. You will be expected to be polite and respectful of others in class.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In this class, students are encouraged to exercise their right to free inquiry and expression. You are welcome to express any view on the subject matter introduced by the instructor or other class members within the structure of the course. **While you are responsible for learning the content of this course, you remain free to take a reasoned exception to the views presented and to reserve judgement about matters of conscience, controversy, or opinion. When you encounter ideas that you find offensive, unwise, immoral, or wrong-headed, you are encouraged to engage them with reason, evidence, and arguments.** Your course grade will be based on your academic performance, not on the opinions you express. Our commitment to freedom of expression means that no relevant ideas or positions are out of bounds, **but disruptive or disorderly behaviour, threats, or harassment are strictly prohibited** and will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students.

See the University's "Commitment to Freedom of Expression" and "Bill of Student Rights" in the University Policies and Statements module on Brightspace.

GRADING

Grading for this class will be as follows:

A+ (99%-100%)	B- (80%-83%).	D+ (68%-69%)
A (94%-98%)	C+ (78%-79%)	D (64%-67%)
A- (90%-93%).	C (74%-77%)	D- (60%-63%).
B+ (88%-89%)	C- (70%-73%).	Below 60% is failing.
B (84%-87%)		

COURSEWORK

- **Secret syllabus task: 5%**
 - Please read through this syllabus and complete the three-part secret task.
 - You must complete all three elements to get any points. [2/3: email me a picture of an elephant]
- **Response papers I, II, and III [3 x 300 words] [3 x 17%]**
 - How to structure and organise a piece will be covered in class. You will be expected to remember and implement the recommended structure.
 - In terms of content, in addition to a proper understanding of the concepts, you will be evaluated on your understanding of the timelines involved. For major events you will be expected to know the year (but not necessarily the day or month). For broader trends, you will be expected to know the decade.
 - **Submitting AI-generated writing or research as your own is academic dishonesty and carries the same penalties as plagiarism. If any portion of your assignment was generated by a chatbot, you are in violation of the academic integrity expectations of this course and the university. Your case will be reported to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities for further review of your status at this University.**
 - **All submissions should be formatted correctly and display proper grammar. For**

formatting, please see [Purdue's OWL Guidance on formatting](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_general_format.html) (https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_general_format.html).

■ **Look at the tabs on the page for details on how to correctly do citations.**

- All submissions must have the following at the top, left-hand side of your submission:
 - The date
 - Your name
 - The course for which you are submitting the piece
 - My name
- Students unable to complete an assignment by the due date should consult their instructor as early as possible to discuss an extension.
- Extensions are not normally granted for reasons of work due in other courses or extra-curricular activities, but may be granted for reasons of illness or a death in the family. Any extension granted must be confirmed by email from the instructor. In no case will an extension of more than one week be granted. Students submitting written assignments late without an extension are penalised at the rate of one grade per day of lateness.
- In terms of content, in addition to a proper understanding of the concepts, you will be evaluated on your understanding of the timelines involved.
 - For major events you will be expected to know the year (but not necessarily the day or month).
 - For broader trends, you will be expected to know the decade.
- **Participation: 19%**
 - **Students who sleep, are consistently tardy, do not read the materials, and/or are otherwise not paying attention** in class will see their behaviour impacting this mark. **Subtracting marks is at the professor's discretion.**
 - **SCLA 102 is a device-free zone. Phones, tablets, and laptops are not permitted.** Unpermitted usage of devices will result in a -1 penalty per incident.
 - **You will also be evaluated on your participation in discussions, ability to answer questions, and ensuring that you get the readings completed before Tuesday every week.**
 - **Attendance is not optional**, but with prior notice you may miss one class without incurring any penalty. Except in the case of genuine and documented emergencies, such absences must be confirmed with me via email before class begins. **Unpermitted absences will incur a -1 penalty per absence.**
 - Please familiarise yourself with the university's policies on:
 - [Academic honesty](http://www.purdue.edu/odos/osrr/academic-integrity/index.html) (www.purdue.edu/odos/osrr/academic-integrity/index.html)
 - [Use of copyrighted materials](http://www.purdue.edu/policies/academic-research-affairs/ia3.html) (www.purdue.edu/policies/academic-research-affairs/ia3.html)
 - [Attendance and other regulations](http://www.purdue.edu/studentregulations/regulations_procedures/classes.html) (www.purdue.edu/studentregulations/regulations_procedures/classes.html)
- **Final video presentation [5 minutes]: 25%**
 - Presentations must be a **minimum of 5 minutes long**, or a **maximum of 5:30 minutes**. Anything outside of this will be docked **25%** of their score.

- Presentations must be written entirely by the presenter. Using ChatGPT, etc., will be considered plagiarism
- Powerpoints are encouraged.
- Presentation topics must be from the time period covered in this class (i.e., 1603-2020).
 - You may select any topic from Japanese history within this period.
 - The goal of this activity is for you to explain something from Japanese history that you find interesting.
 - Do not cover a topic already covered in detail in class. For example, you may look at the lives of individual Christian proselytisers in Japan, but you cannot cover the general history of Christianity in Japan.

All presentations will be graded according to the following rubric:

	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Introduction				
How well did the beginning grab the audience's attention?	0-1	2-5	6-7	8-9
How effectively did the speaker introduce the topic?	0-1	2-5	6-7	8-9
Body				
How effectively did the presentation flow? Was the body well organised?	0-1	2-5	6-7	8-9
How well did the presentation utilise credible supportive evidence? Were there sufficient details (explanations, examples, illustrations, etc.) to support the principal ideas of the presentation?	0-1	2-5	6-7	8-9
Was the central message clear? Was there a clear main point/thesis/"take away" that was easy to identify?	0-1	2-5	6-7	8-9
Conclusion				
How well did the speaker bring the presentation to an end?	0-1	2-5	6-7	8-9
Delivery				
How effective was the speaker's eye contact?	0-1	2-5	6-7	8-9
How effective was the physical delivery? (posture, gestures, distracting movements, movement)	0-1	2-5	6-7	8-9
How effective was the verbal delivery? (tone, rate, volume, vocal fillers)	0-1	2-5	6-7	8-9

How well did the speaker use language (vocabulary, terminology if applicable, sentence structure)? Was the language appropriate for the audience and did it support the effectiveness of the presentation?	0-1	2-5	6-7	8-9
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[secret syllabus task 3/3: email me a picture of a manatee]

All required work must be submitted in order to receive a final grade for the course.

Lectures and classroom discussions may not be recorded in any medium other than notes.

COURSE PLAN

NOTE ON PRONUNCIATIONS

- a* as in *father*
- e* as in *et cetera*
- i* as in *magazine*
- o* as in *note*
- u* as in *flute*

Vowels with macrons (â, ê, î, ô, û **or** ā, ē, ī, ō, ū) are held longer than those without, but their sound values remain unchanged. The distinction is important. For example: *kôshô* means “negotiations,” while *koshô* means “broken.”

Week 1: 14th & 16th January

- **Tuesday [Lecture]:** Basic Historical Theory
- **Thursday [Sourcework & Writing]:**
 - Essay Writing Guidance 1 [Please refer to [guidelines](#) and [sample essay](#)]
 - [If time] [Week 1 source](#) discussion:
 - What are the key differences between the historical visions of Karl Marx and Max Weber?
 - What are the key differences between Friedrich Hegel’s viewpoint and that of Michel Foucault?
 - If you had to choose just two of these concepts to teach someone else, what would they be, and why?

Week 2: 21st & 23rd January

- **Tuesday [Lecture]:** The Fall and Rise of Unified Japan to 1603
- **Thursday [Sourcework & Writing]:**
 - **Special Research Guidance: Mindy J. Williams.**
 - Essay Writing Guidance 2 [Please refer to [guidelines](#) and [sample essay](#)]
 - [If time] [Week 2 source](#) discussion:
 - In what ways did central authority decline in Japan before 1600?
 - How did the Unifiers attempt to revert this decline?

Week 3: 28th & 30th January

- **Tuesday [Lecture]:** The Rise and Fall of Tokugawa Japan, 1603-1857
 - Reading: **Gordon, ch.1 ‘The Tokugawa Polity’; ch.2, ‘Social and Economic Transformations.’**
- **Thursday [Sourcework & Writing]:**
 - [Week 3 source](#) discussion:
 - What major social and economic changes occurred in Edo period Japan?
 - What explains the decline of Tokugawa power in the 18th and 19th centuries?
 - Why and how did Japan close itself off from the outside world during *sakoku*?

- Why do you think Christianity figured so highly in their calculations?
- **Response Paper 1 (Thesis and Plan)**

Week 4: 4th February & 6th February

- **Tuesday [Lecture]: The Anxieties of the *Bakumatsu*: 1830-1867**
 - Reading: **Gordon ch.3, 'The Intellectual Life of the Late Tokugawa'.**
- **Thursday [Sourcework & Writing]:**
 - [Week 4 source](#) discussion:
 - What kinds of European learning were particularly interesting to the Edo period Japanese?
 - What were the goals of the Americans who forced Japan to open to the outside world?
 - How did the Japanese perceive the Perry mission? What were they particularly interested in?
- **Response Paper 1 (Peer editing 1st draft)**

Week 5: 11th & 13th February

- **Tuesday [Lecture]: The Meiji Revolution: 1867-1905**
 - Reading: **Gordon ch. 4, 'The Overthrow of the Tokugawa', ch. 5, 'The Samurai Revolution.'**
- **Thursday [Sourcework & Writing]:**
 - [Week 5 source](#) discussion:
 - How were the political consciousnesses of common folk changing in the Meiji period?
 - How was economic activity changing during the Meiji period?
- **Response Paper 1 (due by end of class)**

Week 6: 18th & 20th February

- **Tuesday [Lecture]: The Rise of Imperial Japan: 1905-1937**
 - Reading: **Gordon, ch 6 'Participation and Protest.'**
- **Thursday [Sourcework & Writing]:**
 - [Week 6 source](#) discussion:
 - What were Japan's motivations for engaging in imperialist expansion in the early 20th century?
 - How did the Japanese perceive their military activities during this period?
- **Response Paper 2 (Thesis and Plan)**

Week 7: 25th & 27th February

- **Tuesday [Lecture]: Taisho Democracy and Showa Fascism, 1912-1945**
 - Reading: **Gordon ch. 8, 'Empire and Domestic Order,'; ch. 9, 'Democracy and Empire between the World Wars.'**
- **Thursday [Sourcework & Writing]:**

- [Week 7 source](#) discussion:
 - How did the circumstances of the common man and woman change in the early 20th century? What commonalities and differences do you perceive with similar experiences in the USA in this period?
- **Response Paper 2 (Peer editing 1st draft)**

Week 8: 4th March & 6th March

- **Tuesday [Lecture]: The Second World War, 1937-1945**
 - Reading: **Gordon ch. 12, 'Japan in Wartime.'**
- **Thursday [Sourcework & Writing]:**
 - [Week 8 source](#) discussion:
 - What exactly was Japan's vision for Asia after they were victorious in World War 2?
 - What reasons did the Emperor give for surrender? In what ways did his understanding of the conflict differ from that of the Allies?
 - **Response Paper 2 (due by end of class)**

Week 9: 11th & 13th March

- **Tuesday [Lecture]: Postwar Reformation, 1945-1952**
 - Reading: **Gordon Ch. 13, 'Occupied Japan: New Departures and Durable Structures.'**
- **Thursday [Sourcework & Writing]:**
 - [Week 9 source](#) [video] discussion:
 - What does this video reveal about material circumstances in Japan at war's end?
 - How do you think these affected how Japanese people saw the war?
 - How do you think these affected what Japanese people wanted from the peace that followed?

Week 10: 18th & 20th March

- **NO CLASSES [Spring vacation]**

Week 11: 25th & 27th March

- **Tuesday [Lecture]: The Miracle, 1952-1970s**
 - **Reading: Gordon ch. 14, 'Economic and Social Transformations.'**
- **Thursday [Sourcework & Writing]:**
 - [Week 11 source](#) discussion:
 - What does the building of the Bullet Train reveal about the ambitions of the Japanese in the 1960s?
 - What strikes you as being uniquely Japanese about the way in which the project was undertaken?
 - **Response Paper 3 (Thesis and Plan)**

Week 12: 1st & 3rd April

- **Tuesday [Lecture]: The Great Bubble, 1980s**

- Reading: **Gordon ch. 15, 'Global Power in a Polarized World: Japan in the 1980s.'**
- **Thursday [Sourcework & Writing]:**
 - [Week 12 source](#) discussion:
 - What conditions did salaried workers endure in the 1980s? What were their expectations from their jobs and their lives?
 - How did this differ from the people whose lives we explored in Week 7?
 - **Response Paper 3 (Peer editing 1st draft)**

Week 13: 8th & 10th April

- **Tuesday [Lecture]: The Lost Decade, 1990s**
 - Reading: **Gordon ch. 17, 'Beyond the Postwar Era.'**
- **Thursday [Sourcework & Writing]:**
 - [Week 13 source](#) discussion:
 - How did the JSDF see its role during the Kobe Earthquake? How did people react to their activities?
 - How did the Japanese perceive the tragedy generally?
 - **Response Paper 3 (due by end of class)**

Week 14: 15th April [NO CLASS 17th]

- **Tuesday [Lecture]: Cool Japan, 2000s**
 - Reading: None
- **Thursday:**
 - Week 14 source discussion:
 - [Perfect Blue](#) (content warning: sexual assault, violence):
 - How does this movie illustrate the gender expectations and tensions of 1990s Japan?
 - What does it reveal about the impact and consequences of urban life?
 - [Tokyo Godfathers](#) (content warning: homophobia, violence):
 - How does this movie explore the lives of marginal people in Japan's cities in the 1990s?
 - What does it reveal about interpersonal relationships and generational tensions in Japan in this period?

Week 15: 22nd & 24th April

- **Tuesday [Lecture]: Anxieties and Change, 2010-2020**
- **Thursday:**
 - **Final Video presentation (due by end of class)**
 - Picnic with dogs

Week 16: 6th & 8th May

- **Tuesday: optional meetings**
- **Thursday: optional meetings**

