

Hist 555/635

Becoming Modern: A Comparative Look at Europe and Asia

Spring Semester 2010
Tuesdays 7:20-10:00
Classroom: Robinson B118

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Office: Robinson B351
Office Hours: Tuesday, 4:30-5:30, and by
appointment

What does it mean to become modern? Does it simply mean, for example, the building of factories and the movement of people from farms into cities? Or does it necessarily entail, or perhaps even result from, some deeper transformation of things immaterial—our values, our identities, or the structure or content of our ideas? This course will explore the various ways in which historians have conceptualized the shift from early modernity to modernity. We will focus on two geographic regions: Western Europe, whose historical experience gave rise to most of the models of modernization, and East Asia, where many of those models have been applied in an attempt to test their universality. We will examine, in comparative fashion, the different ways in which historians have traced this shift—through economic and political systems, social structures, popular culture, intellectual life, religion, gender, and national identity.

Required Texts

Daniel Bell, *The First Total War: Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare as we Know It*

Daniel Botsman, *Punishment and Power in the Making of Modern Japan*

Peter Fritzsche, *Stranded in the Present: Modern Time and the Melancholy of History*

Takashi Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan*

Laura Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise: Ethnography and Cartography in Early Modern China*

Joan Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere*

Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy*

Ruth Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China*

Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family*

Brett Walker, *The Lost Wolves of Japan*

Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in 18th-Century England*

Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*

Grading

Reading Responses: 30%

Final Exam (Take-home): 40%

Class Participation: 30%

The **reading responses** are two-page written responses to the week's readings. The responses should summarize and analyze the author's argument and explore the implications of the work. The responses must be turned in **during the class period** for that week. Late responses will be penalized one-half grade for each day after the due date.

The **final exam** will be take-home, and will consist of essays on topics chosen by the instructor. Successful essays will draw heavily from the course readings; students are not expected to do additional reading when preparing the exams.

The **class participation** grade is based on your involvement in class discussion. Your grade will reflect not how much you talk, but how constructively you contribute to the discussion. Generally speaking, constructive comments always draw from a close and thoughtful reading of the course

material. Obviously, you cannot participate in class discussion if you are absent; therefore, absences will negatively affect your participation grade.

Each week one or two students will be responsible for leading the discussion, or at least the first part of it. In preparation that student (or students) should formulate discussion questions in advance and e-mail them to the instructor the day before the class. Your participation grade will be based partly on your performance in this exercise.

While doing the readings each week, you should consider the following questions: 1. What is the book's main argument? 2. What methodology does the author use when investigating his or her topic? 3. What kinds of evidence does the author use to support the argument? 4. In what ways does the author's argument or methodology differ from, or challenge, that of other books you have read for this class? 5. How would you situate the author's arguments and methodology in historiographical context—that is, in relation to larger trends in the discipline? Formulating answers to these questions as you complete each week's readings will prepare you to do well in both the reading responses and class discussion.

Class policies:

- 1) You are expected to arrive in class on time and stay for the entire class period. If you know that you will be late to class or that you need to leave early let me know ahead of time.
- 2) Do not eat during class. (You may bring something to drink.)
- 3) If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at (703) 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Honor Code:

George Mason has an honor code and you are expected to adhere to it. It is as follows:

"To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work."

(http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#honor_system_and_code)

If I suspect plagiarism or other forms of cheating I will report the case to the Honor Committee. Please don't risk it.

For details on how the honor system at GMU works, consult the university catalog: <http://catalog.gmu.edu/content.php?catoid=5&navoid=410#Honor>

More information can also be found at the GMU [Office of Academic Integrity](#).

Administrative Deadlines:

Last day to add classes: February 2

Last day to drop: February 19

Schedule

- Jan. 19 Introduction: What does it mean to become modern?
- Jan. 26 John Hall, "Changing Conceptions of the Modernization of Japan"
Ronald Dore, "The Legacy of Tokugawa Education"
Harry Harootunian, "America's Japan/Japan's Japan"
- Feb. 2 Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*
- Feb. 9 Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence*
- Feb. 16 Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family*
- Feb. 23 Botsman, *Punishment and Power in the Making of Modern Japan*
- Mar. 2 Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere*
- Mar. 9 **Spring Break—No class**
- Mar. 16 Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise*
- Mar. 23 Bell, *The First Total War*
- Mar. 30 Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy*
- Apr. 6 Fritzsche, *Stranded in the Present*
- Apr. 13 Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity*
- Apr. 20 Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self*
- Apr. 27 Walker, *The Lost Wolves of Japan*

The Final Exam will be due on Wednesday, May 5, at 5:00.