

Samurai Japan 1100-1880

Hist 187S	Prof. Luke S. Roberts
UCSB Spring 2010	4228 HSSB
W F 8:00-9:15	lukerobt@history.ucsb.edu
Girvetz 1004	Office hours: Wed. 1-2, Fr. 10-12

Course description and objectives

Samurai are the class of elite warriors in Japan who existed from the tenth century until the mid-1870's when their status was abolished. Over this time their roles, livelihoods and ideals changed in profound ways. A samurai of the year 1200 would not have recognized a samurai of 1700 as having the same dress, weapons and armor, sources of income, personal and professional values or daily lifestyle. Their notions of honorable behavior would have been very different. The samurai era of political power began with the Kamakura era (1192-1333) when they shared rule over much of Japan with the Kyoto aristocracy and Buddhist temples. The next era was the Ashikaga era (1336-1573) during which time the authority of aristocrats and the old temples significantly declined. The samurai emerged dominant but usually at war amongst themselves. This is the most typically "samurai" era in modern imagination; including the Era of Warring States (1467-1590) and Unification Period (1568-1615) which are the setting for most modern samurai movies. The third and last of the samurai political regimes was the Tokugawa era (1600-1867), when (excepting the beginning and the end of the period) there was no war between samurai lords in Japan. During this time samurai retained military ideals but became bureaucrats and just-in-case warriors with plenty of time on their hands.

Each of the new eras had its own set of samurai ideals, but in each of the eras the ideals of the day had about as much relation to actual samurai behavior as the 65MPH speed limit signs on our California highways tell you how fast people are actually driving. Although actual samurai are quite interesting, there are many popular images of samurai that are mythic and based on exceptional cases or not based in reality at all. These myths--pretending ideals are actual behavior--are both ancient and modern. One of the aims of this class is to distinguish between myth and reality, understand the relationship between ideals and behavior, and to help you learn how to evaluate information and historical sources for what they can tell you.

In this class we will survey the changing ideals and diverse realities of samurai as they changed throughout history, exploring samurai from the perspectives of status, social and military activity, samurai politics, gender, values and identity. I will be using clips from various samurai films to illustrate certain issues. I will also be showing one full length film, a tale of a samurai in 1860's Japan called *The Twilight Samurai*, spread out over two class periods.

I will maintain a gauchospace page for this course.

Requirements and Grading

First third exam 20%; Second third exam 20%; Final exam 40%; Maps and small assignments 20%.

Late Assignment Policy: All assignments will be deducted 10 points per day late. An assignment turned in after class time is considered one day late. The next day is also considered one day late and each day ends at 5:00 PM. A Friday assignment turned in on the following Monday will be 20 points off. All late assignments must be turned in as paper copy to me directly or slid under my office door.

Required texts

Karl Friday, *Samurai, Warfare and the State in Early Medieval Japan* (Routledge, 2003)

Hiroaki Sato, *Legends of the Samurai* (Overlook, 1995)

History 187S Reader of selected articles available at Associated Students in the UCen

*Each of these will also be on reserve in the main library.

Academic honesty

Honesty is an important part of personal character and is necessary to be a good historian as well. All cases of academic dishonesty, such as plagiarism and cheating, will be reported to the dean.

Weekly Readings and Class Plan

Week 1

Beginnings to 1200

W Mar 31

Origins of Samurai (clip from “Shin Heike Monogatari”)

F Apr 2

Genpei Wars and Kamakura

Readings:

Reader pp. 1-22: Bito Masahide and Watanabe Akio, “A Chronological Outline of Japanese History”, pp. 1-17, 26-27 (this is a simple reference for those of you who know no Japanese history. If you have never had Japanese history before or want to refresh on the basic outline please read this). Yonekura Isamu, “the Origin of the Samurai: How Samurai were Born,” *The East*, Vol. 11 no. 4 (May 1975), pp. 18-29.
Karl Friday, *Samurai, Warfare and the State*, pp. 1-33; Hiroaki Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, pp. xi-xxxv, and pp. 95-156.

Week 2

Kamakura 1192-1333

W Apr 7

Kamakura Government

FIRST MAP DUE

F Apr 9

Samurai Warfare: Shōkyū war (aka Jōkyū War), and Mongol Invasions

Readings:

Reader pp. 23-76: William McCullough, “The *Azuma kagami* account of the Shōkyū War,” pp. 102-155 in *Monumenta Nipponica* Vol. 23, no. 1-2, 1968.
Friday, *Samurai*, pp. 34-101.

Week 3

Muromachi 1336-1567

W Apr. 14

Northern and Southern Courts

F Apr, 16

Ōnin War

Readings:

Reader pp. 77-86: Hitomi Tonomura, “Sexual Violence Against Women: Legal and Extralegal Treatment in Premodern Warrior Societies,” pp. 135-152 in *Women and Class in Japanese History* (University of Michigan Center for Japanese Studies, 1999).
Karl Friday, *Samurai, Warfare and the State*, pp. 102-168; Hiroaki Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, pp. 157-205, 249-253.

Week 4

Warring States Era 1467-1590

W Apr. 21

Daimyo realms and castle towns

F Apr. 23

Westerners and daimyo

First 30 minute midterm

Readings:

Reader pp. 87-102: Michael Birt, “Samurai in Passage: The Transformation of the Sixteenth Century Kanto,” *Journal of Japanese Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Summer, 1985), pp. 369-399.
Hiroaki Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, pp. 206-231.

Week 5

Unification Period 1568-1615

W April 28

Unification: Nobunaga, Hideyoshi, Ieyasu

F April 30

Unification: Yamauchi Katsutoyo

SECOND MAP DUE

Readings:

Reader pp. 103-163: Asao Naohiro, “The Sixteenth-Century Unification,” in John Hall ed., *Early Modern Japan*, (Cambridge U Press 1991), pp. 40-95. Kenneth Swope, “Crouching Tigers, Secret Weapons: Military Technology Employed during the Sino-Japanese-Korean War, 1592-1598,” *Journal of Military History* Vol. 69, No. 1 (Jan. 2005), pp. 11-41. Basil Chamberlain transl. “A Short Memoir from the Seventeenth Century: Mistress An’s Narrative.”
Hiroaki Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, pp. 232-246

FINAL EXAM: Friday June 11 8:00-11:00