

Japanese History Through Art and Literature

History 87
UCSB Fall 2006
T TH 11:00-12:15
Bldg 387 Room 101

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Course description and objectives

We will explore history on the Japanese islands from prehistory to recent times, largely through its art and literature. This is not an art history course, but rather we will think about how such materials as paintings, architecture, poetry, memoirs etc. can be used as historical sources that relate information about society, culture and politics. The readings have been chosen, for the most part, to give you examples of how historians use these materials. My lectures will balance a history of politics and institutions with social and cultural history. I have also provided in your reader many writings and documents (in translation) created by the people whose history we are studying. Your weekly discussion sections and the essays you write will give you the chance to express and test understandings which you have learned and created.

We will explore many aspects of culture, but I will not be trying to teach you what Japanese cultural identity is. This is because I believe that searches for 'national' cultural identities are merely one aspect of a nationalistic understanding of the world. I do not like to force the varied and rich activities of people in the islands belonging to the current state of Japan into the box of "national culture." I will rather emphasize diversity, and look upon our subject as a history of people in the world. Certain historic individuals you will meet in our class you may like as people, and--though they are dead--you can have a dialogue with them through their writings or paintings. For me this dialogue is the greatest pleasure of history. A sensitivity to people as individuals can help us avoid national stereotyping and let us understand the many historical forces (understood, for example, in terms of issues of class, occupation, geography, politics, beliefs etc.) which we as individuals deal with in our own lives. I hope that we come to perceive contemporary nations not as timeless cultural realities, but as historical phenomena which provide a limited view on our present condition, so that we do not become trapped in myths of nationalism; those fostered in Japan or here.

We create this class together. I highly encourage you to ask questions or give your own comments at any point in the lecture. Just raise your hand. Your attendance at class lectures and discussion sections is essential and required. Much important information will be given only in lecture. Be sure to have finished the readings by the time of your discussion section. If you do not prepare, everyone will be less rich.

You will write two essays on each of the supplementary books. The first will be your response to the diary of a Kyoto court lady of the eleventh century. The second will be based on a popular novel of 1910 about villagers in the Meiji period. In the essays you should be original and reveal your personal interaction with the readings. The quality of the writing will affect the grade: An essay filled with confusing expressions, incomplete arguments, or which has not been proofread for mistakes will receive a poor grade. If you are unsure of your writing skills, you are welcome to bring to me or the TA a rough draft beforehand, and I encourage you to go to the writing laboratory of the Campus Learning Assistance Services for general assistance on writing papers (www.clas.ucsb.edu). Our best students get help there. Don't miss the great services they provide!

There will be zero tolerance of all academic dishonesty such as plagiarism and cheating on exams. We will report all cases of dishonesty to the dean and punish accordingly.

Requirements and Grading

Midterm exam (10/29) 20%; Final exam (12/10) 30% ; Two 4-5 page essays (due 10/20 and 11/24) 15% each for a total of 30%*; Map 5% (due 10/1); Discussion section participation 15%** . Assignments turned in after class or a day late will have

1/3 of a letter grade deducted, two days late 2/3rds etc. (for example a B paper one day late will become a B-, two days late a C+ etc.) Holidays and weekends are no exceptions to this calculation. We accept papers up to 7 days late.

*Because this is a writing requirement course, your two essays must be of passing quality (before late deduction if late) to pass the course. **Students who do not regularly attend the discussion sections will fail the class.

Required texts

Conrad Schirokauer, David Lurie, Susan Gay, A Brief History of Japanese Civilization 2nd ed., Wadsworth/Thompson Learning, 2006.

Murasaki Shikibu (Richard Bowring trans.) The Diary of Lady Murasaki, Penguin (New York), 1996.

Nagatsuka Takashi (Anne Waswo tr.), The Soil, U. of California Press, 1994.

History 87 Reader of collected articles and other readings (at Associated Students).

You should purchase the texts if possible. The books are available at the UCSB bookstore. The Reader is available at Associated Students in the UCen. All readings can also be found on Reserve in the main library. The SLIDE MODULES will be on the second floor of Kerr Hall in the Language and Learning Labs and also available from campus server computers as podcasts at <http://bragg.ic.ucsb.edu/users/lukerob/>. Each module lasts 30 minutes. Have all readings done for the week they are listed in by the time of your discussion section. Most weeks will be about 100 pages of reading, but week 3 and week 7 have longer readings for the papers--so be prepared.

Weekly Readings and Lecture Topics

Week 1 Introduction

Th Sept. 24 Introduction and geography, hand out Map Assignment due 10/05

Assignments: Map to be due Th Oct. 1

Week 2 Prehistory and Early History

T Sept. 29 Paleolithic, Jōmon and Yayoi

Th Oct. 1 The Yamato and Nara governments 500's-784 MAP DUE

Readings: Schirokauer, preface and pp. 1-46; Reader pp. 1-27; Richard Pearson, "Image and Life: 50,000 years of Japanese Prehistory;" David Lu, Sources of Japanese History (selection). SLIDE MODULE DS1 module 1, "Ise Shrine" (A DVD viewable in Kerr Hall, or from a campus address to <http://bragg.ic.ucsb.edu/users/lukerob/>). (You may want to begin on Week 3 readings which are long)

The textbook and the first reading in your reader will introduce you to the basic outlines of the periods of prehistory, protohistory, the foundation of the Yamato state in Japan. The text will emphasize the importance of the Korean peninsula and China in the development of culture, technology and the early imperial state. The Pearson reading will tell you about the first peoples on the islands, the paleolithic and the pottery producing Jōmon peoples. The Lu reading includes some translations of the earliest written references to people on the islands. Some of these are mythic, but scholars use them for information on beliefs, social customs, and early political conflicts in Japan. The Lu reading gives examples of poetry from the Nara period and a story from the Heian period. The slide module (by weblog or in Kerr Hall) tells about the meanings and origins of the Shinto shrine most closely related to the imperial clan.

Week 3 Heian

T Oct 6 The Heian government 794-1192

Th Oct 8 Aristocratic social life and the aristocratic arts.

Readings: Schirokauer, pp. 47-77; Reader pp. 27-64: Murasaki Shikibu (Edward Seidensticker, Translator), The Tale of Genji (selection). Ivan Morris, "Women of Ancient Japan: Heian Ladies." Selections from Fujiwara Teika (1162-1241) ed. (Robert Browner and Earl Miner trans.) , Superior Poems of our Time, (Stanford, 1967). Read introduction to The Diary of Lady Murasaki. SLIDE MODULE DS1 module 3, "The Genji Scroll." (<http://bragg.ic.ucsb.edu/users/lukerobt/>)

The textbook gives you a basic description of the Heian period of aristocratic rule. The three chapters are a selection from the very long novel about court life, The Tale of Genji, written by Murasaki Shikibu. It will be a bit like dropping into the middle of a soap opera, so to help you, these three chapters are discussed in the "Genji Scroll" slide module. Also be sure to read the Introduction (pp. 23-30 of your reader). Read Seidensticker's comparison of the two rivals, and also think about the slide module on the Tale of Genji Scroll. This slide module is excellent at introducing you to methods of interpreting pictures and documents. What different things can you learn about the life of the Heian aristocracy from the Tale? Look at the list of possible paper topics given below for ideas on how to read the book for historical information. Make lists of illustrations of points. The poetry is from a famous anthology composed in the early 1200's by a court noble named Fujiwara Teika. Many of the poems themselves come from the Heian period. Think about how natural imagery and seasons are used to express human emotions. The Diary of Lady Murasaki is the diary-like miscellany of the author of the Tale of Genji. This will be the main source for your first paper described below.

Assignments: Four-to-five page essay due week 5, Tuesday Oct 24. To be based on The Diary of Lady Murasaki--in relation to the chapters from The Tale of Genji or other class materials you find helpful (see week 3 readings). Pick a thematic problem, such as how people's lives are influenced by status consciousness, and then look for relevant information in the text. Relate many incidents from the text as proof of the point, the thesis that you wish to argue. Your paper must have a thesis statement. A thesis is a statement with which your reader may agree or disagree, and which you must therefore prove. If possible, relate your own point to interpretations in your secondary readings. Other possible topics (you'll have to make your own thesis statement!) include: women's relations with women; with men; entertainments of the elite; merit earned by skill in arts and how this might conflict with social hierarchy--i.e. a low ranking person being more highly skilled in poetry than a high ranking person; religious and magical beliefs of the aristocracy; the social uses of poetry, etc. I will provide in week 3 a more detailed assignment sheet.

Week 4 Heian and early samurai
T Oct 13 The economy of Heian Japan
Th Oct. 15 The rise of the samurai

Readings: The Diary of Lady Murasaki.

Week 5 Kamakura 1185-1333
T Oct. 20 Kamakura and a dual court/samurai state **ESSAY DUE TODAY**
Th Oct. 22 Popular Buddhism

Readings: Schirokauer, pp. 78-99; Reader pp. 65-108, selection from Helen McCullough trans., Yoshitsune (Stanford U. Press); Karl Friday, "Introduction;" "Amida, The Pure Land, and the Response of the Old Buddhism to the New." from Sources of Japanese Tradition, 2nd Ed.

The text will describe the appearance of samurai government in Japanese history. Be sure to note how samurai government does not immediately eliminate effective aristocratic government. The Kamakura period is a period with two simultaneous government systems and centers. They often conflicted, but they often helped each other's interests as well. Although many upwardly mobile samurai tried hard to acquire the arts and elegance of the aristocrats, fundamentally the values of samurai were quite different. The tale Yoshitsune is a piece of literature about the younger brother of Minamoto Yoritomo, the man who founded the Kamakura warrior government. Yoshitsune was a great general but Yoritomo became jealous and fearful and ended up having Yoshitsune hunted down and killed. Yoshitsune's sidekick Benkei is a monk-warrior, and much of the humor in the text comes from the contradictions of such a role. What samurai values are evident in this

text? Think of how it is different from the Tale of Genji. The Karl Friday reading introduces samurai warfare. What does he think of literary sources for learning about warfare? At this time of political change and frequent turmoil, religious beliefs and institutions were changing rapidly. The "Amida" reading introduces you to the great religious transformation which occurred in the Kamakura period. How does it relate to other transformations?

Week 6 Muromachi (Ashikaga) Japan

T Oct 27 Renaissance or Dark Ages?: Muromachi (Ashikaga) Japan
Th Oct 29 Mid-term examination

Readings: Schirokauer, pp. 100-119; Reader pp. 108-120: H. Paul Varley, "Ashikaga Yoshimitsu and the World of Kitayama: Social Change and Shogunal Patronage in Early Muromachi Japan."

The Muromachi is truly an age of great political turmoil. Court authority declined rapidly and the samurai became ascendant throughout most of the islands, but they were disunited. Warriors were constantly vying for power in various regions of Japan, and the Ashikaga authority structure was very troubled. Despite the conflict, this was the age in which many of Japan's great artistic traditions were born. Artistic development is not dependent upon political glory. Commerce thrived as well in this most lively and unsettled of eras in Japanese history. What links exist between the arts and commerce on the one hand and the samurai elite on the other?

Week 7 Unification and the Edo period

T Nov. 3 First contact with the West and Unification
Th Nov. 5 Tokugawa rule and the changing economy
(Friday Nov.10 holiday--4 of 6 sections, cancel all?)

Readings: Schirokauer, pp. 121-166; Reader pp.121-174: George Elison, "Hideyoshi, the Bountiful Minister." Michael Cooper, They Came to Japan (selections). P.F. Kornicki, "Unsuitable Books for Women?: *Genji Monogatari* and *Ise Monogatari* in Late Seventeenth Century Japan."

The text will provide the broad outlines of government and society of the Unification era and the Edo period. The reader selection has one article on the art patronage of Hideyoshi. How did Toyotomi Hideyoshi use patronage of the arts to enhance his prestige and political power? How does he compare with Ashikaga Yoshimitsu? The Cooper reading provides translations of the writings of Europeans who lived in Japan in the decades before and after 1600. What can you learn about people and politics in the islands from these writings? What can you learn about the preconceptions of the writers themselves? How does the appearance of the Iberians influence the course of history on the islands? The Kornicki reading explores the debate in the seventeenth century on whether the Tale of Genji was a text too immoral for women to read!

Week 8 Late Edo

T Nov 10 Late Tokugawa arts
Th Nov. 12 Tokugawa Collapse and Meiji Restoration

Readings: Schirokauer, pp.; Reader pp. 175-212: Jippensha Ikku (Thomas Satchell trans.), selection from Shanks Mare; M. William Steele, "Goemon's New World View: Popular Representations of the Opening of Japan." Begin reading Nagatsuka Takashi (Anne Waswo tr.), The Soil SLIDE MODULE DS1 module 7 "Hokusai" (<http://bragg.ic.ucsb.edu/users/lukerobt/>)

Late Edo is my favorite period in Japanese history. Commoners take the lead in the production of the most energetic culture. It is a culture of playfulness and parody; full of earthy tastes. The "Hokusai" Slide Module introduces the field of popular visual arts in the Edo period, and Shank's Mare (Tôkaidôchû hizakurige) is an example of the bestselling fiction of around 1810. How is the production of art different from that under samurai patronage, and how is this reflected in the content? The Steele reading uses popular art of the 1850's and 60's to understand how Edo city commoners viewed the arrival of Commodore Perry and the aftermath. The cultural foundations of samurai rule and many of their institutions are in decline. The Schirokauer reading deals with the collapse of the Tokugawa and the creation of a new state.

Assignments: 4-5 page essay due Tuesday Nov. 22. To be based on the novel by Nagatsuka Takashi (Anne Waswo tr.), The Soil. This novel has been very popular in Japan since it was published in 1910 because it seems to portray the real lives of people in the previous few decades. Many of the stories come from Nagatsuka's own village. Develop a thesis concerning an aspect of Meiji era society and argue it based on evidence from the novel. Possible topics include the effect of Meiji culture on rural lives, differing roles for men and women, contrasts between urban and rural life in Meiji Japan.

Week 9 Meiji Japan, The 30's Crisis and War

T Nov. 17 Meiji State and Society

Th Nov. 19 The crisis of the 1930's and war in Asia

Readings: Schirokauer, pp. 192-257; Reader pp. 213-226: Irokawa Daikichi, "Meiji Conditions of Non-Culture;" Finish reading Nagatsuka Takashi (Anne Waswo tr.), The Soil.

The Schirokauer reading will cover the general history of Meiji and the early 20th century and the various reasons why so many countries went to war. Think of late Tokugawa and the Meiji period and list how things had changed in; government, international relations, education, cultural leadership, the economy and people's political behavior. The transition was rapid and in many ways successful. It was also very costly and difficult. Ever since, people have been confronting an industrialized modernity, the immense power of the West, and Western identity within an increasingly important "Japanese" identity. The Irokawa reading is a chapter from a 1985 translation of his 1969 book The Culture of the Meiji Period and explores the degrading influences of poverty and a culture of inequality. Think of this in relation to your reading of The Soil.

Week 10 Postwar

T Nov. 24 Early Postwar Period SECOND PAPER DUE

Th Nov 26 THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Readings: Schirokauer, pp. 258-275; Reader pp. 227-250: John Dower, "Race, Language and War in Two Cultures."

The Dower reading touches on how mutual perceptions influenced the conflict in WWII and how we remember it. The war era also created stock interpretations which have resurfaced throughout the postwar period. Western influence on society in Japan has intensified since the end of World War II, and Japanese influence on Western society has increased as well. Although people continually try to distinguish between what is Western and what is Japanese in postwar society, the truth is that together they are integrated into a present whole. Many national cultural borders are rhetorical illusions. Is the paper we use "Chinese" because it was invented there? Is the automobile any less Japanese because the prototypes were not invented there?

Week 11 Recent

T Dec. 1 Movie: Hellfire: A Journey from Hiroshima, John Junkerman and John Dower.

Th Dec. 3 Recent society and culture

Readings: Reader pp. 251-288: Jay Rubin, "The Other World of Murakami Haruki," Murakami Haruki (Alfred Birnbaum trans.) "T. V. People," Frederik Schodt, "A Thousand Million Manga," chapter 1 of his book Manga! Manga! The World of Japanese Comics.

The Rubin reading introduces Murakami Haruki, a writer popular over the past few decades in Japan. Then you have one of Murakami's short stories. Think of it in relation to modern life and also in its relations (or not) to Heian literature. Schodt introduces us to the enormous and fascinating world of Japanese comics. What we see of Japanese comics in America is "but one drop of the great ocean, but one hair of nine cows."

FINAL EXAMINATION: Thursday, Dec. 10, 12:00-3:00.