

Modern Japan

Dr. Edward Wang

Fall 2009 (Tuesday 1:45-4:30, Robinson)

Office hours: Monday and Wednesday: 1:30-3:00 pm and by appointment.

Office telephone: 856-256-4500 x 3990

Email: wangq@rowan.edu

Textbooks:

Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003)

Helen M. Hopper, *Fukuzawa Yukichi* (London: Pearson/Longman, 2005)

Helen M. Hopper, *Kato Shidzue* (London: Pearson/Longman, 2005)

Yukio Mishima, *Spring Snow* (New York: Vintage International, 1972)

Course Objectives:

This course aims to offer a comprehensive coverage of Japanese history from the early nineteenth century to the present. It hopes to acquaint students with a good understanding of Japan's transformation in modern times: how it was changed from a feudal state to a militaristic government and then again to a democracy; its rise as a new power in Asia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and its descent to WWII; its impressive postwar recovery and ascent to becoming the world's second largest economy and the persistent economic recession and its impact it has experienced and endured in more recent years.

Course Description:

This is an upper level course covering modern Japanese history from the late eighteenth century to the present. It will examine the changes in Japanese history during the period and analyze how the traditional elements played their roles in shaping Japan's modern transformation. To enhance our understanding of modern Japanese history, the course will center on the following issues: Japan's relation with Western powers from the nineteenth century, the impact of its modernization both at home and abroad, its military expansion in Asia and its role in World War II, its rapid economic growth during the post-WWII era and the challenges it faces in recent years. While a comprehensive overview of modern Japanese history, it will focus more on Japan's distinct cultural and societal characteristics from historical and comparative perspectives.

Course Requirements:

The class has two examinations, which consist of essay questions and identifications. No make-ups will be given except for medical reasons with proper documentation, nor can the make-up be taken three days after the original time. The instructor may change his method in grading the make-up exams.

Students are required to write three book reviews of Helen M. Hopper's *Fukuzawa Yukichi* and *Kato Shidzue* as well as Yukio Mishima's *Spring Snow*. Instructions on how to write these book reviews will be given in class and/or on the Blackboard. Some class time will also be given to discussing the books and their value as historical sources. In addition, there will be internet assignments for which students will look for creditable sources and use them to explain the controversies over the "Rape of Nanjing" and the dropping of the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of WWII.

No grade higher than "D+" will be given if the review does not follow the instruction, or if it does not contain appropriate citations and footnotes. The instructor will accept a later paper if there is a medical reason and the paper is handed in no later than three days after its original due date.

Class Participation: 10%

Discussion postings on blackboard, quizzes and assignments: 20%

Book Reviews (6-8 pages): 24% (8% each)

Midterm Examination: 22%

Final Examination: 24%

It is important to fulfill all the requirements to pass the course, including making postings on the blackboard's discussion column on weekly basis (by Sunday noon each week). Students are expected to complete **all** the reading assignment beforehand for class participation. Later papers will be penalized and will not be accepted a week after its due date. No make-ups will be given for examinations except for medical reasons or special permissions from the department or university.

Class Schedule:

Week	Assignments	Topics	Discussion Questions
(1) Sept. 1	Gordon, Introduction & chap. 1	Introduction: Land and People	1) How do you characterize the land-people relationship in Japan? 2) What have

			constituted Japan's cultural and religious traditions?
(2) Sept. 8	Gordon, chap. 2-3; Hopper, <i>Fukuzawa Yukichi</i>	Social and Political Order in Tokugawa Japan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) How do you characterize Japanese society under Tokugawa government? 2) Was there any marked social and economic progress in the Tokugawa era?
(3) Sept. 15	Gordon, chap. 4; Hopper, <i>Fukuzawa Yukichi</i>	The Meiji Restoration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Who were the vanguard in the Meiji Restoration and why? 2) What was the main cause for the Meiji Restoration?
(4) Sept. 22 Review of <i>Fukuzawa Yukichi</i> is due.	Gordon, chap. 5	The Transformation of the Samurai Class	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) How do you characterize the social change under the Meiji era? 2) Did the Samurai class gain benefit from the social change?
(5) Sept. 29	Gordon, chap. 6; Hopper, <i>Kato Shidzue</i>	Establishing a Constitutional Monarchy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What prompted the Meiji government to establish a constitutional monarchy? 2) How do you describe the

			constitution?
(6) Oct. 6	Gordon, chap. 7; Hopper, <i>Kato Shidzue</i>	Social and Cultural Changes	1) What changes occurred to women after the Meiji Restoration? 2) Why was there a search for “Japaneseness” in the late Meiji era?
(7) Oct. 13 Review of <i>Kato Shidzue</i> is due.	Gordon, chap. 8;	Empire Building and Taishō Democracy	1) What constituted the “Taishō democracy”? 2) How could Japan become a major power in Asia?
(8) Oct. 20 Mid-Term Exam	Gordon, chap. 9	Japan in World War I	1) What impact did WWI have in Japan?
(9) Oct. 27	Gordon, chap. 10 Internet assignment on the “Rape of Nanjing”	Japan and China	1) How do you characterize Japan-China relations in the past? 2) What made Japan so aggressive against its Asian neighbors?
(10) Nov. 3 Election day; no class			
(11) Nov. 10	Gordon, chap. 11-12	Japan in World War II and Its Defeat	1) Why did Japan attack Pearl Harbor? 2) Why did the

			Japanese army fight so hard in defending their homeland?
(11) Nov. 17	Gordon, chap. 13; Internet assignment on the Atomic bombs' impact in Hiroshima and Nagasaki	The Mushroom Cloud and American Occupation of Japan	1) How did the US help rebuild postwar Japan? 2) What was the "Reverse Course"?
(12) Nov. 24	Gordon, chap. 14-15 Mishima, <i>Spring Snow</i>	Economic Miracle and Social Change	1) How could Japan achieve its economic miracle? 2) How could the LDP rule so dominantly in postwar Japan?
(13) Dec. 1 Review of <i>Spring Snow</i> is due.	Gordon, chap. 16 Mishima, <i>Spring Snow</i>	Seeking a New Order at Home and Abroad	1) How do you describe Japan's relationship with the US? 2) How can Japan improve its relationship with its Asian neighbors?
(14) Dec. 8	Gordon, chap. 17 Readings on the Blackboard	From Boom to Bust: Japan's Economic Recession and Its Impact	1) What is the best way to pull Japan out of recession? 2) The LDP is out, what next?
(15) Dec. 15-19 Finals Week			