

## History 357: Postwar Japan

Spring Semester 2016  
M 10:30-1:15  
Classroom: Planet 124

Dr. Brian Platt  
Office Hours: Wed 10:30-11:30  
Office: Robinson B351

During World War Two, Japan was locked in a desperate and brutal war against the United States. From Japan's perspective, the war was a divine mission, an apocalyptic struggle to the very last man, woman, and child; in their own words, it was "the war to end all wars." Meanwhile, America vilified the Japanese as an evil and sub-human race. It was perhaps fitting that such a bitter war would conclude with the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which caused horrific destruction the likes of which human beings had never before witnessed.

Most Japanese and Americans do not remember this struggle, nor can they appreciate the intense hatred created by it on both sides. In a relatively brief fifty-year period, Japan has transformed itself from a despised international outlaw to a peaceful, "model" country and economic superpower. How has this transformation occurred? What have been the social and cultural effects of this transformation in Japan? How do the Japanese see themselves, now that they have renounced their wartime identity?

The primary goal of this course will be to address these and other questions regarding Japan's postwar history. Since the format of the course is discussion, we will address these questions collectively, reading primary and secondary sources closely and discussing how to interpret and contextualize these questions in light of larger themes. A second goal will be to train you to read scholarly books and articles critically—identifying the argument, evaluating evidence, disputing conclusions, and so on. A third goal will be to train you to use primary sources—which in this class will consist largely of films—to express your own arguments in essay form.

### **I. Required Texts**

Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan*

John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*

Haruki Murakami, *Underground: The Tokyo Gas Attack and the Japanese Psyche*

Articles available either on the web or through Mason's e-journal system (marked with a #)

Several articles on Blackboard (marked with a \*)

### **II. Grading**

Class Participation:	10%
Seven response papers:	5% each (35% total)
Midterm essay (5 pages):	25%
Final essay (5 pages):	30%

The **class participation** grade will be based on your preparation for and contribution to class discussion. The class will be structured around lectures, but there will be time for discussion in almost every class period. In preparing for class, you should complete all the required readings and be ready to answer questions regarding the readings. Your class discussion grade will be evaluated not according to the amount of talking you do, but rather according to whether you contribute thoughtfully and

constructively, based on a careful consideration of the class readings. Obviously, you cannot contribute to class discussion if you are absent; consequently, unexcused absences will be reflected in your participation grade.

The **response papers** are short (around 200-300 words, or one double-spaced page) analytical responses to the readings and films assigned for this course. Perhaps it will be helpful to think of these writing exercises as something like blog posts, though keep in mind that the writing should be focused not on you but on the content of the course. These are intended as low-stakes writing exercises in which you articulate one or two ideas prompted by the readings and films for that particular week. The ideas that you write up for these papers should be generated organically as you do the readings, watch the films, and participate in the class discussions. As you read or watch a film, ask yourself repeatedly: Is there a potentially important point being made here? Is this article or film touching on some important theme from postwar Japanese history? Can I make a connection between the readings for this particular class period and the film I'm watching? Can I make a connection between this film and another one I've already seen? Can I make an observation about what I'm reading or watching that is simply interesting to me and explain why it might be more broadly significant? You do not need to write introductions or conclusions; just jump straight into your ideas. No formal citations are necessary, **but you must always make specific reference to the readings and/or the films for that week.** Your reading response for a particular week does not have to be confined to the material for that week, but it must be clearly prompted by it.

Response papers must be turned in via Blackboard. They must be turned in each week by Tuesday at 5:00; no late papers will be accepted.

**Essays** (both the midterm and final essay) will be evaluated according to how effectively they present the themes and arguments of the readings and films and relate them to the issues addressed in the course. Midterm essays will be penalized one-half grade for each day after the due date. Papers received on the due date, but after the class period for that day, will be penalized one-half grade. After the due date has passed, late papers must be turned in before 5:00 and verified by a member of the history staff or faculty in order to be counted for that day.

The final essay will be due by the time indicated at the bottom of this syllabus. **Late papers will not be accepted.**

### III. Course Policies

**ADA:** Any student who requires special arrangements in order to meet course requirements should contact me at the beginning of the semester to make necessary accommodations. Students should present appropriate verification from the Disabilities Resource Center

**Mason e-mail:** Mason uses only e-mail accounts to communicate with enrolled students. Students must activate their e-mail account, use it when communicating with faculty, and check it regularly for important university information, including messages related to this class.

**Excuses:** If you miss exams due to a serious illness or a death in the family, you must provide proper documentation, without which your excuse will not be accepted.

**Plagiarism and Cheating:** By enrolling at George Mason University, you have agreed to abide by the university's Honor Code. If you violate that Honor Code by plagiarizing or cheating in any other way, I

will automatically report the case to the Dean of Students and the university's Honor Board. I have taken over a dozen cases to the Dean in the past five years, and the punishments have ranged from a zero on the assignment to suspension from the university. Please don't do it.

Concerning plagiarism: According to the Student Handbook, plagiarism encompasses the following: "1) Presenting as one's own the words, work or opinions of someone else without proper acknowledgment; 2) Borrowing the sequence of ideas, the arrangement of material, or the pattern of thought of someone else without proper acknowledgment." While it is possible that I might not catch every case of plagiarism, you should be aware that I use software packages that scan the Internet for papers purchased online and for phrases and sentences copied from websites. In almost all cases, it is easy to identify plagiarized passages, and it is also easy to identify their source. Please don't risk it.

### **Three additional policies:**

1. No laptops, unless special circumstances require you to use them.
2. No food.
3. Cell phones must be turned off.

**One more note on classroom conduct:** We will be watching films almost every week. We will treat these films as primary sources and objects of analysis. Accordingly, viewing the films will be serious, active intellectual work. Classroom conduct should reflect this fact. This will not be a time to eat lunch or nap, although you can bring a beverage if you wish. While viewing the films you should be taking notes. Since all of your papers require you to discuss the films extensively, a failure to take notes during the films will seriously damage your chances of receiving a passing grade. A failure to watch the films at all will guarantee failure.

\*THE LAST DAY TO DROP THIS COURSE IS FEBRUARY 25\*

## **IV. Class Schedule**

### *Week One: Class introduction*

Feb. 1: Read: Gordon, chs. 11 and 12

Watch: "Black Rain" excerpt

### *Week Two: The Occupation, pt. 1*

Feb. 8: Read: Dower, "Introduction" and chs. 1-5

Watch: "Stray Dog"

### *Week Three: The Occupation, pt. 2*

Feb. 1: Read: Dower, chs. 6-11

Watch: "Harp of Burma"

### *Week Four: The Occupation, pt. 3*

Feb. 22: Read: Dower, chs. 12-14

Watch: "Occupied Japan: An Experiment in Democracy"

*Week Five: The Occupation, pt. 4*

Feb. 29: Read: Dower, ch. 15-17, and epilogue  
 Watch (in preparation): "Japan, Our Far East Partner" (access at this web address:  
<http://www.archive.org/details/gov.archives.111-tv-254>)  
 Watch (in class): "Pigs and Battleships"

**\*MIDTERM PAPER DUE ON FRIDAY, MARCH 4, at 12:00pm\***

*Week Six:* Spring Break!

*Week Seven: The bomb: experience and identity*

March 14: Read: \*Tada Makiko, "My husband does not return," in Kyoko and Mark Selden, eds., *Voices from Hiroshima and Nagasaki* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1989), pp. 173-81.  
 \*Hayashi Kyoko, "Two Grave Markers," in Kyoko and Mark Selden, eds., *Voices from Hiroshima and Nagasaki* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1989), pp. 24-54.  
 \*James Orr, "Hiroshima and Yuiitsu no hibakukoku: atomic victimhood in the antinuclear peace movement," in Orr, *The Victim as Hero* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), pp. 36-70.  
 Watch: "Gojira"

*Week Eight: High-speed growth*

March 21: Read: Gordon, ch. 14 and 15  
 \*Igarashi Yoshikuni, "From the the Anti-Security Treaty Movement to the Tokyo Olympics," in Igarashi, *Bodies of Memory* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 131-163  
 \*Kenneth Pyle, "Competing Views of Japanese Purpose," in Pyle, *The Japanese Question* (Washington, D.C. AEI Press, 1996), pp. 42-64.  
 Watch: excerpt from "Tokyo Olympiad"

*Week Nine: Japan as Number One*

March 28: Read: Gordon, ch. 16  
 #Fallows, "Containing Japan," *Atlantic Monthly*, May 1989, pp. 40-54.  
 \*Ezra Vogel, *Japan as Number One* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), pp. 9-23.

Watch (in preparation): "Japan—Miracle in Asia" (access at this web address:  
[http://www.archive.org/details/japan\\_miracle\\_in\\_asia\\_1963](http://www.archive.org/details/japan_miracle_in_asia_1963))

Watch (in class): “The Colonel Comes to Japan,” “Rising Sun” trailer

*Week Ten: Social consequences of the miracle*

April 4: Read: \*Thomas Rohlen, “University Entrance Exams,” in Rohlen, *Japan’s High Schools* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), pp. 77-93  
 \*Anne Alison, “Producing Mothers,” in Anne Imamura, ed., “Re-Imaging Japanese Women (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1996), pp. 135-155  
 \*Norma Field, “The Child as Laborer and Consumer: The Disappearance of Childhood in Contemporary Japan,” in Sharon Stephens, ed., *Children and the Politics of Culture* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 51-78  
 Watch: “Family Game”

*Week Eleven: The Lost Decade*

April 11: Read: Gordon, ch. 17  
 Haruki Murakami, *Underground*  
 Watch: Aum Shinrikyō documentary

*Week Twelve: Japan as cultural superpower*

April 18: Read: #Douglas McCray, “Japan’s Gross National Cool,” available at the following address: <http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/~ikalmar/illustex/japfpmcgray.htm>  
 \*Susan Napier, *Anime: From Akira to Howl’s Moving Castle* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 15-34.  
 \*Koichi Iwabuchi, “How ‘Japanese’ is Pokémon?” in Joseph Tobin, ed., *Pikachu’s Global Adventure* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2004), pp. 54-79.  
 Watch: “Densha Otoko” (“Train Man”)

*Week Thirteen: Remembering and forgetting the Pacific War*

April 25: Read: #Mark Selden, “Japan, the United States and Yasukuni Nationalism” *The Asia-Pacific Journal* (access on the web at <http://japanfocus.org/-Mark-Selden/2892> )  
 \*Carol Gluck, “Operations of Memory: ‘Comfort Women’ and the World,” in Sheila Miyoshi Jager and Rana Mitter, eds., *Ruptured Histories: War, Memory, and the Post-Cold War in Asia* (Harvard University Press, 2007), pp. 47-77.  
 #“A California statue stirs passions in South Korea and ire in Japan” (Access on the web at: <http://www.pri.org/stories/2014-01-29/california-statue-stirs-pride-south-korea-and-protest-japan> )

#“Va. textbook bill on alternative Sea of Japan name heads toward a partisan showdown” *Washington Post*, January 29, 2014(access on the web at: [http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/virginia-politics/va-textbook-bill-on-alternative-sea-of-japan-name-heads-toward-a-partisan-showdown/2014/01/29/9d0ee046-888d-11e3-a5bd-844629433ba3\\_story.html?hpid=z3/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/virginia-politics/va-textbook-bill-on-alternative-sea-of-japan-name-heads-toward-a-partisan-showdown/2014/01/29/9d0ee046-888d-11e3-a5bd-844629433ba3_story.html?hpid=z3/) )

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/virginias-textbook-politics/2014/02/02/08b2e4b2-89cb-11e3-833c-33098f9e5267\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/virginias-textbook-politics/2014/02/02/08b2e4b2-89cb-11e3-833c-33098f9e5267_story.html)

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/memorial-to-wwii-comfort-women-dedicated-in-fairfax-county/2014/05/30/730a1248-e684-11e3-a86b-362fd5443d19\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/memorial-to-wwii-comfort-women-dedicated-in-fairfax-county/2014/05/30/730a1248-e684-11e3-a86b-362fd5443d19_story.html)

Watch: “Japanese Devils”

*Week Fourteen: Japan Adrift*

May 2: Read: Gordon, ch. 18

Read: #Ian Buruma, “Escape in Japan,” *New York Review of Books*,” vol. 56, no. 10 (May 11, 2009).

\*Andrea Arai, “Notes to the Heart: New Lessons in National Sentiment and Sacrifice in Recessionary Japan,” in Ann Anagnost, Andrea G. Arai, and Hai Ren, ed., *Global Futures in East Asia: Youth, Nation, and the New Economy in Uncertain Times* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013), pp. 174-196.

Watch: “Tokyo Sonata”

*Week Fifteen: 3/11*

Wednesday, May 4: Read: #Daniel Aldrich: “Post-Crisis Japanese Nuclear Policy: From Top-down Directives to Bottom-up Activism,” *Asia Pacific Issues*, Vol. 103 (January 2012), pp. 1-11.

\*Selections from *March was Made of Yarn: Reflections on the Japanese Earthquake, Tsunami, and Nuclear Meltdown*, edited by Elmer Luke and David Karashima (New York: Vintage Books, 2012).

Watch: “No Man’s Zone” or “Land of Hope”

**The Final Essay will be due on Tuesday, May 10 in Robinson B359, at 5:00 p.m.**