This course is a survey of Japanese history from the Tokugawa period (around 1600) to the end of the Pacific War in 1945. The course focuses both on changes that preceded Western imperialism in East Asia and those that followed in its wake. Our discussion of modern Japanese history will revolve around three interconnected themes: imperialism, nationalism, and modernity.

I. Course Goals

This course satisfies the Mason Core requirement in Global Understanding, and therefore is designed to train students to do the following:

1. Identify and articulate one’s own values and how those values influence their interactions and relationships with others, both locally and globally.

2. Demonstrate understanding of how the patterns and processes of globalization make visible the interconnections and differences among and within contemporary global societies.

3. Demonstrate the development of intercultural competencies.

4. Explore individual and collective responsibilities within a global society through analytical, practical, or creative responses to problems or issues, using resources appropriate to the field.

In addition, this course is designed to train students to do these things:

1. Achieve a close familiarity with the narrative and themes of modern Japanese history
2. Synthesize information provided through lectures and discussion and identify main points
3. Use primary sources in order to understand the past
4. Write argument-driven essays using primary historical sources as evidence

II. Class Meetings

This class will be a hybrid of in-person and online instruction. Instead of doing an in-person lecture on Tuesday and an in-person discussion on Thursday (as I had initially planned), I’ve decided to record my lectures so that you can watch them on your own on Tuesday mornings (or whenever you want—though it should be early in the week, since I will assume you have watched them by the time we meet for discussion on Thursdays). We will not meet on Tuesdays. However, we will meet in person on Thursdays, every week.

The Thursday class meetings will be devoted exclusively to discussion. We will devote some class time to Q and A about the lectures we’ve watched that week, but most of the time will be devoted to discussing the primary sources or biographies that are assigned each week. Before each meeting, the students are expected to do the following: 1) Watch any lectures I have posted; 2) Complete all the assigned readings
for that week; 3) Complete the “Level 1 Questions” from the Primary Source Sheet from that week and submit answers via Blackboard. During the class period we will quickly address

III. Assignments and Grading

Participation and Primary Source Journal: 30%

There will be two ways in which I will evaluate your participation in the class. The first is through your attendance and participation in the in-class discussions on Thursdays (15%). Because there are a lot of students in this class (around 45), it will be difficult for everyone to have opportunities to have equal time to speak. However, I expect everyone to attend every week and remain engaged in the discussion, even if you don’t say much. “Engagement” is difficult to measure without verbal participation, but I will give you benefit of the doubt, especially if your written work demonstrates that you are keeping up with the readings.

The other component of your participation grade is the Primary Source Journal (15%). Each week, starting in the second week of class, you must submit an entry for your Primary Source Journal. You will have to submit these before the Thursday discussion class begins. In order to complete a journal entry, the first thing you must do is to read the primary sources for that week. Then, you must write answers to the “Level 1 questions” about EACH of those sources, and then provide an answer to the “Level 3 Question” about ONE of those sources. Those questions can be found in the “Primary Source Journal” menu item on the left-hand menu of the Blackboard page.

The “Level 1 Questions” and “Level 3 Questions” are also found in the “Primary Source Sheet” that I will provide every week in the “Readings” folder. In this Primary Source Sheet there are additional questions about each of the sources assigned for that week. Our in-class discussions on Thursdays will be based on the questions from this Primary Source Sheet. In our discussions, I will expect that all of you will be able to provide some sort of verbal answer to the questions on the sheet for that week.

Exams (70%)

Exam 1: 20%
Exam 2: 20%
Final Exam: 30%

The exams will be take-home, and will consist of short answer questions and essays. The exams will draw from the required readings and from our weekly discussions of primary sources. They will be open-note. You will have only a one-day time window in which to complete them. **They will be posted on Thursday at noon and will be due on Friday at noon.** If you are keeping up with the material and taking good notes, the quizzes should take no more than an hour and a half. The quizzes will be posted on Blackboard, and you will submit your answers through Blackboard.

IV. Course Policies

* Late policy: All students are responsible for knowing and adhering to the deadlines for course assignments. Late work will be penalized one full letter grade per day (including weekends & holidays). The only exceptions will be when you have a documented illness or receive explicit, advance permission from your instructor. If you anticipate a problem in completing or submitting your work on time, you must contact the instructor in a timely manner. If you do not hear back from your instructor, you should assume that your work is due on the original date. Regardless of whether or not you have been granted an extension, you must contact your instructor for how to submit late work.
* Plagiarism and cheating: Don't do it. It's usually easy to spot and can result in expulsion from the University and/or loss of your degree. Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another source without giving that source credit. Writers give credit through the use of accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes. A simple listing of books, articles, and websites is not sufficient.

Student writers are often confused as to what should be cited. Some think that only direct quotations need to be credited; this is incorrect. While direct quotations do need citations, so do paraphrases and summaries of opinions or factual information formerly unknown to the writers or which the writers did not discover themselves. Exceptions to this rule include factual information which can be obtained from a variety of sources—what has been called common knowledge—or the writers' own insights or findings from their own field research. What constitutes common knowledge can sometimes be precarious; what is common knowledge for one audience may be so for another. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, or about when or how to properly cite a source, ask me! For more information see this very helpful website.

* Academic accommodations. If you are a student who has a documented condition that warrants academic accommodations, please let me know. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the Office of Disability Services. (http://ods.gmu.edu/)

* Electronic communication. I am best reached by email (see address above). Note: I usually check email during normal business hours, namely M-F, 8 am-5pm. Please allow 24-48 hours for a reply to an email request or inquiry (excluding weekends). Be sure to note your course number in your email subject line and include both your first and last name in your signature. For general advice on the best way to communicate via email, see: http://mleddy.blogspot.com/2005/01/how-to-e-mail-professor.html

*Office Hours. Please visit me during my office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Indeed, I expect every student to visit me during my office hours at some point during the first 8 weeks of the semester. This visit will contribute toward your discussion grade. We will schedule your visit in 15-minute blocks; please go to this Google Sheets page and enter your name in the date/time you prefer. When you sign up, please indicate in parentheses, after your name, which class you’re in (356). The earlier you sign up for a slot, the more options you’ll have. My Tuesday office hours will be virtual, and my Thursday office hours will be in person (Horizon Hall, room 3212). For the virtual office hours on Tuesday, just log into our course blackboard site and click on the “Blackboard Collaborate Ultra for Office Hours” (on the left-hand menu) and then select “Course Room.” Please have your video and audio on. I will be waiting to answer any questions or discuss course material.

**RESOURCES**

Academic Advising for CHSS students: https://academicaffairs.chss.gmu.edu/undergraduate-students
Advising for History majors & minors. https://historyarthistory.gmu.edu/undergraduate/welcome
Career Services: For networking, mentors, and assistance applying for jobs. SUB I Room 3400, 703-993-2370, careers@gmu.edu, https://careers.gmu.edu/
Chosen Name & Pronoun Policy: For information on how to update your chosen name and pronouns. https://registrar.gmu.edu/updating-chosen-name-pronouns/
Counseling and Psychological Services: For free counseling. SUB I Room 3129, 703-993-2380, http://caps.gmu.edu
COVID-19 Safe Return to Campus: https://www2.gmu.edu/coronavirus
Disability Services: http://ods.gmu.edu


Learning Services: Free coaching & academic skills workshops. https://learningservices.gmu.edu/

Library Info Guides: http://infoguides.gmu.edu/


Office of Academic Integrity: https://oai.gmu.edu/

Patriot Pantry: For free food assistance or to make donations. https://ssac.gmu.edu/patriot-pantry/ or email pantry@gmu.edu to make a private appointment to use the pantry.

Patriot Web: For registration, transcripts, and degree evaluations. https://patriotweb.gmu.edu/

Stay Mason Emergency Assistance Fund: For degree-seeking students in acute financial distress who are at risk of dropping out. NOTE: The application process takes a while, and funds are limited. But, it’s worth a try! https://ulife.gmu.edu/forms/stay-mason-student-support-fund-application/

Student Support & Advocacy Center: For health, well-being, and support. SUB I Suite 3200, 703-993-3686, https://ssac.gmu.edu/

University Policies: All members of the Mason community are responsible for knowing and following established policies.

- The Catalog, http://catalog.gmu.edu
- University Policies http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/
- CHSS Policies https://academicaffairs.chss.gmu.edu/ugradpolicies

Writing Center: Multiple locations, 703-993-1200, http://writingcenter.gmu.edu

V. Required Texts

De Bary, Gluck, and Tiedemann, eds., Sources of Japanese Tradition, vol. 2 (excerpts posted on Blackboard site)

Andrew Gordon, A Modern History of Japan

Katsu Kokichi, Musui’s Story

Anne Walthall, ed., The Human Tradition in Modern Japan

Additional readings posted on Blackboard as pdfs, in “Weekly Lessons” folder

NOTE: This syllabus is subject to revision as the semester proceeds. Announcements of changes will be made online and during class meetings. Students are responsible for being aware of any changes.

VI. Schedule

*Additional documents posted on Blackboard will be marked by an asterisk*

Week One (Aug. 22-26)

Tues., Aug. 23: Course Intro

Thurs., Aug. 25: Introduction to Japan and its pre-Tokugawa History
Read: Gordon, pp. 3-9
   Walthall, ch.1 (on Shinanomiya Tsuneko)

Week 2 (Aug 29-Sept 2): Building The Tokugawa Order

Read: Gordon, pp. 11-21
   Walthall, ch. 2 (on Mori Yoshiki)
   In “Tokugawa Order, pt. 1”
   “Code for Warrior Households” (pp. 12-14)
   In “Tokugawa Order, pt. 2”
   “Summary of Japanese Matters” (pp. 156-162)
   “Statement on the Expulsion of the Bateren” (pp. 171-174)
   “The Way of the Samurai” (pp. 192-194)

Week Three (Sept. 5-9): Social Change and the Samurai

Read: Gordon, pp. 22-34
   Musui’s Story
   “The Akō Vendetta Dramatized” (pp. 470-473)

Week Four (Sept. 12-16): Taking Stock of a Changed Society

Read: Gordon, pp. 35-51
   “Kamo no Mabuchi” (pp. 489-496)
   “For a Merit System in Government” (pp. 235-237)
   “The Law of the Universe: Commodities Transactions” (pp. 434-436)
   “Report on an Autopsy” (pp. 371-375)
   “Ōshio’s Protest” (p. 560)
   Aizawa Seishisai’s “New Theses” (pp. 621-627)

Week Five (Sept. 19-23): Barbarians without, Rebels within

Read: Gordon, pp. 51-59
   Tokugawa Nariaki’s letter to the Bakufu
   Ii Naosuke’s letter to the Bakufu
   Subjugation Edict, Resignation Letter, Edict to Diplomats (pp. 670-671)
   Treaty of Amity and Commerce

*EXAM 1: Posted on Thursday, Sept. 22 at noon, due Friday, Sept. 24, at noon

Week Six (Sept. 26-30): The Meiji Restoration and “Civilization and Enlightenment”

Read: Gordon, pp. 61-75
   (In “Restoration—or Revolution” batch)
   “The Charter Oath” (pp. 671-72)
“Memorial on the Proposal to Return the Registers” (pp. 674-676)
“Kido Takayoshi and Ito Hirobumi on Universal Education” (pp. 758-760)

(In “Enlightenment Thought In Meiji Japan” batch)
pp. 694-707 and pp. 710-717

Week Seven (Oct. 3-7): Consolidation at Home, Expansion Abroad

Read: Gordon, pp. 76-89
Walthall, ch. 4 (on the Ishizaka family)
Walthall, ch. 6 (on Jahana Noboru)
“Debating a National Assembly” (pp. 722-727)
Fukuzawa Yukichi’s “Leaving Asia”

Week Eight (Oct. 10-14): Nation-State and Empire

Read: Gordon, pp. 89-103, 113-137
Walthall, ch. 3 (on Nishimiya Hide)
“Political Parties” (pp. 734-739)
“Bestowing the Constitution on the People” (pp. 39-742)
“The Meiji Constitution” (pp. 745-748)
“The Imperial Rescript on Education” (p. 780)

Week Nine (Oct. 17-21): Modernization and Identity

Read: Gordon, pp. 103-112
“Okakura Kakuzō: Aesthetic Pan-Asianism” (pp. 811-816)
“Japan and the World in Cultural Debate” (pp. 1162-1171)

*EXAM 2: Posted on Thursday, Oct. 20 at noon, due Friday, Oct. 21, at noon


Read: Gordon, pp. 139-160 and 161-172
Walthall, ch. 8 (on Matsuura Isami)
“Yoshino Sakuzō” (pp. 837-848)
“Kaneko Fumiko” (pp. 915-920)

Week Eleven (Oct. 31-Nov. 4): Modern Girls and Empire

Read: Gordon, pp. 172-180
Walthall, ch. 5 (on Hatoyama Haruko)
Walthall, ch. 9 (on Yoshiya Nobuko)
“Hiratsuka Raichō and the Bluestocking Society” (pp. 1202-1204)
“The Impact of World War I” (pp. 983-986)
“Peaceful Cooperation Abroad” (pp. 886-889)
“Yanagi Muneyoshi and the Kwanghwa Gate” (pp. 816-820)
Week Twelve (Nov. 7-11): Economic Depression and Radical Nationalism

Read: Gordon, pp. 181-191
“The Rise of Revolutionary Nationalism” (pp. 948-967)
“Plan to Occupy Manchuria” and “The Economic Need for Expansion” (pp. 986-991)

Week Thirteen (Nov. 14-18): Mobilizing for War

Read: Gordon, pp. 191-209
“The Tenkō Phenomenon” (pp. 940-947)
“National Mobilization” (pp. 992-995)
“The Decision for War With the U.S.” (pp. 1007-1010)

Week Fourteen (Nov. 21-25): The Meaning of War

Read: Gordon, pp. 209-219

Week Fifteen (Nov. 28-Dec. 2): War’s End

Read: Gordon, pp. 219-223
Walthall ch. 11 (on Yokoi Shoichi)
Sources: “Defeat” (pp. 1015-1017)

The final exam will be distributed on December 2 and will be due, via Blackboard, on December 9 at noon.

Primary source sheet

You may not be able to answer all the questions for any given source and you will have more specific information for some sources than others. Just do as much as you can.

Level 1 Questions: Basic information about the source:

What is this source? (Give the title AND the genre– is it a letter? A portrait? A law? A poem? An essay?)

Who created this source? (Give the name if you have it and also what kind of person or people created it -- A poet? A government official? A farmer? The leader of an opposition movement?)

When did he/she/they create the source?

What event(s) is the creator reporting, or what issue does it address?
Who was the intended audience?

Level 2 Questions: Meaning of specific source(s) assigned for the week?

(these will be different from source to source)

Level 3 Questions: Significance and Relevance to Course

How do you think the source relates to the issues we're dealing with in class? Does it help illustrate a point that was addressed in the textbook or the lectures?