

History 357: Postwar Japan

Fall Semester 2009
M 1:30-4:15
Classroom: Science and Technology I 212

Dr. Brian Platt
Office Hours: Wed 11-12
Office: Robinson B361

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 students to read scholarly books and articles critically—identifying the argument, evaluating evidence, disputing conclusions, and so on. A third goal will be to train students to use primary sources—which in this class will consist largely of films—to express their own arguments in essay form.

I. Required Texts

Gary Allinson, *Japan's Postwar History*

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 Mason's e-reserve system (marked with a *)

II. Grading

Class Participation: 10%

Two film analyses (3 pages): 15% each

Midterm essay (5 pages): 25%

Final essay (5 pages): 35%

The **class participation** grade will be based on the students' 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.

Essays (both film analyses and 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. The essays must be turned in **during the class period** on the dates designated by the instructor. Late 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.

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

Excuses: If you miss exams or fail to turn in assignments due to an illness or family emergency, you must provide proper documentation, without which your excuses 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—mostly plagiarism-related—to the Dean in the past 5 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. Coffee or other beverages are allowed.
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 even watch the films will guarantee failure.

*THE LAST DAY TO DROP THIS COURSE IS OCTOBER 2

IV. Class Schedule

Week One: Class introduction

Aug. 31: Read: Allinson, ch. 1
Watch: "Our Job in Japan"

Week Two

Sept. 7: **Labor Day Holiday**

Week Three: The Occupation, pt. 1

Sept. 14: Read: Dower, "Introduction" and chs. 1-5
Watch: "Stray Dog"

Week Four: The Occupation, pt. 2

Sept. 21: Read: Dower, chs. 6-11
Watch: "MacArthur's Children"

Week Five: The Occupation, pt. 3

First film analysis due

Sept. 28: Read: Dower, chs. 12-14
Watch: "Japan's Peace Constitution"

Week Six: The Occupation, pt. 4

Oct. 5: Read: Dower, ch. 15-17, and epilogue
Watch: "Pigs and Battleships"

Week Seven: The bomb: experience and identity

Midterm paper due

Tuesday, Oct. 13: 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).
Watch: "Gojira"

Week Eight: High-speed growth

Oct. 19: Read: Allinson, ch. 3

*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

Oct. 26: Read: Allinson, ch. 4

#Fallows, "Containing Japan," *Atlantic Monthly*, May 1989, pp. 40-54.

<http://mutex.gmu.edu:2048/login?url=http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=1821383&sid=1&Fmt=6&clientId=31810&RQT=309&VName=PQD>

*Ezra Vogel, *Japan as Number One* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), pp. 9-23.

Watch: "The Colonel Goes to Japan," "Rising Sun" trailer

Week Ten: Social consequences of the miracle

Nov. 2: 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: Nostalgia amidst success

Nov. 9: Read: Allinson, ch. 5

#Millie Creighton, "Consuming Rural Japan: The Marketing of Tradition and Nostalgia in the Japanese Travel Industry." *Ethnology* 36.3 (Summer 1997): 239-54

*Jordan Sand, "The Ambivalence of the New Breed: Nostalgic Consumerism in the 1980s and 1990s Japan," in Sheldon Garon and Patricia Maclachlan, eds., *The Ambivalent Consumer: Questioning Consumption in East Asia and the West* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2006), pp. 85-108.

Watch: "Jūtai"

Week Twelve: The lost decade

Second film analysis due

Nov. 16 Read: Haruki Murakami, *Underground*

Watch: "Terror in Tokyo"

Week Thirteen: Japan as cultural superpower

- Nov. 23: 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 Fourteen: Remembering and forgetting the Pacific War

- Nov. 30: Read: #Laura Hein, "Exhibiting World War II in Japan and the United States since 1995," *Pacific Historical Review*, 76.1 (February 2007): 61-94
- #Tessa Morris-Suzuki, "Japan's 'Comfort Women': It's time for the truth (in the ordinary, everyday sense of the word)," in *Japan Focus* (http://japanfocus.org/-Tessa-Morris_Suzuki/2373)
- #Rumi Sakamoto, "Will you go to war? Or will you stop being Japanese?" Nationalism and History in Kobayashi Yoshinori's *Sensoron*," in *Japan Focus* (<http://www.japanfocus.org/-Rumi-SAKAMOTO/2632>)
- Watch: "Japanese Devils" or "Nanking"
- Consult: http://www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/top_e.html
<http://www.yasukuni.or.jp/english/>
<http://www.nj1937.org/english/>

Week Fifteen: Wrap-up

- Dec. 7: Read: #Ian Buruma, "Escape in Japan," *New York Review of Books*," vol. 56, no. 10 (May 11, 2009). Found at: <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/22742>
- Watch: "Tokyo Sonata"

The Final Essay will be due on Friday, December 11 in Robinson B359 (by 5:00 p.m.).