From Japan’s emergence as a centralised state under imperial and courtier rule, through the age of the warrior to Japan’s remarkable transformation into a modern nation-state, this paper explores a variety of narratives and approaches to understanding Japan’s long history. Topics will include power politics, religions and ideologies, gender, warfare, modernity as well as Japan’s place in the world.

Instructor: Professor Adolphson
Lectures/Discussions on Mondays and Wednesdays 9:00-10:00, Room FAMES L1.
Office: FAMES, room 313.
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 14:00-15:00; or by appointment.
E-mail: sma75@cam.ac.uk
Teaching assistant: Mr. Hao Chen (hc470@cam.ac.uk)

Course Requirements and Expectations
J6 offers a critical survey of Japan’s history from its early beginnings to the present with a broad focus on political, intellectual and social history. For Michaelmas, we will cover Japan’s classical, medieval and early modern eras, up to the 1850s, whereas Lent Term will be devoted to Japan’s modern age (1850s to the present). This paper is split into two meetings a week – one lecture and one seminar. Through the lectures, students will be offered narratives based on the latest research, which frequently challenges conventional wisdom. It is therefore important that students attend all lectures, engage with the material covered and stay active in class.

For the seminars, students will be asked to read a variety of historical texts, assess them and be prepared to discuss them in class. It is particularly important that you not only read the assigned texts carefully, but also find out about the sources themselves, as well as important terms or names you are unfamiliar with. The format of these sessions will vary from oral and visual presentations to group discussions and even historical experiments.

You are allowed to bring a computer for note taking into the classroom, but I expect that you will show
respect to other students and the instructor by coming to class on time and by not engaging in non-class activities, such as chatting and emailing, on your computer during class times. I would strongly advice against skipping classes, as your learning experience will be substantially diminished without good attendance, and the exam is closely modelled on the material and discussions covered in class. Much of that is not available elsewhere.

**Essays:** There are two essay assignments for the first half of this paper. The first is a short (up to five pages) book review or response paper to an assigned topic that will be handed out in Week 2. It is due on 17 November. The second essay is a longer assignment that students will be expected to work on over Winter break. There will be a range of topics or questions to aid students in finding an appropriate focus, but in contrast to the shorter essay, students will be expected to find sources on their own to produce a paper that reflects independent analysis and an in-depth comprehension. The essay is due prior to Lent Term, on 13 January.

**Supervisions:** Students are entitled to up to 2 supervisions for each term of this paper, though the second one will be in early Lent. They will mainly focus on feedback to the essays, but there will of course also be opportunities to address any concerns or questions.

**Supervision 1 (Michaelmas)**
- Short Essay Assignment to be circulated in Week 2
- Essay Due: 17 November, 17:00
- Supervision: Week 8

**Supervision 2 (Lent)**
- Long Essay topics to be circulated in Week 8
- Essay Due: 13 January, 17:00.
- Supervision: Week 1 of Lent.

**** The exam for this paper consists of three sections containing nine essay questions of which candidates will be required to attempt one from each section.

**Required Textbooks**
The textbooks will be available at the Faculty library but I strongly recommend getting your own copies. If you prefer to use the library, please be considerate to your fellow students as they may want to use the copies available as well. Shorter excerpts will be available at the Faculty library.

- Karl Friday, ed., *Japan Emerging: Premodern History to 1850*. Westview Press, 2012. Several chapters from this book have been assigned, but students are also encouraged to
use it as a reference work for the term.

- Sources of Japanese Tradition, Vol. 1, second edition. (Do not use or purchase the first edition as it does not contain all the readings!)

**SCHEDULE**

**Week 1. Conquering the Peninsula**

9 Oct. (M) *The Origins of the Imperial Family*

11 Oct. (W) *Seminar 1: Making Sense of Legends and Chronicles*


**Week 2. The Early Japanese State**

16 Oct. (M) *Creating the Imperial State*


**Week 3. Japan’s Classical Age**

23 Oct. (M) *The Pluralization of Power in Heian Japan*

25 Oct. (W) *Seminar 3: Cultural Capital and Refinement*


**Week 4. A Courtly Society Militarized**

30 Oct. (M) *The Rise of Warriors and the First Shogunate*

1 Nov. (W) *Seminar 4: Japan’s First Warrior Heroes*


**Week 5. Warrior Rule and Culture**

6 Nov. (M) *The Ashikaga Shogunate*
8 Nov. (W)  Seminar 5: Refining Warrior Ideals
Excerpts from Legends of the Samurai, 157-187.
Friday, Japan Emerging, 267-277.

**Week 6. The Warring States**

13 Nov. (M)  Warlords, Foot Soldiers and the Wild East

15 Nov. (W)  Seminar 6: Warrior Law Codes and the Unifiers
Legends of the Samurai, 204-231, 249-253.
Friday, Japan Emerging, 244-253.

17 Nov. (F)  Short essay due by 17:00. Send by email or upload to course website.

**Week 7. The Tokugawa State**

20 Nov. (M)  Guest lecture by Dr. Kurashige, Keio University: “Centralized Feudalism” and Pax Tokugawa
Friday, Japan Emerging, 321-332.

22 Nov. (W)  Seminar 7: The Creation of the Samurai
Friday, Japan Emerging, 344-355.
Legends of the Samurai, 287-303.

**Week 8.**

Short essay supervisions will be scheduled for this week.

27 Nov. (M)  Edo Culture and Society
Topics for longer essay will be handed out.

29 Nov. (W)  Seminar 8: Contradictions of an Ideology

13 Jan. (Sat)  Long essay due.

Japanese History (J6) - (Meiji to the Modern) 2018
Dr. Barak Kushner, Room 309 (Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies), bk284@cam.ac.uk

Dr. Jeff Kurashige, Room TBD (Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies), jk703@cam.ac.uk and kurashig@fbc.keio.ac.jp

Lectures on Monday, 9:00-10:00am in Room L1
Seminars on Wednesday, 9:00-10:00am in Room L1

Lectures will cover the general historiography and paradigm of the topic. Lectures are not designed to lull students into thinking they are attending a “performance;” lectures are designed to ignite questions, spur passion, and force ideas into conflict in the full Socratic method. Lectures will also be where we discuss the outside films required for viewing, and what is happening in the press concerning Japanese history.

This course is split into two meetings a week – lecture and seminar. The class is designed for students to focus on the history of Japan from the collapse of the Tokugawa bakufu, in the mid 19th century, until today. Students will become familiar with traditional Japanese culture and political history, but also chart and understand how Japan has changed over the last several centuries to become the economic powerhouse in Asia that it is today. In order to analyze Japan’s current relations with its Asian counterparts, we will also examine Japan’s shifting self-image and foreign relations over the centuries, with particular focus on China.

***Essay for supervision: Topics will be explained to students during term.

***The exam paper for this course will consist of answering three questions out of a larger selection given by the instructor.

**Good General Histories** (purchasing one of these will assist you.)

James McClain, *Japan: A Modern History*

Conrad Totman, *Early Modern Japan*

Marius Jansen, *The Making of Modern Japan*

Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Re-inventing Japan*

Other series that will be helpful:

Peter Kornicki edited series on Meiji Japan (Routledge)

Stephen Large’s edited series on Showa Japan (Routledge)

William Tsutsui’s volume on modern Japanese History (Blackwell Publishers)

***All articles and books are either on reserve or available in electronic form through the library servers. If you check them out for too long, then others cannot read them. Please buy them yourself
or put them back on the shelf where you found them. Coming to class and saying, “I couldn’t find it,” is NOT an excuse. You will be expected to have read the preparatory material.
Week 1 (January 22 and 24)
Japan in a China Centered World? Crumbling Tokugawa and the Meiji Restoration

Lecture: This lecture provides an overview of the final years of the Tokugawa polity and the transition of Japan to a modern society. We examine the transformation of Japan not simply as national history but as an integral part of the transformation of East Asia inaugurated by the entrance of the European imperial powers and the decline of the Chinese World Order. Seen from this perspective we see Japan’s Meiji Restoration as part of the broader nineteenth century history of imperialism. We ask the following questions: What was the nature of the imperial restoration of 1868? Was the break between the Tokugawa and the Meiji era really a collapse between the “feudal” and the modern? Was the bloodless revolution really all that free of violence? Put simply, can a society really transform overnight?

Map skills!

Core Reading

James L. Huffman, “Restoration and Revolution,” A Companion to Japanese History. (http://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/bkjapanhistory/restoration_and_revolution/0)


Further Reading


You can now read the Cambridge history series of Japan online if you would prefer to read from your room.

(http://histories.cambridge.org/search_results?search_scope=collection&query=japan&collection_id=set_cambridge_history_japan&advanced=0)


Week 2 (January 29 and 31)
The Making of Modern Japan: Statecraft and Empire

Lecture: This lecture examines the institutional, political, economic, and social transformation inaugurated by the Meiji restoration. This work, from the paving of roads, hygiene, family, workplaces, factories, broke down the traditional order or Japanese society and inaugurated a
new hierarchy and category of state, society, and citizen that was wholly revolutionary and imperial. Moving from the domestic to the external realm, we examine how the restoration transfigured geographical and political relations of Japan to East Asia, and how this new relationship inaugurated a reshaping of Japan’s sense of its place in the world.

**Core Reading**


**Further Reading**


Mara Patessio, *Women and Public Life in Early Meiji Japan: The Development of the Feminist*
Adolphson


Week 3 (February 5 and 7)
Leaving Meiji and the Old Century: Japan Confronts Asia?

Lecture: One of the most important characteristics of economic and political change in nineteenth century East Asia was the presence of competing imperial states and systems. This week follows the origins of the Japanese imperial project, not simply as a geographical project but through its constitutional, diplomatic, political, commercial and cultural relationships. It is an examination of not simply the shifts in world politics from the perspective of East Asia, but of how the Japanese built the first modern non-western empire in what has been labeled as “the age of empire.” What are the key domestic factors of Japanese imperialism? What sort of reaction does Japanese imperialism and colonialism in East Asia generate within Japan, in East Asia, or in the West?

Core Reading


Further Reading
Week 4 (February 12 and 14)
Roads to Imperialism: Taisho Democracy Roaring Twenties, Rising Tensions of the Thirties

Lecture: This week examines the period of transformation from the Great War through two imperial eras and into the 1930s. We examine the transformation of Japan into a global power during the Great War, and which as one of the five great powers helped shape the postwar world at Paris and Washington. We examine the era of party government and universal manhood suffrage, the period known as “Taisho democracy.” What did politics and society in the Taisho era look like? How did people experience the era’s social transformation? How did democracy and imperialism co-exist?

Core Reading


Further Reading


Week 5 (February 19 and 21)

Manchuria, Sino-Japanese War to the Greater East Asian War, and Total Empire

Lecture: From 1931 to 1945 the Japanese Empire founded a new state in Manchuria, reorganized and reconsolidated the empire for the era of total war, and fought wars with Republican China and the Anglo-American powers. Domestically, the era began with the collapse of party cabinets
and ended with the establishment of the non-partisan Imperial Rule Assistance Association. How did Japan fight the Asia-Pacific war? What was the logic of the “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere”? How did the war transform colonial societies? What did wartime mobilization look like in Japan?

Core Reading

Louise Young, “Chapter 3: War Fever: Imperial Jingoism and the Mass Media,” Japan’s Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism, pp.55-114. (http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=acls;idno=heb00123)


Further Reading


Michael Robinson, "Broadcasting, Cultural Hegemony, and Colonial Modernity in Korea, 1924-1945" in Colonial Modernity in Korea (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 1999),
End of War and End of Empire

Lecture: What actually made the Japanese government decide to surrender? How did Japan and the Allies adjudicate wartime responsibility? How do Japanese people remember the war? How were the war atrocities committed for the empire adjudicated by the international community, and by the Japanese themselves? How did the now former imperial subjects remember the Japanese empire and the sacrifices they had to make for it? What was the process of return from the borderlands of empire to the metropole? How did these living representations and reminders of empire influence postwar society?

** Pizza party and film showing of the 1954 film Godzilla, and discussion. Night to be chosen in consultation with students.

Core Reading


pp.66-83.

Katō Kiyofumi, “The Decline of the Japanese Empire and the Transformation of the Regional Order in East Asia,” in The Dismantling of Japan’s Empire in East Asia: Deimperialization, Postwar Legitimation and Imperial Afterlife (London: Routledge, 2016), Ch.1.

Week 7 (March 5 and 7)
The Postwar and Rising Japan

Lecture: This lecture will examine Japanese history in the second half of the twentieth century, a period known to the Japanese simply as the “postwar.” Our historical gaze moves from the early postwar decades through the upheaval of Allied occupation, Cold War "Red Purge" of leftists and communists from the public sphere, and the Korean War. We focus on the structural foundations of postwar Japan from the 1955-system of conservative government to the political-economic institutions of the era of high-speed economic growth, and examine the changing nature of post-imperial Japanese society. We turn our focus to probe the fears and specter of nuclear disaster, the failure of the student movement to stop revision of the security treaty in 1960 and its radicalization in the 1960s. Finally, we come to the last decade of the Shōwa monarchical era, and an era of explosive economic growth that propelled Japan to the center of the global economy.

Core Reading


Week 8 (March 12 and 14)
Whither Japan - the lost decades? Environmental and Leadership Crises

Lecture: The 1990s and 2000s were a period of profound long-term social, political, and economic change in Japan. This lecture seeks to make sense of the so-called "lost decades" and asks whether what was lost was something tangible or a sense of Japan’s future, a sense of its place in the world. We question our sources and pose serious questions of the historiography: do the 1990s and early 2000s truly constitute lost decades? Or were they in fact a period of adjustment in which the structural foundations (economic, political, social, military) were reorganized and restructured in line with changes in the world situation? This lecture is an invitation to think through and reflect upon Japan’s contemporary history and ponder where Japan and East Asia are going?

Core Reading


