History of Modern Japan

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The purpose of this course is to familiarize students with major events in modern Japanese history and scholarly interpretations of these events. We will first examine the uniqueness of Japanese culture and society under the reign of Tokugawa Shoguns, and then we will pursue three major themes: Japan’s modern transformation under the influence of Western civilizations; the rise and fall of Japanese military imperialism; and the development of Japanese capitalism in the second half of the twentieth century. For detailed course objectives and learning goals, please refer to http://uncw.edu/hst/learninggoals.html. This course adopts James McClain’s Japan: A Modern History as the main textbook. The five supplementary books are used for cases studies and for students to write essays. This course combines lectures, readings, discussions, and visual materials. Although no extensive background knowledge is presumed, students should be aware that the required reading includes a large number of unfamiliar names and terms.

TEXTBOOKS (AVAILABLE AT THE BOOKSTORE):

James McClain, Japan: A Modern History
Mark Ravina, The Last Samurai: the Life and Battles of Saigo Takamori
Soseki Natsume, Kokoro
Haruko Taya Cook and Theodore Cook, Japan at War: An Oral History
John Dower, Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II
Bruce Feiler, Learning to Bow: Inside the Heart of Japan

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Class Attendance

Students are expected to attend each class meeting. There is no attendance policy.

2. Reading Assignments

The required reading assignments are listed in the calendar of course events. They vary week to week, but on the average students should expect about 90-100 pages per week. Students are expected to finish the reading assignment before each class meeting.
3. Writing Assignments: 60%

Students are responsible for writing five essays based respectively on the five supplementary books, each in 1,250-1,500 words or 4-5 pages in length, typed and double-spaced and not exceeding 12 point font size. An essay that is submitted late will be penalized 5 percent of the grade for each day it is overdue. Electronic submission of any essays is not accepted. Please retain an electronic version of each essay until the instructor returns the one you have submitted. Students are strongly recommended to consult their writings to the teaching assistant and to the Writing Services at the University Learning Center at DePaolo Hall 1003 or uncw.edu/ulc/writing/index.html. The Writing Services helps in three ways (one-on-one appointments, online submissions and drop-in Writing Lab) and there shouldn’t be any reason a student can’t get the writing help he/she wants.

9/13, The Last Samurai, 10%
9/25, Kokoro, 10%
10/30, Japan at War, 15%
11/13, Embracing Defeat, 15%
11/29, Learning to Bow, 10%

4. Examinations: 40%

Students are responsible for two in-class exams, the midterm and the final, that are based on the main textbook and lectures. Both exams will be in the form of multiple-choice questions and each exam is worth 20 percent of the course grade.

5. Class Discussion: 3% Extra

Students are encouraged to ask questions and express their thoughts in the class and to actively participate in classroom discussions. The extra credit points will be graded essentially upon a student’s performance in discussion sessions.

**GRADING POLICY:** Total 100%

- A = 93-100
- A- = 90-92
- B+ = 87-89
- B = 83-86
- B- = 80-82
- C+ = 77-79
- C = 73-76
- C- = 70-72
- D+ = 67-69
- D = 63-66
- D- = 60-62
- F = Below 60

**IMPORTANT NOTE:**

This course complies with the UNCW Academic Honesty Policy which is documented in the Undergraduate Catalogue and in the Student Handbook. Any plagiarism will lead a student to automatic failure of this class. In writing, any citation more than 25 words directly from other
people’s works must be footnoted.

**CALENDAR OF COURSE EVENTS:**

### I. Tokugawa Japan, 1600-1868

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/23</td>
<td>Introduction/Lecture: Premodern Japan</td>
<td>McClain, 5-20</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/28</td>
<td>Tokugawa Political System</td>
<td>McClain, 20-39</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/30</td>
<td>Tokugawa Society, Economy, and Foreign Relations</td>
<td>McClain, 39-83</td>
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### II. Meiji Japan, 1868-1912

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/4</td>
<td>Opening of Japan</td>
<td>McClain, 119-142</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/6</td>
<td>The Fall of Tokugawa</td>
<td>McClain, 142-152</td>
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<td>9/11</td>
<td>Meiji Restoration</td>
<td>McClain, 153-168</td>
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<td>9/13</td>
<td>Establishing New Society</td>
<td>McClain, 169-182</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Book Discussion:</strong> The Last Samurai; Essay #1 due</td>
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<td>9/18</td>
<td>Meiji Economy</td>
<td>McClain, 207-245</td>
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<td>9/20</td>
<td>Meiji Political Development</td>
<td>McClain, 183-206</td>
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<td>9/25</td>
<td>Film: Meiji: Asia’s Response to the West</td>
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<td><strong>Book Discussion:</strong> Kokoro; Essay #2 due</td>
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<td>9/27</td>
<td>Road to Imperialism</td>
<td>McClain, 283-307, 332-344</td>
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10/2 Midterm Exam

III. Prewar to Wartime Japan, 1912-1945

10/4 Era of Parliament
McClain, 316-332

10/11 Taisho Economy and Society
McClain, 345-375

10/16 Managing the Empire
McClain, 307-315, 332-344

10/18 Road to Militarism
McClain, 375-397, 405-440

10/23 China War
McClain, 441-470

10/25 The Pacific War, I
McClain, 471-505

10/30 The Pacific War, II
McClain, 505-515

Book Discussion: Japan at War; Essay #3 due

11/1 Film, The Pacific War Selections

IV. Postwar Japan, 1945-Present

11/6 The American Occupation of Japan
McClain, 523-561

11/8 Money Politics
McClain, 562-571

11/13 Book Discussion: Embracing Defeat; Essay #4 due

11/15 Miracle Economy
McClain, 571-582

11/20 Film: Inside Japan Inc

11/27 Postwar Society
McClain, 582-591

11/29  Cultural Reconstruction
       McClain, 592-598
       Book Discussion: *Learning to Bow*; Essay #5 Due

12/4   A Troubled Super Economic Power
       McClain, 599-632

12/11  Final Exam: 8-11 am