course syllabus hist/jpna200 spring 2019

course name: japanese history since 1800
year available: year 2 (sophomore)
course code: hist/jpna200– double-listed
subject area: history
class style: lecture
number of credits: 3
term(s) offered: spring and fall semesters
prerequisites: none
instructor: jürgen paul melzer j-melzer@ygu.ac.jp

course description
in this course, we will explore the last two centuries of japan’s eventful history. we will begin our
cyberj in the years before the turbulent collapse of the tokugawa shogunate and follow the japan’s
revolutionary modernization during the second half of the nineteenth century. we will pay close
attention to the tensions between westernization and “japaneseness” and to the dilemma between
democracy and militarization all the way through world war ii and the u.s. occupation. we will also
look into the dramatic and often unpredictable changes of japan’s postwar economy and politics. the
course will examine how these constant transformations not only affected party bosses and top-level
managers but also the everyday lives of home makers, students, workers, and farmers. we will
illuminate the tight connection of japan’s history with the outside world and put its development in a
global context.

course objectives
at the end of this course, you will be able to:
1. identify historical patterns and recurring themes that help to connect japan’s modern history
   with that of other countries.
2. open and use the historian’s toolbox for reading and interpreting a wide range of primary sources.
3. identify the concerns and intentions of secondary sources and becoming aware of the
different approaches to making sense of the past.
4. you will also:
5. gain an awareness of how japan’s present situation in the world is embedded in the country’s
   history.
6. engage thoroughly in writing about historical events by putting forward an argument and
   developing it in a clear and coherent manner.
7. learn how to articulate and refine ideas in discussions and presentations.

grading criteria
there will be one in-class midterm and a final examination. grading is as follows: attendance and
participation in discussions (20%); midterm (20%); paper and presentation (25%); final examination (35%).
students cannot expect to pass the course if they fail to attend the lectures on a regular basis.

organization
classes will start with a 20-minute discussion followed by a 55-minute lecture. depending on the class
size, each student will lead at least one discussion and prepare a summary and review of the readings in
advance of the class meeting.

paper
one essay 2500-3000 words essay (roughly equivalent to 8-10 typed pages, double-spaced), due by the
first day of the examination week. it is best to define your own topic and central questions in
consultation with your lecturer. your essay should be based on course readings and at least one
additional book or set of essays that deals with your topic. late papers will be penalized. students are
strongly advised to review the “plagiarism guidelines” outlined in icla’s student handbook.

required texts
LECTURES AND READINGS

All required readings should be done prior to the date under which they are listed.

WEEK 1: Introduction and Background
(1) Studying the History of Modern Japan
(2) The End of the Tokugawa Era
   • Primary: “Economic Conditions in Edo and in the Countryside” (1798), “The Harris Treaty of 1858.”

WEEK 2: The Meiji Revolution and its Aftermath
(1) The Creation of a Nation State
(2) The Meiji Political Transformation
   • Primary: “The Constitution of the Empire of Japan” (1889).

WEEK 3: “Rich Nation, Strong Army”
(1) Farms and factories
(2) The Meiji Wars

WEEK 4: The “Taishō Democracy”
(1) Modern City Life and Feminism
   • Primary: “Restoring Women’s Talents” (1911).
(2) Taishō Liberalism and Its Adversaries

WEEK 5: Depression, Militarism, and Expansion
(1) Japan and the Great Depression
   • Primary: Gondō Seikyō, “The Gap between the Privileged Classes and the Commoners” (1926).
(2) The Rise of Militarism
   • Louise Young, Japan’s Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism (1998), pp. 55- 114.
WEEK 6: The “Road to Pearl Harbor”
(1) Expansion into China
(2) The Internationalization of the Sino-Japanese Conflict

WEEK 7: Wartime Japan
(1) The Pacific War
- Primary: “The Decision for War with the United States” (1941).
(2) The Home front

WEEK 8: Defeat and Surrender
(1) The War Ends
- Primary: “Imperial Rescript on Surrender” (1945).
(2) Mid-Term Test

WEEK 9: The American Occupation
(1) The Occupiers
(2) The Occupied
- Primary: “Enduring the Defeat” (1945).
- Dower, “Kyodatsu: Exhaustion and Despair” and “Cultures of Defeat” in Embracing Defeat, pp. 87-167.

WEEK 10: The Era of High Growth
(1) The “Economic Miracle”
(2) Office Ladies and Salarymen
- Makoto Kumazawa, “Twenty Years of a Bank Worker’s Life” in Portraits of the Japanese Workplace, pp. 205- 244.
WEEK 11: Postwar Politics
(1) The Struggle over the Security in a Bipolar World
(2) Citizen Movements
   • Primary: Minamata Disease “We Citizens: Sit-in Strike Declaration” (1971)
   • James W. White, “The Dynamics of Political Opposition” in Gordon, Postwar Japan as History, pp. 424-448.

WEEK 12: The “Bubble Years”
(1) Japanese Pride and Economic Power
(2) A Model for America?

WEEK 13: The “Lost Decade”
(1) The Post-Bubble Economy
(2) Anxieties and a Demographic Crisis

WEEK 14: Japan’s Position in the World
(1) “Japanization” and Globalization
   • Bruce Cumings, “Japan’s Position in the World System” in Gordon, Postwar Japan as History, pp. 34-63.
(2) The Long Shadows of the Past

WEEK 15: Presentations and Review