

JAPAN-AMERICA SHARED HISTORIES 2 credits (Fall)

日米関係史 2 単位 (秋学期)

Japan-America Shared Narratives

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**Course Description/Objectives/Teaching Method/Intended Learning Outcome:**

The US arose as the most powerful nation after World War II while Japan emerged as one of the most prosperous countries in the 1980s. Japan and the US share a history that spans centuries, though the relationship has seen many ups and downs. Both nations now cooperate in the areas of military security, information sharing, corporate management, global technology, professional networking, digital and print media, socio-economic systems, venture capitalism, ecological sustainability and cross-cultural awareness. Both nations also possess a strong work ethic which is responsible for their industrial development and national greatness. Though over the centuries there have been significant interactions between these two countries, it is only after the defeat of Japan in World War II and the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1951, that Japan-US relationship enters a new phase. Since the late 1950s US presence in the Asia Pacific region increased and Japanese industrialization gained a fillip with IMF loans. In the 1980s trade relations between the two countries became rough due to Japanese protectionism but gradually it thawed. After the breakup of the Soviet bloc in 1989 the perceived threat from Russia diminished, but in recent years this has been replaced by the growing assertiveness of China. Today both nations are beset with political, economic and demographic problems but they still provide leadership and direction to the rest of the world. The attempt in the class will be to combine the strategies and methodologies of American Studies and Japanese Studies to understand the trajectories, shared histories and narratives that both nations have taken after World War II. We will try to understand key concepts, both American and Japanese, relating to freedom, welfare, civil rights, sovereignty, representation, democracy, religion, corporate governance, in order to create a composite intellectual and political culture based on the methodologies of cultural studies and social sciences. The emergence of a new global order, proliferation of the Internet and the rise of political leaders with a business background brings in new possibilities and challenges for both America and Japan. We will also study some key concepts that guide Japanese and American attitudes in personal and social life such as zoto and gift-giving, yugen and aesthetics, bushido and warrior spirit.

Students will get an opportunity to:

1. acquire negotiation skills,
2. learn new concepts, methods and vocabularies,
3. understand stereotypes of knowledge and reason/develop critical thinking to understand bias, manipulation, prejudice, discrimination and hegemony,
4. synthesize diverse opinions and perspectives from within and outside Japan and America,
5. develop skills to write/think purposefully and strategically, and
6. acquire the habit to pursue knowledge independently and scientifically.

**Course Plan:**

- 1 US-Japan Shared Histories and Narratives. An Overview. Ideas of nation and interpretation of the Other—US and Japan. A brief discussion on Japanese and American ideas of independence.
- 2 US-Japan, Democracy and Human Rights Diplomacy. The way human rights and democracy work in both US and Japan. We will also discuss a Japanese concept.
- 3 US-Japan Security Treaty, A Stronger Alliance. The US-Japan Security Treaty, American bases in Futenma, Iwakuni and Kaneda; Japanese-American Maritime Partnership and Chinese Muscular Politics--Conflict over natural resources and territory--attempts to control maritime and natural resources.
- 4 Socio-Economic Systems of US and Japan. A brief discussion of the spirit of Japan.

- 5 Soft and Hard Power, Japanese and American. A brief discussion of the Japanese spirit of bishido and American warrior spirit.
- 6 Immigration Policies in the US and Japan. Japanese and American Immigration policies—strength and weakness. A discussion on the Protestant Christian work ethic and Japanese idea of gambaro.
- 7 Fukuzawa Yukichi, the Founder of Modern Japan and the Influence from the US. A brief discussion on Japanese nemawashi and American consensus. A discussion on Fukuzawa's ideas on new education.
- 8 Japanese Keiretsu and American Corporate Governance—capitalism, protectionism, zaibatsu, post-war economic miracle, industrial organization, investment systems, banking and non-financial firms, Lehman Brothers Shock and Japanese financial system. A discussion of American aesthetics and Japanese yu-gen. Feedback on assignments.
- 9 Hemingway and Murakami, US and Japanese Modern Literature. We will briefly discuss a new Japanese concept.
- 10 Japanese and American Conceptions of Sovereignty. A brief discussion of a Japanese concept honne-to-tatema.
- 11 Constructing National Heroes—Yasukuni Shrine and Arlington Cemetery—Shintoism and enshrining the dead, American heroism and manifest destiny; Japanese Emperor system and American Christian identity. A discussion on danjyo kankei and male-female relations.
- 12 US and Japan, Foreign Policy and Mutual Support. Japan and US—Asia and the rest of the world, Foreign policy and economic growth, Democrats and Republicans, LDP (Jiminto) and DPJ (Minshuto); Henry Kissinger, Margaret Albright, Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump and Joe Biden on foreign policy.
- 13 The Future of Japan-US Relations and Summing Up. Imagining new directions and future prospects after the pandemic.

Other We will discuss new Japanese and American concepts connected to the class to give added value.

**Method of Evaluation:**

Students' grades will be based on the following criteria:

1. Final Essay: (60% credit) 3000 words plus 100 words abstract on any theme related to the course
2. Weekly Lecture Summary Reports and attending online--real time and on demand (40% credit)

**Textbooks:**

Students will be provided with material on the class web. Recorded On Demand lecture video will also be provided weekly. Please watch the video and come online for the class discussion when the class begins. The online discussion address will be provided in the class web.

**Reference Books:**

Zinn, Howard. (2003). A People's History of the United States 1492-Present. Perennial Classics. New York: Harper Perennial, Price 12.89 USD. ISBN:978-0-06-083862-2

Arase, David and Akaha, Tsueno (2011). The US-Japan Alliance: Balancing Soft and Hard Power in East Asia (The Nissan Institute/Routledge Japanese Studies Series). London: Routledge; ISBN-10: 0415679737

**Lecturer's Comments to Students:**

Students will be expected to watch 'On Demand' videos, discuss online, write weekly reports and a final essay of 3000 words. This is an exciting new class and will provide you with relevant information about the shared histories and new directions in Japan-America relationship. We will study new things every week including a Japanese and an American concept. The course will help you to understand other courses connected with Japan and America within the university curriculum. Students are expected to read the handout given to them in advance through the class web. We will also create an email group to share files and information. Please use my keio.jp email. Since it is going to be an online class please see that you are connected with the class.

**Questions/Comments:**

Please submit all questions, comments, and assignments by email. aryanjava@keio.jp