

Keio University Syllabus and Timetable

INTRODUCTION TO JAPAN'S HISTORY AND CULTURE

Subtitle	From the Meiji Restoration to the end of World War II (1868-1945)
Lecturer(s)	NOBORI, AMIKO
Credit(s)	2
Academic Year/Semester	2024 Spring
Day/Period	Thu.2
Campus	Mita
Classroom	413
Class Format	Face-to-face classes (conducted mainly in-person)
Registration Number	25459
Faculty/Graduate School	INTERNATIONAL CENTER
Year Level	2, 3, 4
Grade Type	S, A, B, C, D
K-Number	CIN-CO-00153-212-03

[▼ Detail](#)
Course Contents/Objectives/Teaching Method/Intended Learning Outcome

1. Course description:

This course examines the major developments in Japanese history and culture from the Meiji period to the end of World War II. The focus is on the main issues and transformations in Japanese society, politics, foreign relations, and culture. The broad questions that will be addressed during the course are: what are the major transformations in Japanese modern history? What factors explain change? How have Japanese society and culture changed? How has Japan interacted with the world? By the end of the course, students are expected to have achieved an understanding of the broad picture and key points of modern Japan's historical development.

2. Assignments

2-1. Weekly comments

The reading materials for this course are available in the K-LMS system. You can find the reading materials in each class' folder (for example, the reading materials for Week 2 are available in the "Week 2" folder). In preparation for class, students are expected to read all the reading materials assigned for that class and to write one short comment (max. 150 words) on one of the assigned reading materials. You can choose to write your comment on any of the reading materials assigned for that week. The comment must be uploaded in the "Weekly comments" field of each class' folder by 11:00 am on Wednesday (the day before class). The comment must not be a summary of the reading material but must include the student's original opinion/ideas. For example, it can be a critical assessment of the author's argument, or a reaction to some specific part/s of the material, or a comparison with the case of other countries. More information on how to write the comments will be provided during the first class.

2-2. Debate

Students will be divided into several groups for the debate to be held on Week 14. On Week 9, each group will be assigned time for selecting a topic related to Japan's history and culture (1868-1945) to be discussed during the debate.

3. Term paper

There is no final exam. Students are required to submit a term paper (1,500 words) on any of the topics related to Japanese history and culture in the period covered in the course. The paper should be sent to the lecturers by uploading it in the Canvas LMS system by January 28, 2025.

Active Learning Methods [Description](#)

Discussions, Debates
Group work

Preparatory Study

Reading the assigned material and write a short comment.

Course Plan

Lesson 1

Orientation

Lesson 2

Japan before the 19th century

Lesson 3

Japan's opening to the world

Lesson 4

Restoration of the imperial power and the making of a modern Japan

Lesson 5

Restoration of the imperial power and the making of a modern Japan II

Lesson 6

Civilization and enlightenment

Lesson 7

Thought of Fukuzawa Yukichi and its impact on modern Japan

Lesson 8

The building of Japan's colonial empire

Lesson 9

Mass culture and social movements during the "Taisho democracy" period

Lesson 10

Women in modern Japan

Lesson 11

The rise of militarism

Lesson 12

World War II

Lesson 13

Defeat

Lesson 14

Debate

Other

Preparation for term paper

Method of Evaluation

- Participation in class (weekly comments and participation in class discussions): 50%
- Term paper: 50%

Textbooks

Reading materials will be uploaded by the instructor in the K-LMS.

Reference Books

Reading materials will be uploaded by the instructor in the K-LMS.

Lecturer's Comments to Students

This course is aimed at those who are interested in the history and culture of Japan. A previous knowledge of Japanese history and culture is not required. The course will be conducted in English. Students with limited English ability are also welcome. Students are expected to participate in class discussions. More than two unexcused absences will lower a student's grade. The maximum number of students who can register for this course is 30. If more than 30 students register for this course, a selection will be made through an automatic drawing system.