

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	2026 Spring (2nd Half)
Day/Period	Thu.1,2
Campus	Mita
Classroom	415
Class Format	Face-to-face classes (conducted mainly in-person)
Registration Number	27266
Faculty/Graduate School	INTERNATIONAL CENTER
Year Level	2, 3, 4
Grade Type	S, A, B, C, D
Course Description	A course to aim to explore the major developments in Japanese history and culture from the Meiji period to the end of World War II with focus on key issues and transformations in Japanese society, politics, foreign relations, and culture.
K-Number	CIN-CO-00153-212-03

▼ Detail

Course Contents/Objectives/Teaching Method/Intended Learning Outcome

1. Course Description

This course explores the major developments in Japanese history and culture from the Meiji period to the end of World War II. The course focuses on key issues and transformations in Japanese society, politics, foreign relations, and culture. Central questions to be addressed include: What were the major transformations in modern Japanese history? What factors explain these changes? How have Japanese society and culture evolved? How has Japan interacted with the world? By the end of the course, students are expected to gain a broad understanding of the key events and dynamics that shaped modern Japan’s historical development.

2. Assignments

2.1 Weekly Comments

Reading materials for this course are available on the K-LMS platform. Each week’s readings can be found in the corresponding class folder (e.g., materials for Week 2 are in the “Week 2” folder). Students are required to read the assigned materials for each class and submit a short comment (maximum 150 words) on the reading. The comment must be uploaded to the “Weekly Comments” section of that week’s folder by 11:00 AM on the day before class. Comments should not summarize the reading but should present the student’s original opinion or ideas. For example, comments might critically assess the author’s argument, react to specific parts of the material, or compare it to cases from other countries. Detailed instructions on writing comments will be provided in the first class.

2.2 Debate

Students will be divided into groups to participate in a debate scheduled for Week 14. During Week 9, each group will have time to select a debate topic related to Japanese history and culture (1868–1945). More details will be

shared in class.

3. Term Paper

There will be no final exam for this course. Instead, students are required to submit a term paper (1,500 words) on a topic related to Japanese history and culture within the period covered by the course. The paper must be submitted via the Canvas LMS platform. Detailed submission instructions and deadlines will be provided during the semester.

Course Taught by Faculty Member with Professional Experience

Not applicable

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

Field Trip: A visit to the Fukuzawa Yukichi Memorial Keio History Museum located on the Mita Campus

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%

Generative AI Policy for Classes

In this course, generative AI may be used only in limited ways: For brainstorming and planning; For drafting assignment structures; As a research aid (you must verify accuracy).
Important notes: Always state if AI was used (e.g., “Structure drafted using Gemini”). Copying AI text without attribution or using unchecked sources may count as misconduct. Actual writing of assignments and reports must be done independently; AI use is not allowed.

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 designed for students interested in the history and culture of Japan. No prior knowledge of Japanese history or culture is required. The course will be conducted in English, and students with limited English proficiency are also welcome. Active participation in class discussions is expected. Students with more than two unexcused absences will see their grades affected. The maximum enrollment for this course is 40 students. If registrations exceed this limit, participants will be selected through an automatic lottery system.

Question/Comments

You can contact the course instructor via email at: amiko@keio.jp

