
AN INTRODUCTION TO JAPANESE HISTORY: SURVEYING
JAPAN'S PRE-MODERN PAST 2 credits (Spring)

日本史入門:前近代日本史概観 2単位(春学期)

AN INTRODUCTION TO JAPANESE HISTORY: SURVEYING
JAPAN'S PRE-MODERN PAST 2 credits (Fall)

日本史入門:前近代日本史概観 2単位(秋学期)

An Introduction to Japanese Pre-Modern History: Surveying Japan's
Pre-Modern Past (Proto-Historic Japan to Sekigahara)

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

This course will examine the "pre-modern period" of Japan from its origins in the Jomon Period through to the end of the 16th century by focusing upon the emergence of the imperial state, court rulership, and the rise of the warrior class. Though dominated by the rulership, religions, and lifestyles of courtiers and warriors, the course also explores the cultural context within which elites, commoners, and those in between lived and prospered. The approach is thus primarily socio-cultural, aiming to enhance the student's understanding not only of the Japan of the past, but also of the present. By the end of the course, students will be familiar with the most important aspects of the classical Heian age, the dual (or tripartite) polity of Kamakura, the warrior rule of the Muromachi era, and the subsequent era of civil warfare.

***NOTE: I plan to teach the course in a "hybrid" fashion. The class will be taught online in "real time" via Zoom. I will record and post these sessions, so if you cannot join live, you will still be able to view the class lectures and discussions.

Course Plan:

- 1 Introduction and Proto-historic Japan: Jomon and Yayoi Japan
 - 2 The "Yamato" Era: Japan's First "Empire"
 - 3 The World of the Shining Prince: Aristocratic Rules and Lifestyles in the Heian Period
 - 4 Late Heian Society: The Insei Period
 - 5 The Making of the Samurai: The Gempei War
 - 6 The First Shogunate: Yoritomo's Kamakura Bakufu
 - 7 Review and Midterm Exam
 - 8 "Popular" Religions: New Faiths and New Systems
 - 9 The Mongol Invasions and the 14th Century "Divide"
 - 10 Zen and the Rise of the Ashikaga
 - 11 Life in the Muromachi Age and the Death of Cooperative Rulership
 - 12 The Onin War
 - 13 The Sengoku Age's Unification
- Other Looking Towards the Early Modern -- Previewing the Edo/
Tokugawa Period

Method of Evaluation:

Mid-term exam: 10% of the course grade

Final exam: 40%

Discussion attendance/participation: 30%

Bi-Weekly SHORT 1 page response papers (225-275 words): 20%

Textbooks:

All reading materials will be provided by the instructor in PDF format.

Reference Books:

Reference books will be provided by the instructor in PDF format.

Lecturer's Comments to Students:

Note: Class size will be limited to 16 students PER SEMESTER while we still face the pandemic. The class will be "built" around discussion of the required readings, so a limited class size will enable all students to participate. If more than 16 students wish to enroll in the class, the "automatic drawing system" will be used to randomly assign students to the course. As soon as the vaccines are available (hopefully Fall term) and we can return to a fully face-to-face/"taimen" format, I plan to return to 20 students per class.

In order that all interested students will be able to take the course, this class will be repeated in the same form during the Spring semester for those students who are unable to enroll during the Fall.

General Expectations: This course is very demanding, but I believe that it will help push each of the participants to grow both as scholars and as citizens of the international community. Students are expected to be attentive and contribute to in-class discussions, and express their ideas and opinions in a respectful manner. Classroom discussion of the provided reading materials is a central part of the class. Thus, students must be ready to read, write, and express their opinions each week.

Required Resources: Please make sure to have a working email account (not just an account associated with a keitai cell phone). You will also need access at home to a computer with word processing capabilities.

Questions/Comments:

Please feel free to contact me by email (kurashig[AT]fbc.keio.ac.jp), but also do not hesitate to approach me before or after class. If I am in my office and the light is on, please feel free to knock as I am always happy to speak with students if time is available.