

## **HIST 3115 - Japan: From Feudal Isolation to Modern Democracy**

### **Ian Buruma**

#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will take Japan as an example of modernization in the non-Western world. The main question to be explored is to what extent modernization means Westernization, or democratization. This would contribute to the discussion today about the possibility of building liberal democratic institutions in the Middle East, and other parts of the non-Western world.

Starting with the arrival of Commodore Perry's "black ships" in 1854, and ending with the state of Japanese democracy today, we will look at various stages of the Japanese confrontation with a dominant West. This will take in the establishment of Japan's Asian Empire – following European examples; the wars with Russia and China; the civil rights movements of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century; the budding democracy of the 1920s; the Japanese varieties of fascism, the war with the West, and the US occupation.

Throughout the course, we will look at Japan in comparison with other parts of the non-Western world, including South Asia and the Middle-East. Course material will include history, as well as novels, films, and further examples from popular culture. Questions to be addressed will include:

- 1: Was extreme militarism inevitable?
- 2: Was Japanese imperialism a copy of Western imperialism?
- 3: Was the US occupation of Japan a success?
- 4: Is Japan a democracy?
- 5: Can Japan serve as a useful model for democratic nation building in other countries.

#### **REQUIREMENTS**

One or more students will be required at each session to do a presentation introducing and commenting on the topic at hand. This should consist of an essay of about 800 words, which will be distributed to the other students for comment in class.

All students are required to write essays at mid-term and the end of term. These will be responses to set questions. The mid-term essay should not be longer than 1000 words, and the end-term essay not longer than 1500 words.

#### **BOOKS TO BE PURCHASED BY THE STUDENTS**

Ian Buruma: *Inventing Japan: 1853-1964* (Random House, 2003)

Natsume Soseki: *Kokoro* (Regnery, 1996)

Junichiro Tanizaki: *Naomi* (Vintage, 2001)

### **BOOKS TO BE USED IN CLASS**

Donald Keene: *The Japanese Discovery of Europe*

Marius Jansen: *The Making of Modern Japan* (Harvard U. Press paperback, 2002)

Marius Jansen: *Sakamoto Ryoma and the Meiji Restoration* (Princeton U. Press, 1961)

Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi: *Anti-Foreignism and Western Learning in Early Modern Japan* (Harvard U. Press, 1986)

Yukichi Fukuzawa: *The Autobiography of Fukuzawa Yukichi* (Columbia U. Press, 1968)

Roger W. Bowen: *Rebellion and Democracy in Meiji Japan* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1980)

Carol Gluck: *Japan's Modern Myths* (Princeton U. Press, 1985)

Edward Seidensticker: *High City, Low City* (Knopf, 1983)

Junichiro Tanizaki: *In Praise of Shadows* (Leete's Island Books, 1988)

Ben Ami Shillony: *Revolt in Japan: The Young Officers and the February 26, 1936 Incident* (Princeton U. Press, 1973)

Louise Young: *Japan's Total Empire* (Berkeley, 1998)

Harry Harootunian: *Overcome by Modernity* (Princeton, 2000)

Akira Irye: *Power and Culture: The Japanese-American War 1941-1945* (Harvard, 1981)

John Dower: *Embracing Defeat* (WW Norton, 2000)

Norma Field, *In the Realm of a Dying Emperor: Japan at Century's End*, (Vintage Books, 1993)

Theodore Cohen: *Remaking Japan: The American Occupation as New Deal* (Free Press, 1987)

*Contemporary Japanese Literature*, edited H. Hibbett, (Knopf, 1977)

Ian Buruma: *The Missionary and the Libertine* (Random House

### **FILMS**

*Assassination of Ryoma*, Dir. Kuroki Kazuo

*Tokyo Story*, Dir. Yasujiro Ozu

*MacArthur's Children*, Dir. Masahiro Shinoda.

*Drunken Angel*, Dir. Akira Kurosawa.

### **FEBRUARY**

2: Read *Inventing Japan*, Chapter One, The Black Ships.

9: Read Donald Keene: *The Japanese Discovery of Europe*. Chapters TK. Discuss the main lessons Japanese drew from their knowledge of the West.

16: Sakamoto Ryoma, from xenophobic rebel to proto-democrat. Read Marius Jansen: *The Making of Modern Japan* and consult Jansen: *Sakamoto Ryoma and the Meiji Restoration*.

23: Read *Inventing Japan*. Chapter 2, Civilization and Enlightenment. Meiji: Revolution or restoration?

## **MARCH**

1: Fukuzawa Yukichi and 'Westernization'. Consult Jansen: *The Making of Modern Japan*, and *The Autobiography of Fukuzawa Yukichi*.

8: The dilemma of individual liberty. Read *Kokoro* by Soseki Natsume.

15: Collapse or rebirth of traditional aesthetics? Read Junichiro Tanizaki's *In Praise of Shadows*.

22: Rebellion in an authoritarian state. Consult Jansen and Roger W. Bowen: *Rebellion and Democracy in Meiji Japan*.

## **APRIL**

5: The imperial cult and its dangers. Consult Carol Gluck's *Japan's Modern Myths*.

12: Taisho Democracy. Read *Inventing Japan*, Chapter 3, Ero, Guro, Nansensu.

19: The Western seduction. Read Tanizaki's *Naomi*.

16: Japanese fascism. Consult Jansen, *The Making of Modern Japan*, and Ben Ami Shillony: *Revolt in Japan: The Young Officers and the February 26, 1936 Incident*.

## **MAY**

3: War: imperialism or anti-imperialism. Read *Inventing Japan*, Chapter 5, War against the West, and consult Harry Harootunian: *Overcome by Modernity*.

10: American Occupation. Read Akiyuki Nosaka: *American Seaweed*, in *Contemporary Japanese Literature*, edited H. Hibbett.

17: The postwar order: how democratic is Japan?