

Instructor: Christopher Smith
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Office Hours: MWF 11:00am-12:00pm or by appointment

Course Description

JPT 3500 is a broad introduction to Japanese culture. It includes a survey of both premodern and modern Japan, as well as an introduction to research methods and critical methodologies for studying Japan. The course covers secondary readings about Japan as well as a selection of important primary texts. In addition to learning specific historical/cultural knowledge, students will develop the skills to analyze and use primary source materials, evaluate secondary source materials, and conduct meaningful research on Japan. All readings are in English, no knowledge of Japanese is required.

Class Motto

“Always historicize!”
(Frederic Jameson)

Required Textbooks

Hane, Mikiso. 1991. *Premodern Japan: A Historical Survey*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

Sugimoto, Yoshio, ed. 2009. *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Japanese Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

All other readings will be posted on Canvas (e-Learning).

Class Policies

Absences

There will be no makeups for missed exams or quizzes without a valid, documented excuse (e.g., a doctor's note, jury summons, etc.). You are allowed three unexcused absences without question. After that, each additional unexcused absence will result in a 1% drop in your final grade. An unexcused absence will, of course, result in a zero for your participation grade for that day.

Late Work

Essays are due at the assigned time and date. Late essays will be marked down 10% for every 24 hours late (i.e., if an essay is due at 10:59 on Monday, submissions between 11:00 Monday and 10:59 Tuesday will be marked down 10%, submissions between 11:00 Tuesday and 10:59 Wednesday will be marked down 20%, and so on).

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty, either in the form of cheating or plagiarism, will not be tolerated. Any proven instances may result in an automatic grade of "E" for the entire course and WILL result in referral to the Dean of Students Office.

Examine the UF honor code at: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/> particularly the following:

On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied:

"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

VIOLATIONS OF THE STUDENT HONOR CODE.

(a) Plagiarism. A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

1. Quoting oral or written materials including but not limited to those found on the internet, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.
2. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.

To avoid common issues remember: when in doubt, cite.

- Words taken verbatim from another source, whether a whole paragraph, a sentence, or part of a sentence, must be placed in quotes and cited. Changing a few words here and there does not make it your original work.
- If you take an idea from another source, you should acknowledge your borrowing in the text of the essay and provide a citation.

Accommodations

Students who need accommodations in class or on exams are warmly encouraged to contact the Dean of Students Office. See <https://drc.dso.ufl.edu/> for more info. You are welcome to visit me during office hours to discuss your needs, but note that I need authorization from the DSO to make accommodations.

Technology Policy

This class is "tech friendly," but devices are expected to be used to read PDFs, take notes, or look up information. Non-class-related activities, especially those that distract your classmates, like texting, checking social media, or playing games will result in a zero for your class participation grade that day.

Grading

Grades will be calculated with the following weights. See below for descriptions:

Pop Quizzes: 10%

Class Participation: 10%

Group Presentation: 15%

Exams: 30% (15% each)

Essays: 35% (3 essays: 10%, 10%, 15%)

Assignments

Pop Quizzes

There will be short quizzes given in class on random days at irregular intervals. The quizzes will cover the assigned reading(s) for that day. You will not be required to memorize minutiae from the readings (such as dates or population numbers), but you should be familiar enough with the readings to answer general questions (identify important people and terms, provide a sequence of events, identify a reading's main argument, etc.). Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped from the final grade. Quizzes will be administered at the beginning of class, and there will be no extra time for students who come in late.

Class Participation

In this type of class it is vital that you come to class prepared, participate in class discussions, watch presentations, and listen to the lectures. To receive a full class participation grade you should come to class prepared to fully participate. That means engaging the assigned texts with active reading, taking notes or highlighting as necessary. If it is evident you have not done the reading or are not prepared to participate fully in the class you will receive a grade of zero for the day. (Hint: answering a question with "I dunno" or "I don't remember reading that" tells me you are not prepared!) Remember, an unexcused absence automatically results in a zero for your participation grade for that day. See the [Absence Policy](#) above.

Group Presentation

In teams of 2-3, you will give a 15-minute presentation to the class about one of the primary source readings. This should not be a summary, since everyone will have read the text. Instead, you should try to provide a deeper look at the reading. You should provide background information such as biographical information about the author (where appropriate) or social/historical context, as well as your own interpretation of the material (themes, messages, etc.). Your presentation should include a PowerPoint (or equivalent) with images or multimedia that supports your presentation. Sign up for a presentation in Canvas by visiting "People" → "Group Presentation."

Exams

There will be a midterm and a final exam given in class, both closed book and closed notes. The exams will cover both assigned readings and lecture/discussion content. They will have a variety of question types (i.e., multiple choice, short answer, short essay, etc.). The final will be cumulative but weighted more towards material from the second half of the class.

Essays

This is a Writing Requirement (Gordon Rule) 4000 class, so you must complete 4,000 words of writing. This is divided into three essays. The essays are worth 10%, 10%, and 15% of your grade respectively. This will be weighted in your favor, so your best essay will be the one worth 15%. Please read carefully the above class policies about Academic Dishonesty and Late Work.

- All essays should be submitted in Canvas by the deadline on the class schedule.
- Essays must be submitted in MS Word (doc, docx) format.
- Use Chicago style for citations. Use footnotes, with a full citation for the first instance of any cited text. Example:

Andrew Gerstle has argued that “the essence of *aragoto* is defiance toward the samurai,”¹ and Sukeroku certainly seems to be a fine example. The play mainly consists of him romping through the Yoshiwara pleasure quarters taunting and provoking samurai. He is “the townsmen’s townsman,”² both a vigorous street brawler and a great lover.

You must also append a separate “references” page at the end of the essay (does not count towards word count).

- Essays must be within 10% of the of the target word count (not less than 90%, not more than 110%). You also must get a C or higher on each essay in order to receive Gordon Rule writing credit.

Essay 1 (1,000 words)

Type: Source Evaluation

Go to the library and select any scholarly writing about Japan written before 1970. Although you can use online journals instead, you should limit yourself to articles accessed via JSTOR or ProjectMUSE to ensure they are really academic in nature (exceptions are possible: email me). 250 words of this essay should be a concise synthesis of the argument of that work, while the remainder should be an evaluation of the work as a source. How does it organize knowledge about Japan? Which parts (if any) use essentialist modes of knowledge, and which parts do not? What parts of its argument and research are still valuable to us today, and which parts no longer accord with the present critical stance on cultural studies? There is no prescribed format for this essay, and it can be written in a conversational

¹ C. Andrew Gerstle, “Eighteenth-Century Kabuki and Its Patrons,” in *A Kabuki Reader: History and Performance*, ed. Samuel L. Leiter and C. Andrew Gerstle (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2002), 91.

² Gerstle, 96.

style. You only need one source: the book or article you select. However, you should cite any other sources you borrow words or ideas from.

Essay 2 (1,500 words)

Type: Persuasive Essay

This is basically a literature essay. The goal is to successfully argue a thesis about one of the primary source texts (the literature or quasi-literature) we have read in class. Your thesis should be a *provable claim* about the text that puts it in a new light or provides some deeper insight into it. Normally this will involve uncovering some theme in the text that is not immediately obvious. This essay should be written in a formal voice. In addition to the primary source text, you need at least two additional *scholarly secondary sources that support your argument*. Citing secondary sources for well-known facts or tangential claims that do not advance your argument will not count. Remember how you evaluated a source in essay 1 and incorporate that into your essay if necessary.

Essay 3 (1,500 words)

Type: Research Essay

In this essay you will explore further one of the non-fictional topics in the *textbook* readings we have done in class (e.g., late Tokugawa cultural developments, modern Japanese food culture, etc.). A reading that you found particularly interesting (or one you particularly disagreed with!) would be a good starting point. You should conduct further research on this topic and write a well-sourced research paper about it. This paper should have a thesis: you should have a claim about the topic you are attempting to prove. You will need to cite at least five sources that *support your argument*: one of these can be the textbook itself. At least two other sources should be sources that the textbook cited in that chapter or mentioned in the “further reading” section (you will have to track these down, so don’t wait until the last minute). You can also use primary sources if they advance your argument (but be careful: fiction is fictional and tells just one story, and does not by itself prove larger social or cultural movements). This essay should be written in a formal tone. Remember how you evaluated a source in essay 1 and incorporate that into your essay if necessary.