

622 Japanese Culture and East Asia

1. Date and Time

Thursday, 5th period (16:30~18:00) beginning 4/16.

2. General Description

The following is a draft syllabus. I reserve the right to make substantive revisions as necessary. You will be informed in advance of any such decision.

This is an introduction to the formation of Japanese culture(s) in the context of East Asian histories and cultures. Rather than assuming a singular, reified Japanese national culture—either synchronically or diachronically—this class will attempt to draw out the diversity of cultures in the archipelago as well as their relationships to the larger East Asian milieu.

3. Course Content

The class will roughly follow a historical chronology, beginning with prehistory and ending in the present day. That obviously means leaving a lot of things out. For reasons I hope will become clear, I plan give very little time to about 800-1600. In this sense, the course is decidedly not a survey. But by highlighting certain critical interactions over time, we will attempt to sketch out a rough picture of the ebb and flow of important cultural influences over time.

This course is not a lecture. It is a discussion, and an intensive one. It depends on your preparation to work. This is especially true for the discussion leaders (see below). I will not be spoon-feeding you information, nor will we be simply limping along through the names and deeds of so-called “Great Men.” You will be challenged to reconsider history from multiple angles through the examination of the kinds of topics and issues that animate the passions and careers of professional historians.

Schedule

The following is a tentative schedule. It *will* be revised based on student enrolment.

Wk 1:	Introduction
Wk 2~10:	Japanese Culture(s) and East Asia
Wk 11~12:	Presentations
Wk 13:	Wrap-up
Wk 14:	TBA

Assignments

Additionally, the work in this course is not limited to reading and discussion. You will need to, at the very least:

1. **Lead discussion** at least once, with at least one partner (depends on enrollment)
 - Discussion leaders will be assigned in advance, and will meet with me for about one hour prior to class (by appointment) to prepare. Specifics will vary according to student enrolment. Guidelines provided separately.

2. Produce a **final project**
 - You may write a traditional seminar research paper (15-25 pages), but I would prefer that you propose a creative project taking advantage of your unique talents and interests. Write an app, make a movie, curate an exhibit online or off, build a model, etc. Group projects are encouraged (but not coauthored papers). Guidelines provided separately.
3. Make a **presentation** of a “draft” version of your final project
 - Present your work to the class at the end of the term. Specifics will vary according to student enrolment. Guidelines provided separately.
4. Write **weekly reading responses** online
 - There will be no tests or exams, but you will be expected to respond in no more than two paragraphs to the readings each week.

4. Textbook

No textbook is required for this class. All readings will be provided electronically as PDFs, etc. Topics will include:

- What is “Culture?”
- What is “(East) Asia?”
- Historical Formation of East Asia
- Emergence of Japan in East Asia
- Premodern Interactions and Exchanges
- “Japanese Culture” (?)
- (Cold) War (Mis)understandings and their Legacies
- Issues in Contemporary Japan
- Soft Power and Japanese Popular Culture in the World

5. Reference Materials

To supplement your knowledge of Japanese history as needed, I recommend the library’s electronic copy of:

- Tsutsui, William M. 2009. *A Companion to Japanese History*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

6. Evaluation

Participation	15%
Reading responses	15%
Discussion leader	15%
Presentation	15%
Project	40%

For reference, be aware that a “good” project gets a B. Amaze me and you get an A, disappoint me and you’re looking at a C at best. Same for the course.

“A” = exceptional. “B” = good. “C” = meh. Anything else = trouble.