

History 86B

## **IMPERIAL JAPAN AND THE UNITED STATES**

Fall 2008

Thursdays 2:00–4:00

CGIS South Room 354

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The United States and Japan emerged more or less simultaneously as world powers engaged in imperialist projects at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Japan is often characterized as a “late developer” seeking to “catch up” to the West, but in significant ways, the United States was equally a late-developer vis-à-vis Britain and Western Europe.

With this premise in mind, we begin by exploring what might be called the history of “hard power” in the American and Japanese cases—the building of modern nation states which engaged in diplomacy and war, among other activities. We then turn to a hands-on investigation of the exercise of “soft power” through US-Japan cultural interactions. We also pay attention to the local scene, to Japanese and Americans connected in various ways to Harvard, to Boston, to New England and the Northeast, asking how the attitudes, the projects, and the experiences of such individuals exemplified, shaped, or perhaps resisted or questioned this larger history of the emergence of two Pacific empires.

The lives and interactions of a fascinating array of characters from each country, men as well as women, can be studied using rich local stores of English-language primary and archival sources. The first two-thirds of the course center on discussions of various historical studies that address aspects of the geo-political and cultural clash of empires. In addition, after the first few weeks, you will work together with us to define and carry out individual research projects. In your research papers, you will be given the opportunity to address the issues raised in the course through study of a particular event, group or individual drawing on primary materials in English, or Japanese for those able to read the language. The final weeks of the course will be devoted entirely to the preparation of your papers and to reading and commenting on your classmates work.

## REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

The course grade will reflect attendance, participation, and the quality of papers students produce. Attendance and participation are crucial not only for the success of the course, but also for the quality of your papers. We expect you to actively participate in each class, as each student can bring something of value to group discussions. You are also required to submit peer reviews of the prospectuses and paper drafts of your fellow students in your peer review group. All deadlines should be met in a timely fashion. The breakdown of the grading scale is:

Attendance and Participation:	30%
Peer Review Performance:	10%
Final Paper Preparation:	20%
Final Paper:	40%

## REQUIRED BOOKS AVAILABLE IN HARVARD COOP FOR PURCHASE

Christopher Benfey, *The Great Wave: Gilded Age Misfits, Japanese Eccentrics, and the Opening of Old Japan*. New York: Random House, 2003.

Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Walter LaFeber, *The Clash: U.S.-Japanese Relations throughout History*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1997.

## SYLLABUS

[Books marked \* are available for purchase at Harvard Coop. All other readings are on reserve at Harvard Yenching Library and/or e-reserve]

Week 1 (9/18): Introduction and Course Overview.

Week 2 (9/25): The Clash: A Power Political Overview (I)

\*Walter LaFeber, *The Clash: U.S.-Japanese Relations throughout History*, Chapters 1-3 (pp. 3-98).

Akira Iriye, *Pacific Estrangement* Chapters 1-3, pp. 1-90.

Week 3 (10/2): The Clash (II)

\*Walter LaFeber, *The Clash: U.S.-Japanese Relations throughout History*, Chapters 4-6 (pp. 99-185).

Akira Iriye, *Pacific Estrangement*, Chs. 5-7, 8-9 (pp. 126-68, 202-37).

Charles Maier, *Among Empires*, chapter on "What is an Empire," pp. 24-77

For reference: Hata Ikuhiko, "Continental Expansion, 1905-1941," *The Cambridge History of Japan, Volume 6: The Twentieth Century*, Chapter 6, 271-314.

#### Week 4 (10/9): Social Darwinism and Racial Thinking Across the Pacific

Edward Said, *Orientalism*, Chapter 1, pp. 1-9.

Rotem Kowner, "Lighter than Yellow, but not Enough': Western Discourse on the Japanese 'Race', 1854-1904," *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (March 2000), pp. 103-31. [Available via JSTOR]

Hiroshi Unoura, "Samurai Darwinism: Hiroyuki Katô and the Reception of Darwin's Theory in Modern Japan from the 1880's to the 1900's," *History and Anthropology* vol. 11 no. 2/3 (June 1999), pp. 235-55. [Available via Academic Search Premier]

Yuichiro Onishi, "The New Negro of the Pacific: How African Americans Forged Cross-Racial Solidarity with Japan, 1917-1922," *Journal of African American History*, Vol. 92, Issue 2 (Spring 2007), pp. 191-213. [Available via Academic Search Premier]

For reference: Morris Low, "The Japanese Nation in Evolution: W.E. Griffis, Hybridity and Whiteness of the Japanese Race," *History and Anthropology*, Vol. 11, No. 2-3 (June 1999), pp. 203-34. [Available via Academic Search Premier]; Eiji Oguma, *A Genealogy of Japanese Self-Images* (Trans Pacific Press, 2002); Naoko Shimazu, *Japan, Race and Equality: The Racial Equality Proposal of 1919* (London, 1998). John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*.

#### Week 5 (10/16): Pacific Crossings

\*Christopher Benfey, *The Great Wave*, Chapters 2-7, pp. 45-237.

Yuji Ichioka, "Amerika Nadeshiko: Japanese Immigrant Women in the United States, 1900-1924," *The Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 49, No. 2. (May 1980), pp. 339-357. [Available online via JSTOR]

**Assignment:** Schedule a meeting with Jeremy during the week to discuss paper topics. Be prepared to submit in advance a brief statement of two or three possible final paper topics, each with an accompanying bibliography.

#### Week 6 (10/23): The Russo-Japanese War, and the United States

Okamoto Shumpei, *The Japanese Oligarchy and the Russo-Japanese War*, Ch. 3, "The Decision for War," pp. 57-105.

Raymond A. Esthus, *Theodore Roosevelt and the International Rivalries*, Chapters 1-2, 7, (pp. 1-37, 136-150).

Peter Duus, "If Japan had Lost the War," in Rotem Kowner, ed., *The Impact of the Russo-Japanese War* (Routledge, 2007), pp. 47-53.

T.G. Otte, "The Fragmenting of the Old World Order: Britain, the Great Powers, and the War," in Rotem Kowner, ed., *The Impact of the Russo-Japanese War* (Routledge, 2007), pp. 91-108.

Bill Clifford, "Boston: Autumn, 1904" (handout in class)

**Assignment:** bring in one article of interest, covering some aspect of the Russo-Japanese war or its aftermath, from *Boston Evening Transcript* or other Boston or New York press.

**Assignment (2):** Schedule a meeting with Professor Gordon during the week to discuss (and finalize) paper topics.

Week 7 (10/30): Local Connections—MFA visit [*pending*]

Christopher Benfey, *The Great Wave*, epilogue, pp. 265-293.

Joe Earle, "The Taxonomic Obsession: British Collectors and Japanese Objects, 1852-1986" *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 128, No. 1005 (Dec., 1986), pp. 864-873 [available via JSTOR].

Selected articles from *Okakura Kakuzo and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* (pp. 162-175).

**Assignment:** Submit by **October 31** to the course website a prospectus, tentative outline of the final paper, and a detailed bibliography that includes primary and secondary sources.

Week 8 (11/6): World War I, Woodrow Wilson, and New Visions of World Order

Frederick Dickinson, *War and National Reinvention: Japan in the Great War, 1914-1919* (Harvard University Press, 1999), Chapter 6 (pp. 204-237).

Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (Simon and Schuster, 1994), Chapters 1-2 (pp. 17-55).

Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment* (Oxford, 2007) Part I (pp. 16-53).

Sadao Asada, "From Washington to London: The Imperial Japanese Navy and the Politics of Naval Limitation, 1921-1930," in *The Washington Conference, 1921-22, Naval Rivalry, East Asian Stability, and the Road to Pearl Harbor*, edited by Erik Goldstein and John Maurer (Cass, 1994), pp. 147-184.

Konoe Fumimaro, "Against a Pacifism Centered on England and America," in *Japan Echo*, Vol. 22, special issue, pp. 12-14.

For reference: Miwa Kimitada, "Japanese Opinions on Woodrow Wilson in War and Peace," *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 22, No. 3/4 (1967), pp. 368-389.

**Assignment:** Read and write a brief, one-page critique of each student's prospectus in your peer review group. The critique should be submitted to the course website before class on **November 6**.

Week 9 (11/13): A Bright Future? Consumerism, Gender, and the Roaring Twenties

Miriam Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times* (Berkeley, 2006). Preface, Introduction, and Chapter 4 (xv-xvii, 1-9, 143-175).

Andrew Gordon, "Selling the American Way," (unpublished manuscript, posted to course website).

Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through 20<sup>th</sup> Century Europe* (Cambridge, 2005). Intro., Chapter 4 (pp. 1-14, 184-225).

For reference: Jordan Sand, *House and Home in Modern Japan* (Cambridge, 2003). Barbara Sato, *The New Japanese Woman* (Durham, 2003). Sadao Asada, "Cherry Blossoms and the Yellow Peril: American Images of Japan during the 1920s," in Sadao Asada, ed., *Culture Shock and Japanese-American Relations* (London, 2007), pp. 27-52.

#### Week 10 (11/20): Toward Crisis—Immigration Exclusion, the Depression, and Beyond

John Thares Davidann, *Cultural Diplomacy in U.S.-Japanese Relations, 1919-1941* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), Chapters 5-6 (pp. 81-117).

Mark Metzler, "American Pressure for Financial Internationalization in Japan on the Eve of the Great Depression," *Journal of Japanese Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 2, (Summer, 2002), pp. 277-300. [Available via JSTOR]

Akira Iriye, "The Failure of Economic Expansion: 1918-1931," in Bernard S. Silberman and H.D. Harootunian, ed., *Japan in Crisis: Essays on Taishō Democracy* (Princeton, 1974), pp. 237-269.

For reference: Akira Iriye, "The Failure of Military Expansionism," in James Morley, ed., *Dilemmas of Growth in Prewar Japan* (Princeton, 1971), pp. 107-138; Ian Nish, *Japanese Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period*; Christopher Thorne, *The Limits of Foreign Policy: The West, the League, and the Far Eastern Crisis* (New York, 1972); Michael Barnhart, *Japan Prepares for Total War: The Search for Economic Security, 1919-1941*; Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, 2004), pp. 15-55; Mark Metzler, *Lever of Empire: The International Gold Standard and the Crisis of Liberalism in Prewar Japan*.

#### Week 11 (11/27): No Class—Thanksgiving Recess

#### Week 12 (12/4): No Class

Students work on their projects while consulting with course instructors.

#### Week 13 (12/11): Discussion of paper drafts, handed in by **Monday December 8**.

**Discussion will occur in breakout groups that will be set up after course enrollment is finalized, precise schedule to be determined.**

**Assignment:** Write a one-page critique of the draft of each classmate in your peer review group. The critiques will be discussed and submitted in break out groups.

#### **Reading Period**

#### Week of January 5: No Class

Individual meetings as needed to discuss and review final paper drafts

Final papers due at end of reading period, Monday, January 12, by 5 PM in Professor Gordon's office or mailbox. **No late papers or extensions.**