

Modern Japanese History

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Eight Lectures and Eight Classes in Hilary Term

Course Description:

The course will offer an introduction to the modern history of Japan, from the late Tokugawa era through to the second half of the twentieth century. We will focus on intellectual and cultural history, seeking to explore the ideas which drove change in modern Japan, and the ways in which they were reflected in broader society. We will also seek to place Japan within a global context, considering the multiple paths linking Japan to other parts of the world, and the role that international and transnational experiences had in shaping Japan's modern history.

We will read and debate both primary sources and key secondary works, exploring major events of Japan's past and some of the on-going debates surrounding them. In doing so we will also consider different forms of writing history, different methodological approaches, and some of the theoretical models which inform them. By engaging with both the nature of historical sources and the concepts used to interpret them, we will seek to explore the practice of history; at the same time we will also ask what a historical perspective can bring to other academic fields.

Format:

Each class will involve a mix of lecture, student presentation, and open discussion, centred upon one or more questions on a key topic of modern Japanese history. There will be a set text or a range of texts to choose from, which all participants will be expected to have read, and each week a predetermined set of students will give a short presentation to begin the discussion.

Course Assessment:

The main assessment will be through a three-hour examination in Trinity Term.

All students will be required to submit two essays, one in week 4, and one in week 8. Details will be given during the first class of the term.

Suggested Readings:

Inventing Japan, Ian Buruma, Pheonix, 2005

A Modern History of Japan, Andrew Gordon, OUP, 2003

'*Rethinking Modernization and Modernity in Japanese History*', Sheldon Garon, *Journal of Asian Studies*, 53/2 (May 1994)

Cambridge History of Japan (volumes 5 & 6), Hall et al., Cambridge UP, 1998+ (e-book also available through SOLO)

Sources of Japanese Tradition, de Bary et al. volume 2, Colombia UP, 2005 (various versions exist, this I think has the most on modern Japan)

Studies in the Modernization of Japan series (Changing Japanese Attitudes to Modernization/The State and Economic Enterprise in Japan/Dilemmas of Growth in Pre-war Japan/Aspects of Social Change in Modern Japan/Tradition and Modernization in Japanese Culture/Political Development in Modern Japan), Princeton UP, 1965-1973

In Defence of History, Richard Evans, Granta, 2004