History 2220
War and Society in the Modern World:
Japan, 1894-1945 and Beyond

"Picture of Our Valorous Military Repulsing the Russian Cossack Cavalry on the Bank of the Yalu River" by Watanabe Nobukazu, March 1904

Maymester, 2016
M-F 9:00-12:00
Ketchum 1887

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Course Description:

[War] allows us to believe we have achieved our place in human society because of a long chain of heroic endeavors, rather than accept the sad reality that we stumble along a dimly lit corridor of disasters. It disguises our powerlessness. It hides from view our own impotence and the ordinariness of our own leaders. By turning history into myth we transform random events into a chain of events directed by a will greater than our own, one that is determined and preordained. We are elevated above the multitude. We march toward nobility. And no society is immune.


From the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, Japan was a nation and a society extremely susceptible to the potent lure of war. From it sudden and dramatic emergence as the first Asian imperial/colonial power in the 1890s to its disastrous clash with the United States and the Allied Powers in World War II, the Japanese people in the modern era have experienced the elation of victory and crushing weight of utter defeat; both of these conditions have profoundly shaped the country’s political, economic, and social history. With the end of World War II in 1945, Japan transformed itself into a democratic, capitalist state. It is presently the only leading industrialized nation that does not, by constitutional law, possess a military that can be used for offensive purposes. This course will focus on the effects of war—and of peace—on the Japanese people at home and abroad in the wartime and postwar eras. It will also focus on the brutal results of Japanese wartime actions and policies on people who fell under the control of Japanese wartime empire. In broadest terms, our goal is to try to understand the toll war takes on human beings, as individuals and as social groups. To do so, we will also need to understand how, to paraphrase journalist Chris Hedges, war is a force that gives meaning to people’s lives and compels them to do extraordinary things—for better and for worse.

Required Texts
(available for purchase at UMC Bookstore, all in paperback):


Additional required readings:

A number of required readings and viewings of visual materials will be available only via our course website on Desire2Learn (D2L). Use your personal Identikey and password to access your D2L Home site by visiting https://learn.colorado.edu/. From there, select the course name to access our course’s D2L site. You can learn more about the accessibility of D2L in the company’s D2L Resource Center: https://documentation.desire2learn.com/en/accessibility You must be a registered student and formally enrolled in this class to access D2L.

Assignments and grading:

Exams: There will be three exams in total, given at the end of each of the three weeks of the term. Each exam will consist of two parts: 1) five short-answer questions (one paragraph-length answer for each question; exam questions will be drawn from study questions on daily lecture handouts, which we will work on in groups during class to help everyone keep up with the material), and 2) one essay question (essay-format response to a question focusing either on a primary source in translation that we have read for class, or on a broader analytical question that asks you to synthesize issues and/or documents discussed in class.

Attendance: Attendance at every class meeting for the entire period is mandatory, and essential for your success in this class. During Maymester we are covering the equivalent of one week’s worth of material during the regular semester in a single day—you simply cannot miss class.

Participation: We will spend a substantial amount of time on discussion every class meeting. You will see readings marked “prepare for discussion” on the syllabus—you are to come to class having done the reading, and you should bring with you print or digital copies of the readings and/or notes on them, and be prepared to actively participate in discussion of those readings. Discussion and participation are integral parts of the class, and significant parts of your grade.

Grading:

Exams (total of 3 x 25% each) = 75%
Attendance and participation: 25%

All due dates for assignments listed below are firm. Any extensions or make-ups must be approved by the instructor—do not assume that extensions or make up assignments will be allowed in all cases.
Using your CU email for class-related purposes: Please remember that email via your CU account is an important means of communication between instructors and students. All students are required to check and maintain their CU email accounts during the semester. Your instructor may periodically send information and updates by email, and you are responsible for staying informed. Use your CU email account for all correspondence regarding this class, and please use standard format and proper language when emailing a professor or a TA: begin with “Dear Professor Yonemoto,” avoid slang, jargon, or inappropriate informalities, end with your full name, and omit any inappropriate signatures or quotes. Any messages that do not conform to these basic standards may not receive a reply.

Regarding civil behavior in the classroom: Most of us are aware, in general terms, of what constitutes unacceptable behavior in the classroom. As you know, the university has quite clear policies on improper behavior (see web link below, under “other important information”). But what constitutes appropriate, much less “civil” behavior? Instructors have widely varying definitions of civil behavior, and may hold their students to very different standards. Students, in turn, have various understandings—different among themselves and different from that of the instructor—of what is civil or polite. In order to encourage a productive learning environment, I request that you refrain from doing the following during class time: reading non-class-related materials; doing homework for other classes; using cell phones; having extended conversations with others; sleeping; getting up and leaving in the middle of class (please let me know ahead of time if you have an unavoidable conflict and must leave class early, sit in the back or on the aisle, and leave quietly). To reduce distractions to a minimum, and also to encourage active note-taking by hand (which studies have shown is more effective in terms of retaining information than is taking notes on the computer), I will limit the use of computers in the classroom. We will discuss this policy further in class. Please note that if you have a physical or learning disability that requires you to use a computer or other devices in class, that is completely acceptable—but please meet with me as soon as possible at the beginning of the term so we can make arrangements. To aid in note-taking, I will make handouts available for lectures, and I will be happy to answer—during or outside of class—any questions you have regarding lecture material or information you think you may have missed in your notes. I will also make every effort to answer emailed questions promptly.

Office hours: Since we meet daily, I will not hold scheduled office hours, but I am happy to meet with you at any time. If you would like to meet with me individually, please talk to me in person or email me to set up a time.
LECTURE SCHEDULE AND READING/WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

NOTE: Readings should be finished and, when indicated, you should be prepared to discuss those readings on the day for which they are assigned. All readings or film viewings marked (W) below are available on the course website.

Monday, May 9:
1) Introduction to the class
2) View documentary, “Meiji: Asia’s Response to the West”
3) Lecture/discussion: A peaceful prelude? Japan and the West in the 19th century
4) Group writing: responses to study questions

Reading: no pre-assigned reading; short documentary readings plus research assignment will be distributed in class—prepare assignment for discussion on Tuesday, May 10

Tuesday, May 10:
1) Lecture: War, imperialism and modernity: The Sino-Japanese War (1894-95) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05)
2) Discussion: Documenting the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars (based on readings distributed previous day)
3) Group writing: responses to study questions

Reading: James Huffman, Japan in World History, Ch. 5 (W)

Wednesday, May 11:
1) Lecture: Liberalism vs. nationalism in the early twentieth-century
2) Excerpts from films: “The Sisters of Gion,” (Dir. Mizoguchi Kenji, 1936), and documentary “Writers and Revolutionaries”
3) Discussion: liberalism vs. nationalism—what’s at stake?
4) Group writing: responses to study questions

Reading: James Huffman, Japan in World History, Ch. 6 (W); “Fundamentals of Our National Polity” (W)—prepare “Fundamentals” for discussion

Thursday, May 12:
1) Lecture: The imperialist path and the war in China, 1931-45
2) Documentary: “In the Name of the Emperor” (Dir: Christine Choy and Nancy Tong, 1998)
3) Discussion: The Nanjing Massacre and Japanese military atrocities
4) Review for exam

Reading: Japan at War, pp. 21-46, 158-167; Kim Tŏkchín, “I Have Much to Say to the Korean Government,” from True Stories of the Korean Comfort Women (W)—prepare both for discussion

Friday, May 13:
1) EXAM #1
2) Film: “The Most Beautiful” (Dir: Kurosawa Akira, 1944)
No reading assignment to prepare for today, but you can begin reading Otsuka, *When the Emperor Was Divine* over the weekend

**Monday, May 16:**
1) Lecture: Empire at home in the 1930s  
2) Discussion: Life as an “imperial subject”  
3) Group writing: responses to study questions  
**Reading:** *Japan at War*, pp. 177-199, 240-248—prepare for discussion; continue reading Otsuka, *When the Emperor Was Divine*

**Tuesday, May 17**
1) Lecture: Pearl Harbor and the Pacific War  
2) Discussion: Japan and the US in the Pacific War  
3) Film: “Know Your Enemy: Japan” (Dir. Frank Capra, 1945)  
4) Group writing: responses to study questions  
**Reading:** *Japan at War*, pp. 77-83, 90-95—prepare for discussion; continue Otsuka, *When the Emperor Was Divine*

**Wednesday, May 18**
1) Lecture: Japanese immigration to the United States and the incarceration of Japanese and Japanese Americans during World War II  
2) Discussion: Japanese in the US in the twentieth century  
3) Group writing: responses to study questions  
**Reading:** continue Otsuka, *When the Emperor Was Divine*

**Thursday, May 19**
1) Film: “Days of Waiting: The Life and Art of Estelle Ishigo”  
2) Discussion: *When the Emperor Was Divine*—representing incarceration  
3) Review for exam  
**Reading:** finish *When the Emperor Was Divine* for discussion

**Friday, May 20**
1) **Exam #2**  
2) Lecture: Island Hopping across the Pacific  
3) Read and discuss *Japan at War*, pp. 305-327 in class  
**Reading:** no reading to prepare for today, but begin Hersey, *Hiroshima*, pp. over the weekend

**Monday, May 23**
1) Lecture: Ending the war: When? How?  
2) Documentary: “The Day After Trinity”  
3) Discussion: debates over the atomic bombings of Japan  
**Reading:** Hersey, *Hiroshima*; *Japan at War*, pp. 354-372

**Tuesday, May 24**
1) Discussion: John Hersey’s *Hiroshima*
2) Lecture: The meanings of “postwar”  
3) Group writing: responses to study questions

**Reading:** finish Hersey, *Hiroshima* for discussion; *Japan at War*, pp. 441-463

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**Wednesday, May 25**
1) Lecture: War memories, national and individual  
2) Discussion: war in the postwar  
3) Review for exam

**Reading:** *Japan at War*, pp. 458-471; find one recent (last 5 years) news article on memory of the Pacific War in Japan or in the US—bring to class and present

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**Thursday, May 26**
1) **Exam #3**  
2) Wrap-up discussion/celebration
OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

**Accommodation statement:** I am committed to providing the support and services needed to participate in this course. If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit a letter to the instructor from Disability Services in a timely manner—preferably within the first two weeks of class—so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671, or by email at dsinfo@colorado.edu. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see Temporary Medical Conditions: Injuries, Surgeries, and Illnesses guidelines under Quick Links at [http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/)

**Classroom behavior:** Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veterans’ status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression, age, ability, and nationality. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student’s legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information, see: [http://www.colorado.edu/policies/student-classroom-and-course-related-behavior](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/student-classroom-and-course-related-behavior)

**Honor Code and academic dishonesty:** All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council honor@colorado.edu; 303-735-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Additional information on the Honor Code can be found at [http://www.colorado.edu/policies/student-honor-code-policy](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/student-honor-code-policy)

**Religious Observance:** Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. If you have a potential class conflict because of religious observance, please see me as soon as possible at the beginning of the semester. See policy details at [http://www.colorado.edu/policies/observance-religious-holidays-and-absences-classes-andor-exams](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/observance-religious-holidays-and-absences-classes-andor-exams)
Discrimination and harassment: The University of Colorado Boulder is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. CU-Boulder will not tolerate acts of discrimination or harassment based upon Protected Classes or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. For purposes of this CU-Boulder policy, “Protected Classes” refers to race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Student Conduct (OSC) at 303-492-5550. For more information, see: http://www.colorado.edu/institutionalequity/harassment