

**HIEA 115, Society and Culture of Modern Japan**  
**Instructor: Gerald Iguchi**  
**Course Meetings: Tues/Thurs 3:30PM - 4:50PM**

**Course Description:**

This course will approach the social and cultural history of modern Japan in three different but interconnected ways; by studying modern historiography, modernist literature, and the relationship between modernity and religion. In the first third of the course we will examine the way that modern historiography (the writing of history) fostered a belief in Japan as a homogenous entity that has existed throughout recorded and even unrecorded history. We will attempt to understand the political, economic, social and cultural implications of understandings of history. During this first segment we will also consider the birth of something we can call a Japanese culture in its relationship with global trends and the preeminence of the modern nation-state. During the second third of the quarter we will be reading a limited number of literary texts and commentaries on them. In particular we will be examining the work of Tanizaki Jun'ichirō and watching a film based on one of his novels. We will be exploring the notion that literature may function as a form of representation of history and contemporary life that represents alternatives to standard historiography. During the final third of the course we will focus on the relationship between modernity and religion. We will examine the way that modernization altered understandings of religion and religious practices, experience and belief in modern Japan. Next we will address forms of Japanese religion that arose during the specifically modern period. Finally we will focus on ways that certain Japanese elites during the first half of the twentieth century sought an escape from problems they associated with modernity through philosophical and religious means that were themselves inseparable from modernity.

There is no general textbook for the course. Lectures will provide information and perspectives that link the readings to a coherent narrative. Students should try to read in such a way that they understand how each assignment is related to the overarching themes of the course. I highly recommend that students do each of the assigned readings by the date readings are listed. Doing so will usually enable students to more fully benefit from the lectures and films. Grades will be determined by a take-home midterm essay and a take-home final exam essay, each of which will be in response to an assigned question. The essay questions will reference information provided by in-class films, assigned readings and lectures. Lastly, I will attempt to facilitate discussion during class throughout the course and I recommend that you participate.

**Books**

Tanizaki Jun'ichirō's *Naomi* is now available for purchase. At some point in the quarter I may require the reading of a book (Miyazawa Kenji's *Night of the Milky Way Railway*) that is no longer in print. I will make it available online.

All other reading materials are in the course reader, which is available at Postal Plus Copy Shop, 4130 La Jolla Village Drive (next to the Marriot Hotel, Regents Square); 452-9933/info@postalplusucsd.com. A Postal Plus representative will be vending copies outside the lecture hall following the first few course meetings.

### **Requirements**

1. Midterm Essays due or written out in class on Thursday May 5. It will account for 40% of grade. NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED. ATTENDENCE IS REQUIRED.

2. Final Essays (60% of grade) due in class on Thursday, June 9 at 3:30-6:00.

### **Part I: Historiography and Culture**

#### **Week One**

Tues, March 29: Introduction

No reading

Thu, March 31: On History, Repression and “the Japanese”

Reading: Walter Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” from *Illuminations*, 253-264; Edwin O Reischauer, “The Japanese and the Outside World” from *The US and Japan* (New York: The Viking Press, 1950, 1957 and 1965), 99-115.

#### **Week Two**

Tues, April 5: Everything You Ever Needed to Know About Japanese History

Reading: “History,” from *Japan: Profile of a Nation* (Kodansha International, Ltd: Tokyo, 1999), 72-208.

Thu, April 7: The Making of Japan

Reading: Amino Yoshihiko, “Deconstructing Japan,” from *East Asian History* Vol. 3 (June 1992), 121-142; and Stefan Tanaka, “Time, Pasts, History” from *New Times in Modern Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 1-26.

#### **Week Three**

Tues, April 12: History and the Modern Nation-State

Reading: Stefan Tanaka, “Naturalization of Nation: Chronological Time,” from *New Times*, 111-143.

Thu, April 14: What is Culture?

Reading: Tessa Morris-Suzuki, “Culture” and “Globalization” from *Reinventing Japan: Time, Space, Nation* (New York: M.E Sharpe), 60-78 and 161-184.

## **Part II: Literature as a Means of Representation**

### **Week Four**

Tues, April 19: Modernity, Modernism, and Modernization

Reading: James McFarlane, "The Mind of Modernism," from *Modernism a Guide to European Literature* (New York: Penguin, 1991), 71-93, and Marshall Berman, "Modernity-Yesterday and Tomorrow," from *All that's Solid Melts into Air*, 15-36.

Thu, April 21: Japan and the West in Literature

Reading: Izumi Kyōka, "The Holy Man of Mt. Koya," from *Japanese Gothic Tales*, 21-73; and begin to read Tanizaki Junichirō, *Naomi* (New York: North Point Press, 1990).

### **Week Five**

Tues, April 26: Tanizaki Jun'ichirō I

Reading: Masao Miyoshi, "The Lure of the 'West': Tanizaki Junichiro," in *Off/Center: Power and Cultural Relations Between Japan and the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 126-148; Donald Keene, "Tanizaki Junichirō" from *Appreciations of Japanese Culture* (New York: Kodansha International, 1981), 171-185; and continue to read *Naomi*.

Midterm Question Distributed

Thu, April 28: Women in Taishō Japan/Gender and Modernity

Reading: Miriam Silverberg, "The Café Waitress Serving Modern Japan," from *Mirror of Modernity: Inventing Traditions of Modern Japan* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1998), 208-225; and finish *Naomi*.

### **Week Six**

Tues, May 3: "East," "West" and "Reality"

Reading: Ken K. Ito, "To the West," from *Visions of Desire: Tanizaki's Fictional Worlds* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).

Film: "Manji"

Thu, May 5: Tanizaki Jun'ichirō II

No Reading.

Midterm Due

## **Part III: Religion and Overcoming**

### **Week Seven**

Tues, May 10: Modernization of Religion

Reading: James Ketelaar, "Of Heretics and Martyrs: Anti-Buddhist Policies and the Meiji Restoration," from *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan: Buddhism and its Persecution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 43-86.

Thu, May 12: Modernity and Religion

Reading: Donald Lopez, "Belief" and Robert H. Sharf, "Experience" from *Critical Terms for Religious Studies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 21-35 and 94-116.

### **Week Eight**

Tues, May 17: Japanese Buddhism and Zen

Reading: Robert Sharf, "The Zen of Japanese Nationalism," from Lopez, Donald S. Jr., ed., *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 107-160; and Alfred G. Arnowitz/Jack Kerouac, "A Yen for Zen" (excerpt) from *Big Sky Mind: Buddhism and the Beat Generation* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1995), 80-83.

Thu, May 19: Japanese Buddhism, Nichiren and Nichirenism

Reading: Manabu Fujii, "Nichiren" from *Shapers of Japanese Buddhism* 123-134 (Tokyo: Kosei Publishing Company, 1994); George J. Tanabe Jr., "Tanaka Chigaku: The Lotus Sutra and the Body Politic" in *The Lotus Sutra in Japanese Culture*, 191-207; and Satomi Kishio, "Introductory" from *Japanese Civilization: Its Significance and Realization; Nichirenism and Japanese National Principals*, 1-13.

### **Week Nine**

Tues May 24: Miyazawa Kenji

Film: "Night of the Milky Way Railroad"

Reading: Miyazawa Kenji, *Night of the Milky Way Railroad*

Thu, May 26: Religion, Nationalism, Imperialism and Fantasy

Reading: Tetsuo Najita and H.D. Harootunian "Japanese Revolt Against the West: Political and Cultural Criticism in the Twentieth Century," from *The Cambridge History of Japan* Vol. 6, The Twentieth Century (New York: Cambridge University Press), 711-774.

Final Question Distributed

### **Week Ten**

Tues, May 31: Pan-Asian Dreams and Overcoming Modernity

Reading: Richard M. Jaffe, "Seeking Śākyamuni: Travel and the Reconstruction of Japanese Buddhism" from *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 30:1 (2004), 65-96; and Harootunian, "All the Names of History" from *Overcome by Modernity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), ix-xxxii.

Thu, June 2: Final Reflections

No Reading.

Finals: Monday - Friday, June 6-10