

School of Liberal Studies
Ambedkar University Delhi
Course Outline

Time Slot- Tuesday & Thursday 9-11 am

Course Code: SLS2HS207

Title: The History of Modern Japan

Type of Course: Elective (History)

Cohort for which it is compulsory: None

Cohort for which it is elective: All

No of Credits: 4

Semester and Year Offered: Open

Course Coordinator and Team: Dr Dharitri Narzary

Email of course coordinator: dharitri@aud.ac.in

Pre-requisites: None

Aim: This course is part of the MA history comparative basket and will encourage students to engage in area studies, i.e. East Asia. This will help students understand the contemporary social and cultural concerns in a comparative perspective. The course is being offered keeping in mind the faculty expertise currently available at AUD, with an effort to create a niche in area studies.

The history of Japan is unique, one that is an anomaly in the history of modern imperialism which cannot be understood without taking into account its traditional historical background and geographical positioning. Japan not only is the only country in Asia that escaped western colonization; but it is also the only non-western country to rise to become a colonial empire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Despite its late entry as a colonial power, it had tremendously affected the course of world history in the twentieth century.

The course deals with the historical process of empire building in modern Japan post Meiji Restoration and will cover a period from 1868 to the post World War II developments. There are ongoing debates related to Japanese political ideology during the peak of colonial era with many Western as well as Asian researches revisiting the Japanese notion of a 'nation-state'. The simple explanation that Japan transformed itself along the western ideals of development - following a

more capitalist mode of production, modern education and scientific knowledge - glosses over the multi-dimensional complexities involved in the process of empire building that Japan had to deal with. Japan's internal policy became intricately connected with its external policy due to its own understanding of 'colonialism and empire'. Why and how Japan turned ultra-nationalist? How was Japanese colonialism different from the Western colonialism? Apart from ultra-nationalist ideologues like Kita Ikki, the early twentieth century Japan also saw the floating of the famous slogan called the 'Japanese Pan-Asianism', an ideology used by Japan to unite Asia against the imperial west in the early twentieth century by political and cultural ideologues like Okawa Shumei, Okakura Tenshin and others.

The course will be premised within the larger context of understanding the political and cultural ideology of Japan since the Meiji regime. Japanese concept of modernity, the notion of 'self' and the 'other', the emergence of a national perspective on social and cultural minorities, the 'nihonjinron' discourse or 'Japaneseness' that is related to the idea of 'homogeneity' – one nation, one culture, are some of the dominant ideologies that made Japan what it is today. The contemporary social and cultural concerns of Japan such as ageing, social security, immigration, education, and so on are rooted in the country's traditional thought process. The course will thus discuss the major political, cultural and social events/transcends that shaped the history of modern Japan.

Brief description of modules/ Main modules:

This is primarily a lecture course, which includes one or two film screening. Some of the modules of the course are:

- 1600-1868: Early modern history as a background to the process of modernization of Japan, pre-Meiji Tokugawa polity of a closed nation, class society with a feudal structure, promotion of samurai culture, early notion of 'nation', intellectual history, controlled contact with the outside world and its impact.
- 1868-1990: Meiji Restoration and Meiji policy of political, social, cultural and economic transformation. Emergence of a new political ideology (of being Japanese-the idea of race, self and the other) post its exposure to and contact with the West, development and industrialization, national education system and modern thoughts. Issues and problems related to the regime change such as population growth, unemployment, etc.
- 1900-1945: Imperial Japan: Japan emerging as an Imperial and colonial power, policy of expansion and conquest, internal and external policy of Imperial Japan, Japan at war, the idea of one Asia, role of the ideologues.
- 1945-1980: The unconditional surrender of Japan and the period of American Occupation post WWII, democratization of Japanese political thought and system under the occupation regime including freedom of expression (media), economic and social reconstruction of Japan after independence, new trends in culture, the notion of multi-culturalism, minority issues, etc.
- Japanese popular culture: Tradition and modernity, emergence of new trends in the popular culture, representation of Japan in literary works within and outside the country

Assessment Details with weights:

1. **Take Assignment: 25%**
2. **Class Presentation: 25%**
3. **Class participation: 10%**
4. **End semester examination: 40%**

Reading List:

- Gordon, Andrew, *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa to the Present*. OUP, USA, 2003 (ISBN-10: **0195110617** | ISBN-13: **978-0195110616**)
- Jansen, Marius B., *The Making of Modern Japan*. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002 (ISBN-10: 0674009916 ISBN-13: 978-0674009912)
- W.G. Beasley, *Japanese Imperialism 1894-1945*. Clarendon Publications, 1987.
- Reischauer, Edwin O; Fairbank, John King and Craig, Albert M., eds., *A History of East Asian Civilization*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960.
- Jansen, Marius B and Rozman, Gilbert, eds., *Japan in Transition: From Tokugawa to Meiji*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986.
- Horio, Teruhisa, *Educational Thought and Ideology in Modern Japan*. University of Tokyo Press, 1988.
- Saaler, Sven and Koschmann, J. Victor, eds., *Pan-Asianism in Modern Japanese History: Colonialism, Regionalism and Borders*. Routledge, 2007.
- Sugimoto, Yoshio, *An introduction to Japanese society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2003.
- Hall, John Whitney, *The Cambridge History of Japan: The Twentieth Century*. Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Calman, Donald, 1992, *The Nature and Origins of Japanese Imperialism: A reinterpretation of the Great Crisis of 1873*, London & New York, Routledge.
- Cummings, William K., 1988, *Education and Equality in Japan*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press.

Articles

- Chang, Yunshik, "Colonization as Planned Changed: The Korea Case", *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1971.
- Bukh, Alexander, "Japan's History Textbooks Debate: National Identity in Narratives in Victimhood and Victimization", *Asian Survey*, Vol. 57, No. 5, 2007.
- Hane, Mikiso, "Early Meiji Liberalism: An Assessment", *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 24, No.4, 1969.
- Esenbel, Selcuk, "Japan's Global Claim to Asia and the World of Islam: Transnational Nationalism and World Power, 1900-1945", *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 109, No. 4, 2004.
- Marion, J Levi, Jr., "Some Implications of Japanese Social Structure", *The American Sociologist*, Vol.31, No. 2, 2000.

- Doak, Kevin M., “Ethnic Nationalism and Romanticism in Early Twentieth-Century Japan”, *Journal of Japanese Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 1, 1996 (Winter).
- Howell, David L., “Ethnicity and Culture in Contemporary Japan”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 3, 1996.