

1/3/24 version May be revised

## Early Modern Japan: 1580's-1840's

History 187A  
UCSB Winter 2024  
T Th 9:30-10:45  
North Hall 1111

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Office hrs: W 10:30-12, Th 11-12  
and Zoom by appt.

We will learn about life in Japan during most of the Tokugawa period (1600-1868), starting with the unification era of revolutionary change in the decades before and after the year 1600 and then the society created in the aftermath. After a century and a half of relentless warfare on the islands, the Matsudaira clan produced a warlord who changed his family name to Tokugawa and came to rule the hundreds of daimyo lords of Japan in 1600. The lords remained to govern their own domainal realms but no longer could they war with each other, and they were subject to punishment and attainder by the Tokugawa, while the Tokugawa created many new daimyo out of their own vassals. Most samurai were pulled out of their villages and came to live in the burgeoning cities, and they became dependent upon salaries granted from their lords. Villagers and townspeople gained administrative self-government but were disarmed, and the military power of religious institutions ended. In this way the samurai class secured a position at the top of the government and social hierarchy, but they were also tamed and bureaucratized, leading to one of the seeming paradoxes of the Tokugawa period; more than two centuries of military rule without warfare, an era called "the Great Peace."

A further paradox is that, within a century, commoner townspeople, not samurai, emerged as the dominant accumulators of wealth and producers of culture. Japan became one of the most urbanized societies in the world by the 1650's, and Edo (now Tokyo) became the world's largest city with more than one-million residents. A civilian populace increasingly produced the literature, drama, fashion and professional sports that made even the samurai avid consumers. By the early 1800's Japan had become a highly literate, educated, peaceful and commercialized early modern society, capable of meeting the challenges posed by the growing dominance of the West in the latter half of that century, even though the government itself collapsed in a new revolution in 1868.

### Course description and objectives

In this class we will explore the above issues and changes of these centuries largely by focusing on the lives of many individuals to show how issues such as status, class, gender and other categories affected their experience and how they navigated their world. The central book reading of the class is *Stranger in the Shogun's City: A Japanese Woman and her World* by Amy Stanley. It is a biography of a woman who ran away from her country home and tried to make her way in the big city of Edo. Throughout this course we will also practice the historian's craft of interpreting documents of contemporaries. Most of these will be from our textbook, *Voices of Early Modern Japan* by Constantine Vaporis, which will guide you on how to read and think about primary documents. Most Thursday classes will include formal discussion time centered around our readings. You will each be required to bring *on paper* a one-to-two page single spaced typed commentary on what you have learned from the week's documents. This will serve as the basis for the discussion. These pages will be graded for sincere engagement with the sources and will account for 35% of the class grade. There will be three small open book quizzes about every three weeks that you can take on Canvas, and there will be no final exam. A 9-page document paper will be instead of a final exam. You will have to write one large document paper which will be your presentation and analysis of select document materials. It will be modeled on the organization of the chapters in your textbook *Voices of Early Modern Japan*, but you will find and use other primary sources. I will post a detailed assignment sheet in week 4 of the class page.

We create this class together. I encourage you to ask questions or give your own comments at any point in the lecture. Your attendance at class lectures is essential and required. Much important information will be given only in lecture. I will post a pdf of the class lecture powerpoint to Canvas for people who must miss class because of illness.

**Requirements and Grading:** Map (due 1/16) 5% submitted on *paper*; One Pager document assignments for discussion (generally every Thursday and submitted on *paper*) 7x5=35% (eight opportunities so you can miss one without penalty), 3 short open book electronic quizzes on Canvas (3x5=15%); final document paper prep document (due 2/22) 10% submitted on *paper*; one 9 page document paper--First draft (due 3/5) 15% submitted on *paper*, and Final Draft due 3/18

20% submitted electronically as pdf or document file.

**Late assignment policy:** There will be a late deduction of 10% per day late up to 50% off. You may email me the assignment for a submission date and then give me an identical version on paper later so I can grade it. I can excuse the penalty with good reason so be sure to contact me ASAP if needed. Note that for the first two weeks of the course I will take into account late adds and other reasonable adjustment issues.

**Required texts:**

Constantine Vaporis, *Voices of Early Modern Japan (2nd ed.)*, (Routledge, 2021).

Amy Stanley, *Stranger in the Shogun's City: A Japanese Woman and Her World*, (Scribner, 2020).

articles and documents on Canvas class website

You should purchase the texts and bring them to class on Discussion Thursdays. Also bring other documents as directed. If you cannot purchase or access the texts, they will be available on Reserve at the Main Library.

**Etiquette and health:**

The most important rule is to be respectful and kind to each other. Do your best to be prepared, join in our collective activities, and help others get more out of this class. Be thoughtful with regard to illness. If you feel ill with the symptoms of flu or covid then do not attend class nor office hours in order to protect other people's lives. I will be happy to meet by appointment via Zoom. Anyone may wear a mask as they wish but if you have a cold then please wear a mask to class. These are emotionally very difficult times for all of us, and I well understand that you may not be on top of your game sometimes. If you feel you are having special difficulties please feel free to contact me early on and I will do my best to be accommodating and helpful. My goal is for everyone to learn as well as they can.

**Weekly Readings and Lecture Topics**

**Week 1 Late Warring States and Unification**

T Jan 9 Introduction to course and Warring States era

Th Jan 11 Unification Part 1

Readings: Vaporis, "Preface," "Introduction: The Shogun's Japan," and "Evaluating and Interpreting Primary Documents" (pp. xxii-xliv).

*The first part of the Vaporis reading is setting the scene of his book in terms of its goals and methods, and then setting the scene of Tokugawa Japan. Then he discusses how to evaluate and interpret documents. Ask yourself what was especially interesting or useful to you in this?*

**Week 2 The Unification**

T Jan 16 Unification Part 2 **MAP due**

Th Jan 18 Tokugawa Government (35 mins) **One pager due**  
Discussion 40 mins: Fukutomi and Mistress An Documents

Readings: 1. "The Memoir of a Unification Era Warrior, Fukutomi Han'emon," unpublished translation by Luke S. Roberts

2. Basil Chamberlain transl., "A Short Memoir from the Seventeenth Century: Mistress An's Narrative." pp. 107-113 in *Early Japanology* (Asiatic Society of Japan, 1998).

3. Vaporis, Ch. 11, 44 on siege of Osaka castle

Reading skills and first one pager: When you read a document, first do your best to understand its context. Historians do this by answering the question "Who wrote this to whom, when, where and why?" After you answer that, then think how this might influence the content and change its meaning. Then list a few things you learned from the document (s). Also ask yourself What did you like about the document? Why? What did it tell you that you liked learning? For the first one pager address the two memoirs in the above manner. One full single spaced page or up to two single spaced pages.

*Discussion topics: We will discuss this week's assigned two personal accounts of the experience of war during the unification era by samurai, one a man and one a woman. What was the process by which these documents were made? How might the contexts of production have affected the content of these two documents? Then consider at least one of the following questions: What do you learn about society in wartime; human relations, values, expediency. How did gender affect one's experience? Did any of this change your preconceived notions of samurai and their values?*

### **Week 3 Tokugawa Political Culture**

T Jan 23 Religion and Foreign Relations

Th Jan 25 Daimyo Performance, Submission and Independence 40 mins

Discussion: Tokugawa Political Culture. **One pager due**, treat at least two of the assigned chapters in the manner suggested by the *discussion topics* below.

Readings: Vaporis, Political Order Ch. 12-13, 46; Religion Ch. 38, 39, 42; Foreign Relations Ch. 17-19  
Roberts, *Performing the Great Peace*, Introduction and Chapter 1

*Discussion topics: Read and consider the chapter readings for this week. How does Vaporis structure his chapters? Does his contextualization help you understand the documents? This week's readings are about the political order and foreign relations in the unification era and early Tokugawa period. Pick two chapters you especially like and think carefully about them and write for your one pager: What did you like about them and what did you learn from them? How did considering the contexts of document production help you understand the document and its information better? Does Roberts' (yes that is me!) reading lead you to rethink the nature and significance of public documents?*

### **Week 4 Villages and their people**

T Jan 30 Villages

Th Feb 1 Women's lives

Discussion: Rural Japan, Family and Women's lives. **One pager due**

Readings: Stanley *Stranger in the Shogun's City*, frontmatter and pp. 1-68  
Vaporis ch. 1-4, 15, 27, 28  
Anne Walthall, "The Life Cycle of Farm Women in Tokugawa Japan"

*Discussion topics: About nine tenths of Japanese in this era were villagers. Based on these readings, what are some of the key issues of social control in villages and towns? What are key features of family organization? What strikes you as odd and what purpose may it have had in Tokugawa society? What restrictions do women face? What freedoms do they have? How does Tsuneno's life compare to women described in the other documents? What disjunctions do you see? In your one pager deal with one of two of these questions.*

### **Week 5 Cities**

T Feb 6 Literacy, Printing and commercial culture.

Th Feb 8 Urban Economic Life

Discussion: Urban life from the Stanley reading **One pager due**  
**Quiz on Gauchospace 5% due Friday Feb 9, 11:59PM**

Readings: Stanley *Stranger in the Shogun's City* pp. 68-160  
Vaporis ch. 9, 10, 16, 26, 36

*Discussion Topics: This week's readings focus on life in the big city of Edo. How does urban life look from the point of view of a commoner woman like Tsuneno? She has no power but what does she rely on to succeed? What do you learn about social relations, economic relations and gender relations in the city, and*

*about rural-urban connections? How do the lives described in the Stanley book compare to what you learn in the various Vaporis chapters?*

### **Week 6 Samurai Romance and Violence**

T Feb 13 *Bureiuchi*: Slaying for rudeness

Th Feb 15 Male male romance

Discussion: Male male romance and status system violence **One pager due**

Readings: Ihara Saikaku (trans. Paul Gordon Schalow as *The Great Mirror of Male Love*), *Nanshoku Ōkagami*.  
 Luke Roberts, "Governing the Samurai Family."  
 Vaporis ch. 22-25, 35

*Discussion topics: The short stories by a popular writer of fiction in the 1690's deal with two crucial aspects of samurai values and life; a sense of personal honor and a sense of devotion to one's friends. The latter was tied up with a strong tradition of hierarchical same-sex romance which was normal among samurai. Both issues often came into conflict with performing duty to one's lord. Which seems more important to these samurai, personal honor or duty to lord? What other values can you learn from these stories? Based on the Roberts' reading, what values do you see operating concerning the roles of mothers, wives, relatives and servants in a household? How is violence justified, and why? The Vaporis readings include one that theorizes the samurai place in the social order. How does the writer explain why samurai do little work? The other chapter is on economic problems of samurai. What are these problems and why do they happen? How does this affect the social order?*

### **Week 7 Economic and Ecological Change and Commoner Protest**

T Feb 20 Environmental Problems and Economy

Th Feb 22 Commoner Protests **You will submit a brief document to me on your final project. (10%)**

Discussion: Problems and protests **One pager due**

Readings: Conrad Totman, "Preindustrial River Conservancy," Luke Roberts, "Voices of Dissatisfaction and Change: The Petition Box;" "Selections of Passages from petitions..." (Petitions from Tosa people with criticisms of government and suggestions for reforms in the domainal country of Tosa)

*Discussion topics: The Totman article is about how maintaining controlled waterways during the Tokugawa period was a very difficult ecological and economic issue. What were the key problems and costs? Why were they so large in the Tokugawa era? The Roberts' readings are about protests and petitions concerning government. Based on the readings what did they identify as problems? What solutions did they try or propose? For your one pager do either one of these different issues (environment or samurai finances), first establishing the character of your source material(s) and then addressing the above questions as relevant. How might they relate to modern issues that we face in our world?*

### **Week 8 Government Reforms**

T Feb 27 Tokugawa Reforms

Discuss your projects 30 mins.

Th Feb 29 Domain Reforms

Discussion: Tempō Reforms **One Pager due**

**Quiz on Gauchospace 5% due Friday Mar. 1 11:59PM**

Readings: Stanley *Stranger in the Shogun's City* pp. 161-222

Harold Bolitho "The Tempō Crisis," *Discussion: We will discuss questions you have about the readings. One pager: How do the Tempō reforms appear in Tsuneno's world? How does her view compare to the reforms as described by Bolitho?*

**Week 9 Publishing and Arts**

- T Mar 5 Publishing and books **First Draft of Project Due Today 15% (I will return with comments by March 12 so you can revise for Final Project submission by Mar. 18)**
- Th Mar 7 Entertainments **One Pager due**
- Readings: Readings: Stanley *Stranger in the Shogun's City* pp. 223-252, Vaporis ch. 31, 48, Santō Kyōden "Edo Born Playboy Grilled and Basted"

*Discussion topics: We will discuss arts and entertainments of the Edo period with a focus on the Santō Kyōden story, "Edo Born Playboy Grilled and Basted." What are the tastes of consumers in this world? What does the content tell us about vales of the day?*

**Week 10 Your Choice of Lecture and Your Documents**

- T Mar 12 Lecture will be topic you choose and vote on
- Th Mar 14 Discussion of three selected from first draft versions of your document papers  
**Quiz on Gauchospace 5% due Friday Mar. 15 11:59PM**  
Readings: **TBA** and three of your document papers.

*Discussion topics: TBA*

**FINAL EXAM: No Final Exam. Instead turn in to Canvas your revised Final Project (20%) by midnight Monday Mar. 18**