

## Japanese History Through Art and Literature (Coronavirus version!)

History 87  
UCSB Spring 2020  
T TH 12:30-1:45 (or not!)  
LSB 1001 (NOT!)

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### Course description and objectives

We will explore history on the Japanese islands from prehistory to recent times, largely through its arts and literature. This is not an art history course, but rather we will think about how such materials as objects, paintings, architecture, poetry, fiction, memoirs etc. can be used as historical sources that relate information about society, culture and politics. The readings and videos on Gauchospace have been chosen, for the most part, to give you examples of how later people have used these materials in their own eras, and how historians use these materials. I have also provided many writings and documents created by the people whose history we are studying. Your weekly discussion sections and the essays you write will give you the chance to express and test understandings which you have learned and created about these writings. My lectures will balance a history of politics and institutions with social and cultural history. Feel free to raise your hand and ask ....

KRZSHAAAL KKRZSHAAAAAAL! (Here I am quoting your week 10 Murakami Haruki short story "TV People," which seems to me to be an increasingly relevant exploration of selves in a homebound, virtual world.) /\\ Okay, that was when we had planned a large lecture class. Some of the above may apply but things will be a bit different this time as we hastily switch to "distance learning" for all of Spring quarter. There may be TRRPQ SHAOUSS\\ technical glitches along the way that we'll need to overcome.

Here is our current plan: I will post recorded lectures to Gauchospace each week by lecture time which you can view either during lecture time or later if lecture time is inconvenient. Then you should take a content quiz on Gauchospace about the lecture, which will serve for "attendance." As for the readings, it is best to read the textbook (or assigned Wikipedia pages) first, so you have context to help you understand the specific individual reading assignments on Gauchospace. Be sure to have finished the readings and assigned video links by the time of your discussion section for that week and have written up and submitted your weekly one pager by section time. There are 10 one-pagers and you need to do 7 of them for full credit. Your TA's and I will also hold Zoom virtual office hours for you all to talk and ask questions.

In addition to the weekly one pagers, you will write two essays on specified documents. The first will be on a selection from a tale written by an 11th century court lady. The second will be based on humorous popular fiction from the early 1800's that relates the conversations people have in the public bathhouse where they socialize. You should apply in your essays the skills for understanding sources that we are using in class. The quality of the writing will affect the grade, so consult the posted grading rubric so see the aspects of writing that are important to doing the paper well.

There will be zero tolerance of all academic dishonesty such as plagiarism and cheating on exams. We will report all cases of dishonesty to the dean and treat accordingly. All materials I produce for this course are copyrighted. Use them for your study, but redistributing and posting them elsewhere is against the law and strictly prohibited.

This time more than ever you will see how much your active participation will be directly linked to the amount of learning you achieve in this class.

### Requirements and Grading\*

Weekly "one pagers" on the readings 20%; Lecture quizzes 20%; Two 4-5 page essays (due 4/21 and 5/26) 20% each for a total of 40%\*\*; Discussion section participation 20%\*\*\*. Assignments are to be turned in by uploading them to Gauchospace by the due time. Those turned in after the due time or a day late will have the equivalent of a third of a letter grade (3.33%) deducted. (for example a B paper one day late will become a B-, two days late a C+ etc.) Holidays and weekends are no exceptions to this calculation. After 7 days late you get half credit for the assignment.

\*I am writing this syllabus at a time of a strike by some TA's concerning COLA. If the strike continues into Spring quarter grading standards and processes may be adjusted accordingly. Furthermore, the effects of the coronavirus pandemic such as our distance learning arrangements may also lead to further

changes in grading processes and standards. Our goal is to be reasonable and flexible. \*\*Because this is a writing requirement course, your two essays must be of passing quality (before late deduction if late) to pass the course. \*\*\*Students who miss *more* than two discussion sections will fail the class. If technological or health issues prevent participation contact your TA ASAP after the scheduled section to arrange for makeup activities. Do not wait a week or more to do this. This quarter is very hard on all of us, so communicate as promptly and responsibly as possible.

### **Suggested textbook**

Conrad Schirokauer, David Lurie, Susan Gay, *A Brief History of Japanese Civilization* 4th ed., Cengage Learning, 2012.

If you cannot have access to the textbook then use the following Wikipedia page:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_Japan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Japan) to get general contextual information on the eras we touch on. Note that on that page there is an Overview section which has a grid of “periodization of Japanese history” In the column called “Period” there are links to detailed discussions of the periods. In your weekly reading schedule below I will identify the name of the linked period page(s) that you should read.

### **Required Readings and Videos**

Various weekly readings as pdf’s and video links up on Gauchospace. Week 2 and week 7 have longer sets of readings to be used for the papers--so be prepared.

### **Weekly Readings and Lecture Topics**

#### **Week 1 Introduction and Early History up to Nara (Ise Shrine)**

T Mar. 31 Introduction and prehistory

Th Apr. 2 Early Imperial governments 500's-784

**Readings:** Schirokauer, pp. 1-43 (or Wikipedia History of Japan links for Jōmon, Yayoi, Kofun, Asuka, Nara) .

Gauchospace: Fabio Rambelli, “Floating Signifiers: The Plural Significance of the Grand Shrine of Ise and the Incessant Re-signification of Shinto.”

Videos: “Ise Jingu Grand Shrine” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q25zC7pDpW8>

“Ise Shrine - Japan” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CVy2toIHhig> 5 minutes

*The textbook will introduce you to the basic outlines of the periods of prehistory, protohistory, and the foundation of the early imperial state in Japan, emphasizing the importance the regions of modern Korean and China played in the development of culture, religion, technology and politics. The Early Shinto reading includes some translations of the earliest Japanese writings of the myths of key gods of Japan. They are not actual history, but historians use them for information on beliefs, social customs, and early political conflicts in Japan. What things do you think you learn about Japan back then? What is your evidence? The deity Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess, is enshrined in Ise and Japan’s imperial clan claims her as its ancestress. The Youtube shorts discuss Ise Shrine. The first is about its general meaning and the second focuses on the ceremony of bringing logs to the site for its periodic reconstruction each 20 years. Think about the object Ise Shrine and also about the activities around it and what you can learn from them. Rambelli’s essay is a bit difficult in places, but please focus on what you can understand and particularly on the key argument of his essay, which says that Ise shrine and Shinto rituals have been constantly reinterpreted in new contexts over the ages. Meanings change with the people who interpret. Know that our interpretations of the past reveal as much about ourselves as they do about the past we analyze and think about. Understanding this is a key starting point to most historical methodology, and it may seem to you particularly relevant to interpreting art and literary products.*

**Think about these questions:** *In the modern context--pictured in the video--why not just truck the logs in? What are the broader functions or uses of this festive process of maintaining a shrine? In the ancient context what do you think the shrine did for the imperial family? Think of myths, activities of the shrine, and its economic roles. How was reconstructing it every twenty years a useful thing back then? There are symbolic issues, certainly, and also think about what the actual behavior of contributing and participating might do for people and the polity. How does Rambelli’s essay help you think about this? Write down your answers to at least some of these questions in 150-250 words and submit it to Gauchospace as your first “one-pager” for the class.*

<b>Week 2</b>	<b>Heian (Women's Writings Paper 1)</b>
T Apr. 7	The Heian government 794-1192
Th Apr. 9	Aristocratic social life and the aristocratic arts

**Readings:** Schirokauer, pp. 45-69 (or Wikipedia History of Japan link for Heian). Gauchospace: Ivan Morris, "Women of Ancient Japan: Heian Ladies;" Murasaki Shikibu (Edward Seidensticker, Translator), *The Tale of Genji* (translator's Introduction and selection);

**Additional readings for paper:** "Chapter 9 The Vocabulary of Japanese Aesthetics I" pp. 197-204 from William Theodore de Bary et al eds. *Sources of Japanese Tradition*; selections from *Tales of Ise*, Helen Craig McCullough trans. Selection from the start of the *Kagerō Diary* by Fujiwara Michitsuna's mother (trans. Sonja Arntzen). Also watch the 4 minute youtube video "Marriage and Matrilocality in Heian Japan" ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a6pg\\_3LXc\\_A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a6pg_3LXc_A) ).

*The textbook gives you a basic description of the Heian period of aristocratic rule. Japanese might be the only modern language for which the prose tradition was mainly created by women rather than men, and this happened in the Heian era. This week we will focus on women's writings, and you will write your first large assignment about it, and especially a portion of the novel, The Tale of Genji. There are many readings this week to use as the basis for your first paper. First read Ivan Morris' article on aristocratic women of Heian Japan. Then read the introduction and three chapter selection from the very long novel about court life, The Tale of Genji, written by Murasaki Shikibu. It will be a bit like dropping into the middle of a soap opera so be sure to first read the Introduction first to understand the context. We enter the story where Prince Genji's good friend, Kashiwagi (Oaktree) is regretting the fact that he has had an affair with Genji's wife, the lady "Third Princess." She is also worried about what Genji thinks of this, made more complicated by the fact that she gives birth to a child who Genji pretends is his own.... What things can you learn about the social life and gender roles of the Heian aristocracy from the Tale? **The rest of the readings are supplementary to help with your paper due April 21:** First is another famous piece of writing called "The Kagerō Diary." As you read it think on two things: 1. Based on her first paragraph, what is she trying to write about? What might be new about this kind of writing? and 2. how are poems used in romantic relations and other human interaction? The reading about the vocabulary of Japanese aesthetics (of tales and of poetry) will introduce you to Heian era goals in writing. What do they value? Think about how natural imagery and seasons are used to express human emotions. Then read the selections from the *Tales of Ise* (you might want to consult the Wikipedia entry on *The Tales of Ise* to learn the character of the document). How are these brief poem tales similar to aspects of the Tale of Genji? What do they tell you of gender relations in aristocratic society? The youtube video is an introduction to matrilineal marriage in Heian and its implications for court politics. Family organization is very different from our norms.*

Assignments: 1. One pager: Based on the assigned *Tale of Genji* chapters. Start developing a thesis about Heian society to use in your paper: Identify the question you are trying to answer with evidence from the chapters, list some evidence and then tentatively propose an answer. Submit this. This will be the basis for your first paper.  
2. Five page essay due week 4, Tuesday April 21. To be based on the *Tale of Genji* selection and other relevant sources as appropriate. A detailed assignment sheet is on Gauchospace for week 2.

<b>Week 3</b>	<b>Early Samurai (Tale of the Heike)</b>
T Apr. 14	The rural economy and samurai origins
Th Apr. 16	Kamakura and a dual court/samurai state

Readings: Schirokauer, pp. 70-90 (or Wikipedia History of Japan link for Kamakura). Gauchospace: Helen McCullough trans., *The Tale of the Heike*, Introduction and selections pp. 1-11, 23-27, 313-319, 366-380; Carmen Blacker, "Legends of Heike Villages: The Fugitive Warrior as Ancestor;" Youtube: "Roving Ronin Report Presents Japanese Biwa Player" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vnIQ15CZRr8>

*The Tale of the Heike is the earliest great piece of samurai-oriented literature in Japan. Read the Introduction to understand the origins of the Tale, and then read the selections from the Tale. What influences of court culture do you see? What aspects of samurai culture do you see, and what is different? What kind of values and worldview are expressed? Think of how it is different from the Tale of Genji. The Tale of the Heike was what we would call historical fiction, and it was also what we would call a ballad: It was meant to be sung in the courts of samurai for entertainment. Please view the youtube selection of a biwa player, Sakurai Akiko, performing a section of the Tale. The Tale of the Heike became very important in subsequent Japanese culture. The Carmen Blacker reading focuses on a curious cultural tradition that many villages in*

*Japan claim to be descended from the Heike warriors who fled there after defeat. Think about why such traditions may have become popular. Also think about how the Tale of the Heike contrasts with the Tale of Genji in content and style.*

Assignment: In your one pager address some of the issues for thought suggested in the italics above.

**Week 4 Warrior Disorder and Changing Religion (Kyogen comic theater)**

T Apr. 21 Changes in Buddhism ESSAY DUE TODAY

Th Apr. 23 Renaissance or Dark Ages? Muromachi (Ashikaga) Japan

Readings: Schirokauer, pp. 91-110 (or Wikipedia History of Japan links for Kenmu Restoration and Muromachi).;

Gauchospace: Two comic plays (kyogen) of the Muromachi period “Buaku” and “The Ink Smeared Lady” from Shio Sakanishi, *Kyogen Comic Interludes of Japan*. Youtube: “痾痢 (pins and needles) - Japanese kyogen,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZFWpbC4u7U>. Movie accessible through Gauchocast “Daimyo” by John Nathan for the

Smithsonian National Gallery of Art.

*The Muromachi is truly an age of great political turmoil. Court authority declined rapidly and the samurai became ascendant throughout most of the islands, but they were disunited. Warriors were constantly vying for power in various regions of Japan, and the Ashikaga authority structure was very troubled. Despite the conflict, this was the age in which many of Japan's great artistic traditions were born. The movie Daimyo highlights some of these arts. I have included in your readings two comic interlude plays (kyōgen) that were performed between the very stately and serious noh plays so as to contrast and refresh. Comedy is a great avenue into the anxieties of the age. These two plays are about daimyo warlords and were performed in front of daimyo warlords. What do they worry and laugh about? What does this tell you about their lives and social organization?*

Assignment: In your one pager address the last two questions in the italics above.

**Week 5 Iberians and Unification (Byōbu--Biombo Folding Screens)**

T Apr. 28 First contact with the West

Th Apr. 30 Unification 1568-1600

Readings: Schirokauer, pp. 111-128 (or Wikipedia History of Japan link for Azuchi-Momoyama).; Gauchospace: Michael Cooper, *They Came to Japan* (selections). View the Minneapolis Institute of Art video (8mins.) on Japanese scrolls and screens: “Art of Asia: Japan Scrolls and Screens” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VVnQvhS4vRs>. View the Khan Academy video (8 minutes): Brooklyn Biombo: Folding Screen with the Siege of Belgrade and Hunting Scene, c. 1697-1701 (<http://smarthistory.khanacademy.org/brooklyn-biombo-folding-screen-with-the-siege-of-belgrade-and-hunting-scene-c.-1697-1701.html>). Read the brief SOAS page on the folding fan: <https://www.soas.ac.uk/gallery/traditionsrevised/origin-of-the-folding-fan.html>

*The text will provide the broad outlines of government and society of the Unification era and the Edo period. The Cooper reading provides translations of the writings of Europeans who lived in Japan in the decades before and after 1600. What can you learn about people and politics in the islands from these writings? What can you learn about the preconceptions of the writers themselves? How does the appearance of the Iberians influence the course of history on the islands? The web movie introduces us to how to read a Mexican art form for its world wide connections. Why is a Mexican art form relevant to this class? How does the history of the folding fan relate to these themes?*

Assignment: In your one pager address some of the questions in the italics above.

**Week 6 Unification and the Edo (Tokugawa) period (Popular romantic fiction)**

T May 5 Tokugawa rule and the arts of patronage

Th May 7 Economic change in Tokugawa Japan

Readings: Schirokauer, pp. 129-150 (or Wikipedia History of Japan link for Edo).; Gauchospace: Ihara Saikaku (trans. Thomas Schallow), “The Great Mirror of Male Love,” selections. C. Andrew Gerstle, “Takemoto Gidayū and the Individualistic Spirit of Osaka Theater.”

*The Edo period is the last of the three eras ruled by samurai. Although it was ruled by warriors it was paradoxically an era of no war for more than 200 years, a feat achieved by no other early modern gunpowder empire. Another irony is that although samurai were in charge, it was commercial culture that came to flourish in this era. The commercial culture first flourished in Osaka in the seventeenth century. Your two readings introduce the character of the city of Osaka and one of its chief art forms, the puppet theater called jōruri.*

**Week 7                    Late Edo (Urban Working Class writing: Paper 2)**

T May 12                Late Tokugawa arts

Th May 14              Late Tokugawa Problems

Readings: Schirokauer, pp. 150-158 ((or Wikipedia History of Japan link for Edo).; Gauchospace: Robert Leutner, *Shikitei Sanba and the Comic Tradition in Edo Fiction* Introduction 1-14 and “An Annotated Translation of Portions of Ukiyoburo;” pp. 135-204; Gary Leupp, “Master-Servant Relations;” Amy Stanley, “Maid servants’ Tales: Narrating Domestic and Global History in Eurasia, 1600-1900.”

*The city of Edo became an important cultural center from the late 1700’s, and the culture of the early 1800’s feels to me very modern despite continuing samurai rule. Commoners take the lead in the production of the most energetic culture. It is a culture of playfulness and parody; full of earthy tastes. Your second paper will be based on a very popular piece of fiction called Ukiyoburo (“Bathhouse of the Floating World” written 1809-1813) which presents humorous conversations among bathhouse customers about daily life in Edo. The Schirokauer reading describes the commercial culture of late Tokugawa, and then the collapse of the Tokugawa regime and the creation of a new nationalist Meiji state. The Leupp and Stanley readings introduce you to working class urbanites and will be of use to you as you consider Ukiyoburo for your second paper.*

Assignments: 1. One pager, start on a thesis and lining up evidence for it.

2. 5 page essay due Thursday, Nov. 30. To be based on “An Annotated Translation of Portions of Ukiyoburo”. Like the first paper, pick a topic of your choice, create a thesis statement and write a paper proving your thesis with evidence from the text. I will provide a detailed assignment sheet on Gauchospace in the week 7 entries.

**Week 8                    Meiji Japan**

T May 19                Meiji Restoration

Th May 20              Meiji Nationalism

Readings: Schirokauer, pp. 159-207(or Wikipedia History of Japan link for Meiji).. John Dower, “Yokohama Boomtown: Foreigners in Treaty Port Japan (1859-1872)” <https://visualizingcultures.mit.edu/yokohama/index.html>, and “Asia Rising: Japanese Postcards of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905)” [https://visualizingcultures.mit.edu/asia\\_rising/index.html](https://visualizingcultures.mit.edu/asia_rising/index.html)

*Based on the textbook, think of late Tokugawa and the Meiji period and list how things had changed in; government, international relations, education, cultural leadership, the economy and people’s political behavior. The transition was rapid and in many ways successful. It was also very costly and difficult. Ever since, people have been confronting an industrialized modernity, the immense power of the West, and Western identity within an increasingly important “Japanese” identity. The two web based essays by John Dower treat the beginning and the end of the Meiji period through two kinds of popular art media, woodblock prints and postcards. The first is about the main treaty port in Japan, and how Japanese artists illustrated foreigners and foreign life there in the 1860’s at the time of the nationalist revolution in Japan that is called the Meiji Restoration. The second uses post cards to discuss the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05 that happened near the end of the Meiji era (1868-1910) and signaled to the world Japan’s success at “Westernizing.”*

Assignment:

**Week 9 Postwar**

T May 26                The crisis of the 1930’s and war in Asia    **SECOND PAPER DUE**

Th May 28              Early Postwar Period

Readings: Schirokauer, pp. 207-243 (or Wikipedia History of Japan links for Taishō and Shōwa (Prewar)).; Gauchospace:

John Dower, "Race, Language and War in Two Cultures." Sabine Frühstück, "Field Games" pp. 19-58 from *Playing War*.

*The Dower reading touches on how mutual perceptions influenced the conflict in WWII and how we remember it. The war era also created stock interpretations which have resurfaced throughout the postwar period which he analyzes through cartoon images. The Frühstück reading is from her book about children and war in Japan. It will tie in with the Dower reading on militarism and help you understand how people grow up with militaristic values. How does she use images and non-traditional sources to make her argument?*

Assignment:

### **Week 10 Recent**

T June 2                Movie: *Hellfire: A Journey from Hiroshima*, John Junkerman and John Dower.

Th June 4              Recent society and culture

Readings: Schirokauer, pp. 243-276 (or Wikipedia History of Japan link for Shōwa (Occupied postwar and post occupation and Heisei) ); Gauchospace: Murakami Haruki (Alfred Birnbaum trans.) "T.V. People." Frederik Schodt, chapters 1 and 2 of his book *Dreamland Japan: Writings on Modern Manga*. Chapter from Ishinomori Shotaro, *Japan Inc.: Introduction to Japanese Economics*.

*Murakami Haruki is a writer popular over the past few decades in Japan. "TV People" is one of Murakami's short stories. Think of it in relation to modern life and also in its relations (or not) to Heian literature. The Schodt reading introduces us to the enormous and fascinating world of Japanese comics. The Ishinomori reading is an example of an educational comic that teaches its readers about something, in this case the Japanese economy of the 1980's.*

Assignment: For your final one pager, draw a six frame or eight frame comic on one page of paper illustrating Murakami's "TV People."

**FINAL EXAMINATION:** Your two papers and the many quizzes you do for this course constitute the Final examination.