COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course places Japanese society in a global context. Rather than examining Japan as an isolated island nation, we will explore the rise of modern Japan in its broader geopolitical and historical context of territorial expansion and colonialism, defeat and reconstruction under the U.S. Occupation. Further, we will examine how Japan’s integration into the global economy has not only had an impact on everyday life in Japan, but also has lead to the export of familiar cultural products such as Pokemon, manga and sushi. In exploring these processes from the perspective of Japan, the course seeks to decenter discussions of global and transnational processes fixed on the influence of the West and explore new conceptualizations of globalization. This course may be counted toward an Asian studies major or special major in Japanese.

REQUIRED READINGS:


Readings on course website
COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Discussion paper and presentation
Each week, two students will present on the topic of the day and lead the discussion. Presentations should be based on a five-page discussion paper, which analyses and critically assesses the readings. You should not summarize the readings in your paper. The discussion paper is due on the day of the presentation.

Midterm take-home exam
Topics for the midterm take-home exam will be distributed in class two weeks prior to the due date. In your essay, you will be asked to discuss central problems raised by the assigned readings and lectures so far. The essay should be double spaced and five pages long. The midterm is due on October 6th in class.

Final paper:
As a final exercise, you should write an 8-10 page research paper, which expands on one of the themes of this class. A one-page proposal which states your topic and major question, as well as a short bibliography is due on November 10th. Paper drafts will be discussed in class on December 1.

Late papers will result in a reduction of your grade.

Attendance, class participation, and webmemos:
You should attend all class meetings, read the assigned materials in time for class and actively participate in class discussion. You should also make weekly postings on the course website, in which you reflect on the readings of that week. Postings are due at 8am on the day of class. The discussion board for the postings is located under ‘communication’ – ‘discussion boards.’

Evaluation:
Discussion paper and presentation, due day of presentation  20%
Midterm take-home exam, due October 6:    30%
Final paper, due December 10 (proposal due Nov. 10):  30%
Attendance, class participation, and webmemos, due weekly:  20%

Course website:
You can access the course website by clicking on “blackboard” under “finding what you need” on the library homepage (http://www.swarthmore.edu/Library/). Your login for Blackboard is your username preceded by sc. (e.g. sc.username). If you don’t know your password, use the ‘forgot your password?’ function. The title of the course should appear on the upper right hand side after you login. To access required readings, click on “Course Documents” on the course website.
COURSE SCHEDULE

INTRODUCING JAPAN

September 1
1. Introduction

Recommended for background:

September 8
2. Nation-building and national identity


Recommended:


September 15
3. Legacies of War and Occupation

Film screening: *Occupied Japan: An Experiment in Democracy*, Oregon Public Television (1996, 60 min)


Recommended
September 22

4. Okinawa


Laura Hein and Mark Selden, “Culture, Power, and Identity in Contemporary Okinawa”

Matthew Allen, “Wolves at the Back Door: Remembering the Kumejima Massacres”

Gerald Figal, “Waging Peace on Okinawa”

Linda Isako Angst, “The Rape of a Schoolgirl: Discourses of Power and Women’s Lives in Okinawa”

Recommended:


JAPAN AND THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

September 29

5. The Japanese “Miracle”


Recommended:


October 6 – Midterm essay due

6. Economic development and transnational corporations

Film screening: *The Global Assembly line*, directed by Corraine Gray (1986, 58 min)


Recommended


OCTOBER HOLIDAY

October 20 – Library session in McCabe library computer classroom (4th floor)

7. Village women and capitalist discipline


October 27

8. Migration and transnational identities


Recommended:


November 3

9. Orientalism


Recommended:

November 10 – Final paper proposal due

10. Transnational desires and identities


Recommended:

POPULAR CULTURE AND CONSUMPTION

November 17

11. Cultural Imperialism? McDonald’s in East Asia


Recommended:
November 24

12. Japanese popular culture at home and abroad


Recommended:


THANKSGIVING

December 1

13. Japan and globalization: final thoughts

