Description: This course situates the long history of Japan and Asia in a world historical context — the context in which East Asian civilization developed. We trace the connections between global and local developments and examine the multiple interactions between Japan, East Asia, and the world. Sweeping themes such as industrialization and capitalism, the formation of nation-state and empire, changing social organization, and cultural interchange are treated through concrete topics with historical specificity and as many primary sources as possible. These topics range from pirates and missionaries to textile workers and coal miners, from trains and telegraphs to televisions and transistors, from changing conceptions of time to transnational migration, and from the economics of opium to the cult of anime. In each instance, we stress connections, commonalities, and comparisons within East Asia and between Japan and the world. The goal is to explore patterns of world history as they played out on the ground in Japan and Asia.

Class format and requirements: This class will be run as a seminar. This means that the success of the course is wholly dependent on your active participation. Commitment to reading and thinking carefully about the texts, and willingness to share ideas in class are the most important requirements for the course. The themes of the class are organized in a rough chronology but a comprehensive narrative of Japanese history will not be provided. On weeks with particularly heavy reading assignments we will divide the readings among class members. Films will be shown outside of normal class time and will also be made available for you to view at your convenience. Emphasis will be placed on careful readings of primary sources alongside secondary interpretations. Grades will be determined as follows. Percentages are approximate:

- Attendance and participation: 30% of grade
- One in-class presentation: 15%
- Mid-term essays: 20%
- Final research paper (8-10 pages) 35% (10% of the grade for the research paper will go to the thesis statement and project outline due April 7)

Presentations: In-class presentations should not exceed ten minutes. Presenters should react to the main problems and arguments presented in the readings. They should finish with three or four questions to help kick-off our discussion.

Midterm essays: Questions based on the course materials and class discussions will be distributed March 3. Essays are due March 12. Students will present their papers briefly in class that day.
**Final research paper:** Research papers should further develop one of the themes or sub-themes of the course. Mandatory meetings with the instructor to discuss projects will be held the week of March 31. Paper outlines and thesis statements will be due April 7.

**Books and Course Reader:** Most of the readings for the class are contained in the course reader which is available to purchase at CopyQuick, 1211 Amsterdam Avenue between 119th and 120th Streets (212-222-2070). The following books are also available at Labyrinth Books:


The course reader will be placed on reserve in Starr East Asian Library.

**The Course:**

**WEEK ONE: Introductions**
- January 22: Getting started. The course, introductions, logistics.

**WEEK TWO: Bringing the World Back In**
- January 29: Japan and the Silk Road
  - READING:

**WEEK THREE: Pirates and Missionaries**
- February 3: Trade and Commerce Before the Nation-State
  - READING:
    - Images of wakô from *Daiminkoku to wakô: kaigai shiten nihon no rekishi* 7 edited by Nihon ato sentâ.
Pomeranz and Topik, xiii-xvii; 3-43; 147-156.

**February 5:** Japan and Asian Maritime Trade in the 15th and 16th Centuries

**READINGS:**


**Sub-themes and project ideas:** piracy in Asia, firearms and the transformation of warfare, the technology of gun production, silver, missionaries, Xavier in Japan.

**WEEK FOUR: Trade and Diplomacy**

**February 10:** Trade and Diplomacy and the Making of the Tokugawa Order

**READINGS:**


**February 12:** The VOC and Tokugawa Japan

**READINGS:**


Sub-themes and project ideas: Tokugawa currency problems, Nagasaki in early modern Japan, the VOC in Asia.

WEEK FIVE: Drugs
February 17: Drugs and the Making of the Modern World
READINGS:

- Pomeranz and Topik, 77-108.

February 19: Opium and the Making of Modern Asia
READINGS:


Sub-themes and project ideas: opium, sugar, tobacco, coffee in Japan, Japanese tea in the world, unequal treaties.

WEEK SIX: Time
February 24: Making Time
READINGS:

February 26: Modern Time(s) in Japan
READINGS:

Sub-themes and project ideas: calendars and time-keeping in pre- and post-Meiji Japan, clocks, national holidays, nengo (periodization by emperor reign), the history of time zones.

WEEK SEVEN: Trains and Telegraphs
March 3: Machines of Modernity
READINGS:

Mid-term essay questions will be distributed in class.

March 5: Forging Nation and Empire
READINGS:

Sub-themes and project ideas: trains, telegraphs, newspapers, the South Manchuria Railway Company, steam technology.
WEEK EIGHT: Factories
March 10: The Industrial Revolution in Japan
READINGS:


Pomeranz and Topik, 214-239.


Sub-themes and project ideas: cotton in the world economy, changes in spinning and reeling technologies, protective legislation for women, debates over the workday, child labor laws.

March 12: Mid-term essays due. In-class presentations of essays.

WEEK NINE: Spring Break

WEEK TEN: Migrations
March 24: “Natives” and Nationals: Citizenship and Colonialism
READINGS:


March 26: Modern Diaspora: Problems of place, class, nation.
READINGS:

ALL READ:

CHOOSE (YOU MUST READ ONE):

OR

OPTIONAL:

AND

Sub-themes and project ideas: Groups or individuals moving to and from Japan, and within the Japanese empire. The movement and displacement of people created by industrialization and colonization.

WEEK ELEVEN: Dance Halls, Cafés, and Modern Girls

Mandatory meetings concerning research projects this week.

March 31: Girl in the City
READINGS FOR THE WEEK:
Tanizaki Jun’ichirō. 1924. Naomi.

OPTIONAL:

AND

WE WILL VIEW *OSAKA ELEGY* (MIZOGUCHI KENJI, 1936) IN CLASS. CLASS WILL BE HELD IN 702 HAMILTON HALL. BE ON TIME. THE FILM WILL BEGIN PROMPTLY AT 1:10.

April 2: Discussion of readings and film.

Sub-themes and project ideas: Hollywood stars in Japan in the interwar, cafés, modernism in art, film, architecture, women’s and mass magazines, department stores, baseball.

**WEEK TWELVE: War**

April 7: Total War, Total Empire

READINGS:


April 9: Useful War, Useful Empire

READINGS:

Sub-themes and project ideas: conversion of technology from war to peace, Japan and World War I, Japan during the Korean and Vietnam wars, Mitsubishi (or another company) before, during, and after WWII, the South Manchuria Railway.

WEEK THIRTEEN: Televisions and Transistors

WE WILL VIEW *OHAYÔ* (OZU YASUJIRÔ, 1959) IN CLASS. CLASS WILL BE HELD IN 702 HAMILTON. WE WILL DISCUSS ALL OF THE WEEK’S READINGS IN CLASS ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16.

April 14: De-colonization / Americanization / Cold War

OPTIONAL:

Outlines and thesis statements for research papers due.

April 16: Consuming Desires

READINGS:
**Sub-themes and project ideas:** Coca-cola in Japan, Blondie comic strips in Japan, transistors, washing machines, refrigerators, televisions, modernizing the kitchen.

**WEEK FOURTEEN: Tuna and Timber**

**April 21:** Consumption and the environment  
**READINGS:**  

**April 23:** The Consequences of Sushi  
**READINGS:**  
Derek Hall, “Stagnation and Transformation in the Political Ecology of Japan-Asia Relations.” TO BE DISTRIBUTED IN CLASS.  

**Sub-themes and project ideas:** tuna, shrimp, oil, timber, garbage

**WEEK FIFTEEN: Anime**

**April 28:** Comics in the classroom.  
View Miyazaki Hayao's *Spirited Away* outside class and be ready to discuss.  
Excerpts from the *manga* *Cowboy Bebop*.

**April 30:** Anime as a Global Commodity  

**Sub-themes and project ideas:** manga, anime, Pokemon, Game Boy

**WEEK SIXTEEN: Research Presentations and Wrap-Up**

**May 5:** Preliminary reports of research findings.

Final papers will be due by the scheduled exam date.