This is a survey course on Japanese history. It begins, chronologically, with the emergence of Jomon culture (ca. 8,000 B.C.) and ends with the Tokugawa Period (1600-1867). We shall not be concerned in this course with Japan after Tokugawa, though certain themes may be pursued through later years if doing so helps to clarify or refine them.

The literature on periodization is voluminous, and much of it is tendentious, ideologically biased or silly. Yet some tentative breakdown is necessary. I propose the following:

I. Japan Before the Coming of Buddhism.
II. Nara and Heian Periods. 700-1100 A.D.
III. Kamakura to the Warring State Period. 1185-1600 A.D.
IV. Tokugawa, 1600-1867.

A major theme of this course is the problem of “cultural borrowing.” Throughout, we shall explore whether Japan has been largely distinctive in its historical evolution until the mid-19th century, or whether it should be seen as part of a larger East Asian Confucian civilization. Students are urged to approach this problem from any of a number of different perspectives: religious life, land system, armed dissidence, literary genres, etc. Whatever the perspective, this main theme should remain paramount.

Requirements include:

• Writing a one-paragraph comment on the weekly principal reading for discussion (not from Totman, Japan Before Perry). Do so for weeks 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 11. These one paragraph comments are due in class on Thursdays.

• Preparing DI sheets which are due in class on Thursdays. Do so for weeks 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 11.

Each DI (which stands for Discussion initiation) sheet is to be typewritten on one 8 1/2” x 11” piece of paper and should contain the following:

— the student’s name;
— the date;
— the student’s title for the week’s discussion;
— the student’s choice of one quotation from the week’s assigned reading for discussion;
— the student’s formulation of one question for the week’s discussion.

Each DI sheet is due in class on Thursday of the week for which the readings are assigned. Late DI sheets will not be accepted.
• Completing a special writing assignment. Instructions to be announced later.

• Participating in discussions in class on Thursdays;

Each student’s grade will be based on the performance of three kinds of assignments with roughly equal weight given to each:

35% on comments and the DI sheets;
35% on the midterm and the special writing assignment;
30% on attendance and classroom discussion.

**Texts:** (*available at the College bookstore)*

* Conrad Totman, *Japan before Perry,* (University of California Berkley, 1981)

Ryusaku Tsunoda, Wm. deBary and Donald Keene, eds., *Sources of Japanese Tradition,* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1958)


H. Paul Varley, *Samurai,* (Dell, 1970)


David Lu, Japan, A Documentary History, (NY: Sharpe, 1997)

**Sessions**

**Week I**

TH  Aug 28  Introduction to the course

**Week II**

T  Sep 2  Earliest Records of Japan

TH  Sep 4  The Buddhist Conquest

*Readings:*

- *Japan before Perry,* “Preface,” “Chapter 1.”
- Selections of the *Kojiki,* in *Japan: A Documentary History,* pp. 4-11.

**Week III**

T  Sep 9  The Chinese Influence

TH  Sep 11  Nara Culture

*Readings:*

- Selections from the *Man'yoshu,* in *Anthology of Japanese Literature,* pp. 33-53.
- “Buddhism as Protector of the Nation,” in *Documentary History,* pp. 46-50.
- *Japan before Perry,* pp. 18-41.

**Week IV**

T  Sep 16  Heian and Its Culture

TH  Sep 18  Growth of Indigenous Institutions

**Week V**

T  Sep 23  *Reading:*


TH  Sep 25  *The World of the Shining Prince,* pp. 88-250.
**Week VI**

**T** Sep 30  The Kamakura Period (1185-1333): Development of Feudal Institutions.

**TH** Oct 2  Samurai

*Readings:*
- *Japan before Perry*, pp. 70-132.

**Week VII**

**T** Oct 7  Buddhism in Medieval Japan

**TH** Oct 9  Medieval Culture

*Readings:*
- “The Account of My Hut,” in *Anthology*, pp. 197-212.
- “Tales from the Uji Collection,” in *Anthology*, pp. 213-223.

**Week VIII**

**T** Oct 16  Kwaidan (film)

**TH** Oct 18  One-hour midterm

Fall Recess—October 18 through 26

**Week IX**

**T** Oct 28  First Contact with the West

**TH** Oct 30  Read Noel Perrin, *Giving up the Gun*

**Week X**

**T** Nov 4  Reunification and the Tokugawa Order

**TH** Nov 6  Tokugawa Society

*Readings:*
Week XI

T Nov 11 Economic Growth in Tokugawa

TH Nov 13 Samurai Culture

**Readings:**
“Neo-Confucian Orthodoxy,” in Sources of Japanese Tradition, pp. 335-368.

Week XII

T Nov 18 Ihara Saikaku, Five Women Who Loved Love

TH Nov 20 Five Women Who Loved Love

Week XIII

T Nov 25 No Class

Week XIV

T Dec 4 Discussion: Silence

TH Dec 6 Discussion: Silence

Week XV

T Dec 9 Retrospect

TH Dec 11 Complete Special Assignment

Due Date: Dec. 11, 4:30 p.m., Academic Support Office, Mears Cottage