

# **History 3609G**

## **Japan since 1945**

### **Winter 2026**

Instructor: **Dr. Carl Young**

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Office: **Department of History, Lawson Hall 2225**

Office Hours: **Tuesdays and Wednesdays 1:00 PM-2:00 PM or by appointment**

This is a **draft** outline. Please see the course site on OWL Brightspace for a final version.

### **Course Description**

Selected topics, such as Japan's phenomenal economic growth, its competitive drive for the control of world markets, big business in politics, the debates on the Constitutional revision and remilitarization, student radicalism and the changing roles of women in contemporary Japan, are examined.

**Prerequisite(s):** Registration in third year or above, any module.

### **Course Syllabus**

After its shattering defeat in World War II, Japan was in ruins and placed under US occupation from 1945 to 1952. Under the Occupation, Japan engaged in an arduous political, economic, and social reconstruction that provided a new foundation for its reemergence as an important political and economic power. After the Occupation, Japan embarked on a meteoric rise to emerge as the second most important capitalist economy in the world, with a model that provided prosperity for its citizens, potentially dominating the world economy. This success also included periods of political, economic, and social crisis, which culminated in the bursting of the “bubble economy” in the early 1990’s. Since then, Japan has been confronting economic stagnation, political immobility, and strong social changes, but Japan still has managed to maintain its economic stature and its position as a major power in Asia and the world, in spite of not having strong military resources.

This course will deal with the important events and processes involved in Japan’s renewed rise since 1945. It will deal with the impact of the US occupation; the Japanese model of close government, business, and labour cooperation for economic development; Japan’s role in the Asia-Pacific regional order and its alliance with the United States; the social and cultural impact of rapid economic development; and the reasons why Japan’s model ran into trouble in the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We will conclude with how Japan is coping with its new challenges and opportunities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and what impact this has on Japan, Asia, and the world.

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By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Assess the interaction between political, social, economic, and cultural factors in Japan's historical development since 1945
- Explain the characteristics of Japan's postwar political, social, and economic reconstruction and the strengths and weaknesses of Japan's postwar model
- Understand the interaction between domestic and international policies and their impact on Japan's position in the world
- Analyze primary and secondary sources on select topics in the history of Japan since 1945 through both oral discussion and written work
- Present findings and views from readings through oral presentations
- Synthesise primary and secondary sources to produce a research paper

## Methods of Evaluation

Term Paper (around 10-15 pages)	30%
2 Article Analyses (4-6 pages: 15% each)	30%
Final Exam	25%
Discussion Participation	<u>15%</u>
	100%

The term paper will be a research paper on a topic of your choice in the history of Japan since 1945. Suggested topics will be handed out early in the beginning of the semester. The suggested length of the papers will be approximately 15 pages. The paper will be due on **Thursday, March 18.**

The final exam will take place in the April final exam period. It will be a 3-hour exam composed of a combination of 2 essay questions that students will choose from a list of selected topics covered in the course.

The three article/document analyses will be based around the readings for each class. During the semester, students will choose **2** of the articles or documents assigned and write a 4-6 page paper each on the articles or documents. These papers are **due on the day of the relevant seminar in which the particular reading is assigned. This assignment will not normally be accepted late. The 1<sup>st</sup> article analysis, based on readings from Jan. 14**

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**to Feb. 25, must be handed in by Feb. 25. The 2<sup>nd</sup> article analysis, based on readings from March 4 to April 8, must be handed in by April 8.** This assignment is more than merely a summary. The main purpose of the paper is to bring forth the main issues of the article or series of documents, discuss how the author(s) bring forth their point of view, and also analyze the effectiveness of the readings in conveying information and opinion, as well as their contribution to the topic under discussion in the particular seminar. A sheet with further explanation and suggestions will be available on the course OWL site.

This is a seminar course and the success of the seminar depends a lot on keeping up with the readings, attendance in class, and participation in discussion. It is for this reason that 15% of the course mark depends on seminar participation. Roll will be taken in each class and students will be given marks for participation in the discussions. For each class, students will be marked on a scale of 1 to 5 for each class and at the end of the semester, the marks will be added together to give an overall participation mark.

To enhance discussion in a larger seminar like this, students will be assigned to rotating groups which will be assigned a specific reading for the week. During class, there will be small group discussion within the groups and the groups will be responsible for creating 1-2 questions from their assigned reading for wider class discussion.

If you should have any questions pertaining to the structure or content of the course, please do not hesitate to contact me during my office hours, or by phone or e-mail to make an appointment.

Make-up tests, midterms, and exams can only be approved by Academic Advising. Please see [https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program\\_module\\_information/policies.html](https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html) for department procedures and requirements involving make-up tests and exams.

### ***Absences and Late Assignments***

The term paper will be accepted late. However, there will be a penalty of 2% a day that will be applied for every day the assignments are late, including weekends and holidays. The article analyses will not normally be accepted late, since there is flexibility as to when to hand them in. I normally request both an electronic copy of your assignment, submitted on OWL, and a paper copy submitted to myself in class, during my office hours, or through the History department office (please see below). Penalties stop on receipt of the first version (either electronic or paper) that has been received. However, I will normally only start marking your assignment when I have both versions of your assignment. If you have missed class, try and get notes from another member of the class. The Powerpoints for the lectures will also be posted after they have been presented.

If you do hand in your assignment late, please hand in your paper copy to the wooden drop-off box outside the History Department office at Lawson Hall. The staff will pick up the assignment and stamp it with a date and time and put it in my mailbox. This provides greater security and clarity for the handing in of the assignment. Please avoid shoving the paper under my office door if at all possible, because it could get lost.

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In case of family emergency, illness, or other circumstances, penalties can be removed from assignments after approval from academic advising. In these circumstances, please get in contact with your home faculty or college's academic advising office and submit the required forms and documentation. The office will then get in touch with me and give me recommendations for accommodation.

Students have the right to file **one assignment per course per semester** with academic advising without supporting documentation. In this case, normally an extension will be given for 2-3 days, after which lateness penalties will begin.

Some students have access to flexibility in assignment deadlines through Accessible Education. This allows for extensions on assignments for a few days without having to go through academic advising. Please come and consult with me to work out a new assignment deadline if you have this accommodation and you are exercising this option. Flexibility in assignment deadlines does not mean extending assignment submission over weeks or months. This is to avoid stress in the end of the semester with an accumulation of assignments for submission. If more time is needed than a few days, academic advising will need to be consulted.

All written work (regardless of accommodations) must be submitted by the end of classes for winter semester, which is **April 9, 2026**. Any petition for extension beyond this date will require approval from the academic advising office with supporting documentation.

Attendance at the seminar sessions and participating in discussion is an important part of the course. However, if you do miss a seminar class, after advice from academic advising, I will either request a 1-2 page response paper on the readings for the relevant week to make up for your participation mark for that week or I will waive the participation mark for that week. This flexibility should be the exception rather than the rule for your seminar participation mark.

Please consult the following for more in-depth information on department, faculty, and university policies on absences and late submissions.

- Social Science Academic Advising on [Absence & Academic Consideration](#)
- the university's policies on [Academic Consideration for Medical Illness](#) and
- the Department of History's own [Undergraduate Policies and Statements](#))

### **Course Materials**

Gary D. Allinson, *Japan's Postwar History* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004)(approximately \$45.00)

Matt Alt, *Pure Invention: How Japan's Pop Culture Conquered the World* (New York: Crown 2020)(approximately \$28.00)

Wm Theodore de Bary et al, *Sources of Japanese Tradition, Volume Two: Part Two, 1868 to 2000* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition), (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006)(approximately \$59.00)

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Selected readings available on the course OWL site

## **Course Schedule and Readings**

[Allinson=Gary Allinson, *Japan's Postwar History*

Alt=Matt Alt, *Pure Invention*

*SJT2*=Sources of Japanese Tradition, Volume 2, Part 2

### **Jan. 7—Introduction**

### **Jan. 14—The Occupation and Politics and Education**

Allinson, “Antecedents: 1932-1945”, p. 11-44

*SJT2*, p. 323-343 (Selected from Chapter 44—“The Occupation Years, 1945-1952”)

John Dower, “Victor’s Justice, Loser’s Justice” in John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), p.443-484 (available at the course OWL site)

Kenneth Ruoff, “The Constitutional Symbolic Monarchy”, in Kenneth Ruoff, *Japan’s Imperial House in the Postwar Era, 1945-2019* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020), p. 47-93 (available at the course OWL site)

### **Jan. 21—The Occupation and Economic Development**

Allinson, “Revival: 1945-1955”, p. 45-82

Alt, “Tin Men”, p. 17-43

*SJT2*, p. 343-360 (Selected from Chapter 44—“The Occupation Years, 1945-1952”)

“The Rise of the Big Four” from Jeffrey W. Alexander, *Japan’s Motorcycle Wars*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), p. 109-165 (available at the course OWL site)

### **Jan. 28—The Occupation and Society**

Lori Watt, “The Coproduction of the Repatriate” in Lori Watt, *When Empire Comes Home: Reconciliation and Reintegration in Postwar Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), p. 56-97 (available at the course OWL site)

Naoko Shibusawa, “Women and Children First” in Naoko Shibusawa, *America’s Geisha Ally: Reimagining the Japanese Enemy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 13-53 (available at the course OWL site)

Matthew R. Augustine, “Making of ‘Aliens’” in Matthew R. Augustine, *From Japanese Empire to American Hegemony: Koreans and Okinawans in the Resettlement of Northeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2023), p. 163-199 (available at the course OWL site)

#### **Feb. 4— Japanese Foreign Policy and the Early Cold War**

John Dower, “Peace and Democracy in Two Systems: External Policy and Internal Conflict” in John Dower, *Ways of Forgetting, Ways of Remembering: Japan in the Modern World* (New York: The New Press, 2012), p. 185-226 (available at the course OWL site)

Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, “Treacherous Ground: Soviet-Japanese Relations and the United States” in Klaus Larres and Kenneth Osgood (eds.), *The Cold War after Stalin’s Death: A Missed Opportunity for Peace*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006), 277-302 (available at the course OWL site)

Jennifer M. Miller, “A Breaking Point” in Jennifer Miller, *Cold War Democracy: The United States and Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019), p. 191-226

#### **Feb. 11— High Growth: Economic and Social Transformations in the 1950’s and 1960’s**

Allinson, “Growth: 1955-1974”, p. 83-124

Alt, “The Revolution Will Be Televised: Anime, 1963”, p. 44-74

Duncan McCargo, “The Changing Political Economy” in Duncan McCargo, *Contemporary Japan* (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan Press, 2000), p. 31-58 (available at the course OWL site)

Susan C. Townsend, “The Miracle of Car Ownership in Japan’s ‘Era of High Growth’, 1955-73”, *Business History* 55:3 (2013), 498-523 (available at the course OWL site)

Feb. 14-22—Winter Reading Week—No class

## **Feb. 25—Democracy and Society in the 1950's and 1960's**

*SJT2*, p. 382-412 (Chapter 45—"Democracy and High Growth")

"The Birth of the *Shimin*" in Simon Andrew Avenell, *Making Japanese Citizens: Civil Society and the Mythology of the Shimin in Postwar Japan* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010), p. 62-105 (available at the course OWL site)

William Andrews, "1968 and All That" in William Andrews, *Dissenting Japan: A History of Japanese Radicalism and Counterculture from 1945 to Fukushima* (London, UK: C. Hurst and Co., 2016), p. 65-98 (available at the course OWL site)

\*\*\*\*\****Last chance to hand in 1<sup>st</sup> Article Analysis—Feb. 25***\*\*\*\*\*

## **March 4—Cultural and Social Transitions in the Era of Economic Development**

Alt, "Everybody is a Star: The Karaoke Machine, 1971", p. 75-100

Alt, "Cult of Cute: Hello Kitty, 1975", p. 101-130

Gary S. Cross & Gregory Smits, "Japan, the US, and the Globalization of Children's Consumer Culture", *Journal of Social History*, Volume 38, no. 4 (Summer 2005), p.873-890 (available at the course OWL site)

## **March 11--Japan and the World in the 1970's and 1980's (I)**

Allinson, "Affluence: 1974-1989", p. 125-167

Alt, "Plugging In and Dropping Out: The Walkman, 1979", p. 131-160

Jean-Marie Bouissou, "A Shock-Absorber System" in Jean-Marie Bouissou, *Japan: The Burden of Success* (Boulder, CO : Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), p. 167-213 (available at the course OWL site)

## **March 18--Japan and the World in the 1970's and 1980's (II)**

Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, "A Strategic Quadrangle: The Superpowers and the Sino-Japanese Treaty of Peace and Friendship, 1977-1978" in Tsuyoshi Hasegawa (ed.), *The Cold War in East Asia, 1945-1991* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), p. 213-240 (available at the course OWL site)

William R. Nester, "Japan and Southeast Asia" in William R. Nester, *Japan and the Third World: Patterns, Power, Prospects* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), p. 119-139

*SJT2*, p. 553-573 (Selected from Chapter 49—"Thinking with the Past")

\*\*\*\*\***Term Paper due—March 18**\*\*\*\*\*

### **March 25— The Bubble Bursts: Economic and Social Crisis in the 1990's**

Allinson, "Immobility: 1989—" p. 168-210

"Economic and Financial Distress from 1990 to 2001 and the Turning Point" in Thomas F. Cargill and Takayuki Sakamoto, *Japan since 1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 101-122 (available at the course OWL site)

Alt, "Empire of the Schoolgirls: Kitty Goes Global", p. 163-193

Alt, "Gaming the World: The Famicom & Game Boy, p. 224-252

### **April 1—Japan, Asia and the World in the New Millennium**

Yū Uchiyama, "Domestic Affairs: The Battle over Neoliberal Reform" in Yū Uchiyama, *Koizumi and Japanese Politics: Reform Strategies and Leadership Style* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2010), p. 26-78 (available at the course OWL site)

Nick Bisley, "Securing the Anchor of Regional Stability? The Transformation of the US-Japan Alliance and East Asian Security", *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs*, Vol. 30, no. 1 (April 2008), p. 73-98 (available at the course OWL site)

Wendy Suiyi Wong, "Globalizing Manga: From Japan to Hong Kong and Beyond", *Mechademia* 1 (2006), 23-45 (available at the course OWL site)

### **April 8—Whither Japan?**

"Shock, Disaster, and the End of the Heisei Era: Beyond the "Lost Decades"" in Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan, 4th edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), p. 351-375 (available at the course OWL site)

E. Taylor Atkins, "Millennial Japan as Dream Factory", in E. Taylor Atkins, *A History of Popular Culture in Japan: From the Seventeenth Century to the Present* (London, UK: Bloomsbury, 2017), p. 203-224 (available at the course OWL site)

Alt, "Epilogue", p. 287-298

Takeshi Yuzawa, "From a decentering to recentering imperative: Japan's approach to Asian security multilateralism" in Paul Midford and William Vosse (eds.), *New Directions in*



*Japan's Security: Non-US Centric Evolution* (London, UK: Routledge, 2020), p. 131-153  
(available at the course OWL site)

\*\*\*\*\***Last chance to hand in 2nd Article Analysis—April 8**\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\***Final Exam during April examination period**\*\*\*\*\*

## **Additional Statements**

**Communication policies:** E-mail is generally the easiest way to contact me for short questions. I will endeavour to answer within the day, although there may be delays on weekends and holidays in particular. You can also ask short questions during the class lecture breaks. For longer enquiries, please drop by during my office hours at my office. If you are unable to come to my normal office hours, please contact me to set up an alternative appointment, either in person or through Zoom. For general class announcements, I use the “Announcements” feature on OWL, so please check frequently on OWL to keep track of latest class developments.

**Use of electronic devices:** No electronic devices will be allowed for the final examination. A paper English-second language dictionary will be permitted for the final examination. These dictionaries will be inspected when signing in to the examination.

## **Use of generative artificial intelligence (AI):**

You may use generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, in this course for activities such as researching and refining your ideas, or drafting an outline to organize your thoughts—but not for generating prose. All writing submitted in this course must be your own. If in doubt, please ask me for clarification and advice.

Please review the Department of History’s shared policies and statements for all undergraduate courses at: [https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program\\_module\\_information/policies.html](https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html) for important information regarding accessibility options, make-up exams, medical accommodations, health and wellness, academic integrity, plagiarism, and more.