

33010 JAPANESE HISTORY

INSTRUCTOR: Robert Aspinall

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students taking this course will be introduced to differing perspectives on the modern history of Japan. Starting with an examination of the opening of Japan to trade with the West and ending with the post-war American occupation, this course will chart the modernization of Japan's political and social institutions. Students will be invited to discuss varying interpretations of key events and developments. Controversies which are still the subject of heated debate today will be examined, such as: how democratic was Taisho democracy?; how oppressive was Japanese colonialism?; why did Japan attack the USA in 1941?

COURSE SCHEDULE

1. Introduction: different approaches to the study of Japanese history
2. Black Ships: Japanese encounters with foreigners of the modern world
3. The revolt against the Shogunate, and the Meiji Restoration
4. Social change: urbanization and increased social mobility
5. Political change and the Meiji Constitution
6. The creation of a modern national education system
7. Taisho Democracy
8. Conflict abroad: war with China and Russia
9. The Colonization of Taiwan, Korea and Manchuria
10. Political change and the growing power of the military at home
11. The road to total war
12. The Pacific War
13. Defeat and the American Occupation
14. Controversies surrounding the study and teaching of Japanese history today

TEXTS

Textbook: None

ASSESSMENT

Oral presentation 40%; Final paper 60%