

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

Japan's Samurai Revolution: The Meiji Restoration and its consequences - 46108

Last update 17-08-2016

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: asian studies

Academic year: 0

Semester: 2nd Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Dr. Danny Orbach

Coordinator Email: dannyorbach@gmail.com

Coordinator Office Hours: Thursday, 15:00-16:00

Teaching Staff:

Dr. Danny Orbach

Course/Module description:

Until relatively recently and, to a certain extent, even today, "The Japanese Model" has been a popular topic of discussion in many parts of the world. In 1905, many in Asia, the Middle East and Africa were exhilarated by Japan's astounding military triumph over Russia, the first major victory of an Asian nation over a Western imperial power. At the same time, observers in European countries were at odds in explaining Japan's meteoric rise. A few decades later, Japan was one of the world's major powers. At Pearl Harbor, the United States was deeply shaken by the Imperial Army's assault, and even Japan's defeat in the Second World War did not altogether diminish the allure of its "model" for many local and foreign observers. In 1957, for example, the Japanese Prime Minister, Kishi Nobusuke, recommended that South East Asia follow his country's path to modernization. Shortly afterwards, an eminent American scholar published a book called "Japan as Number One", calling on the United States to pick up lessons in management, organization and economics from its former foe. Rhetoric and myth apart, Japan was indeed the first non-Western country to industrialize and compete with Western empires on their own terms. This surge towards modernization had complicated roots, but it is almost always traced back to the Meiji Restoration, an unusual revolution led by a group of young samurai in 1868. The dramatic events of that year, the historical process leading to them and the subsequent leap to modernization and empire are the subject of this course.

In these lectures, we shall closely examine the history of Japan in the late Tokugawa and early Meiji periods. Following the events prior to the Restoration, we shall explore the historical processes which undermined the Tokugawa feudal system and its ruling samurai elite. We will meet nativist thinkers, frustrated samurai, indebted lords, rebellious peasants and religious visionaries. Journeying between castle towns and fencing schools, we shall trace the social networks of rebellion which led to the Meiji Restoration. The second half of the course is devoted to the Restoration itself and to the system built in its wake. Finally, we shall explore the reasons for the breakdown of the Restoration Coalition and the power dynamics which emerged from its ruins, underlying the success, crisis and tragedy of modern Japan.

Course/Module aims:

A better understanding of the roots of the Meiji Restoration, its ramifications and influence on the development of Japanese modernity.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be

able to:

As specified above

Attendance requirements(%):

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Frontal lectures

Course/Module Content:

As specified in Hebrew

Required Reading:

Required reading, as specified below each lecture.

Additional Reading Material:

Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 100 %

Presentation 0 %

Participation in Tutorials 0 %

Project work 0 %

Assignments 0 %

Reports 0 %

Research project 0 %

Quizzes 0 %

Other 0 %

Additional information: