

**HIST 252**  
***HISTORY OF THE JAPANESE EMPIRE***

**Fall Semester 2023**  
Tuesday & Friday, 12:55–2:10  
Kerwin Hall 5

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**Course Website:** [edspace.american.edu/cave17/](https://edspace.american.edu/cave17/)



**Office Hours:** Tuesday & Friday, 11:30–12:30 (Battelle-Tompkins 153)

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This is an introductory course on the rise and fall of the Japanese Empire. Our focus will be on the acquisition, development, ideology, dismantlement, and legacy of the empire itself rather than on the home islands, about which we will spend relatively little time. The course begins with the Tokugawa and Meiji response to the unequal treaties imposed by the West, then turns to the integration of non-Japanese borderlands (Hokkaido, Okinawa) and the acquisition of formal (Taiwan, Korea, Sakhalin) and informal (Manchuria, Micronesia) colonies. We will then take a look at the expansion of the wartime empire (Southeast Asia, Occupied China). The course concludes by examining wartime atrocities, the American occupation, repatriation of overseas Japanese, and the legacy of the empire.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

All readings will be available as PDF files on our course website: [edspace.american.edu/cave17/](https://edspace.american.edu/cave17/). There are no required books to purchase.

### **CLASS STRUCTURE:**

All students are expected to come to class having already completed all assignments for that day, which are listed in the course schedule below. The assignments consist of recorded lectures and Youtube videos produced by your instructor, translated primary sources, and films. When available, recorded lectures and videos have been selected to familiarize you with the subject matter before coming to class, so that we can use class time to clarify, reinforce, and expand upon the material that you have already encountered in introductory form. Similarly, they can also serve as handy references for you to consult after class while you study for the exams—or perhaps out of the sheer love of learning.

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

### **EXAMS. *SEPTEMBER 26, OCTOBER 31, DECEMBER 5***

Each student will complete **three (3) in-class exams**, each of which is noted in the course schedule below in **blue highlighting**. These exams will include a range of identifications and short essay questions derived from lectures, readings, and films covered in this course. In grading these exams, I will be looking for evidence that you have incorporated insights and interpretations presented during our lectures—not whatever you may learn about the “*kokutai*” or the “Co-Prosperity Sphere” on Wikipedia or other internet sites. Even if such answers are not, strictly speaking, factually incorrect, they do not demonstrate your understanding of the instructor’s value-added analysis of the material under examination and will thus receive a lower grade. For each exam, I will provide a study guide on the day of the previous class session. This study guide will include 2-3 times as much material as will actually appear on the exam—but you can rest assured that nothing will appear on the exam that was not also on the study guide. So students who use the study guide to prepare diligently will not encounter any surprises on the actual exams.

### **MAP QUIZ. *OCTOBER 6.***

The Japanese empire was a complex geographic entity, spread out over vast stretches of sea and land across East and Southeast Asia in opportunistic and haphazard fashion. In order to develop a basic understanding of the general spatial contours of the empire, each student will take a short ten-minute map quiz in class on October 6. This quiz will require you to identify on a blank printed map the names of twenty important locations or sites in the empire during the peak of its expansion during World War II. A study guide that includes both the map and all twenty identifications will be provided several weeks before the quiz to assist in your review.

### **SKIT. *DECEMBER 8.***

I am not generally a big fan of group projects, but I’ll make an exception for a well-scripted and enthusiastically performed historical skit. On the last day of the semester, you and a randomly selected group of about six classmates will perform a 10-minute mock skit in front of the class that demonstrates your mastery of major themes and topics explored in our course. To the extent possible, students should attempt to memorize their lines or at least work off of short notes. Whatever you do, do NOT read from your script! Costumes and props are welcome but not required. Your topic and classmates for this skit will be randomly assigned by the instructor approximately 3-4 weeks into the semester (once no one can drop the course anymore!). The list of potential topics to which you might be assigned includes the following historical scenarios drawn from our course:

- a mixed Taiwanese baseball team in the 1920s or 30s
- a Japanese tourist group in either Taiwan or Korea/Manchuria in the 1920s or 30s
- a Japanese settler family in Manchuria in the 1930s
- a Japanese military platoon in Occupied China, the Pacific theater, or SE Asia
- Japanese museum curators hosting a Western archaeologist in the 1930s
- Japanese zookeepers at Ueno Zoo during World War II

**GRADING:**

The breakdown of your final grade will be as follows, based upon five assignments:

Exam #1:	25 pts. (25%)
Exam #2:	25 pts. (25%)
Exam #3	25 pts. (25%)
Map Quiz	10 pts. (10%)
<u>Group Skit</u>	<u>15 pts. (15%)</u>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100 pts. (100%)</b>

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

**1. Communication Skills:** Students will be able to demonstrate their mastery of the knowledge and skills involved in historical practice in a clear and organized manner both in writing and orally. This demonstration of knowledge and skills will take the form of class discussion, three in-class written exams, a map quiz, and a group skit.

**2. Critical Thinking & Intellectual Integration:** Students will be able to identify and describe the contours and stakes of conversations among historians within defined historiographical fields. They will learn to apply historical methods to evaluate critically the record of the past and how historians and others have interpreted it.

**3. Research Skills:** Students will be able to acquire basic research skills, including (as appropriate) the effective use of libraries, archives, databases, oral histories, and other sources of historical evidence.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

All students are expected to conform to the standards of academic conduct specified in the University’s Academic Integrity Code ([www.american.edu/academics/integrity](http://www.american.edu/academics/integrity)). By registering for this course, you acknowledge that you have read and understood the Code and that you are committed to following it. Please note that I am required to report suspected cases of plagiarism to the Dean’s Office regardless of intent or severity of the offense. In my experience, the penalty for plagiarism is usually failure of the course. If you have any questions at all about what constitutes plagiarism, don’t hesitate to ask.

# COURSE SCHEDULE

## WEEK 1

**August 29: Introduction**

**September 1: The Transformation of Japan**

1. **WATCH:** “Tokugawa Japan before the Empire” (14 min.)

## WEEK 2

**September 5: Japanese Museums and Expeditions**

1. **READ:** “Brief Narrative of a Visit to Japan, 1930”

**September 8: Hokkaido and the Ainu**

1. **LISTEN:** “Japan, Hokkaido, and Okinawa” (76 min.)
2. **READ:** “The Shores of the Sorachi River”
3. **READ:** “Travels in the North”

## WEEK 3

**September 12: Okinawa and the Ryukyuan Kingdom**

1. **READ:** “Officer Ukuma”
2. **READ:** “Exploration of the Southern Islands”
3. **READ:** “Straggler”
4. **READ:** “A Quest for Meaning”
5. **READ:** “I Learned About the War From Grandma”

**September 15: \*\*\* CLASS CANCELLED \*\*\***

## WEEK 4

**September 19: Tourism in the Japanese Empire**

1. **WATCH:** “The Origins of the Japanese Empire” (10 min.)

**September 22: Conceptualizing Asia**

1. **READ:** “Bridges in the Clouds, Rain in the Gorges”
2. **READ:** “A Map Changed My Life”
3. **READ:** “From the Old Country”
  - a. **Note:** The author of this short story, Zhong Lihe, was a Chinese-Taiwanese who lived most of his life under Japanese rule on Taiwan.
4. **STUDY GUIDE: Study Guide for Exam #1 uploaded to Canvas today**

## WEEK 5

**September 26: \*\*\* EXAM #1 \*\*\***

**September 29: Identity Politics**

1. **WATCH:** “Ideologies of the Japanese Empire” (17 min.)
2. **READ:** “The Ideals of the East, with Special Reference to the Art of Japan”
3. **READ:** “The Old People and the New Government”
4. **READ:** “Through the Eye of a Needle”

### WEEK 6

#### **October 3: Turbulence on the Mainland**

1. **WATCH:** “The Japanese Displacement of Western Imperialism” (13 min.)
2. **READ:** “The Twenty-One Demands”
3. **READ:** “Tokutomi Soho and the ‘Asiatic Monroe Doctrine’”

#### **October 6: The South Manchuria Railway Company**

1. **LISTEN:** “The Invention of Manchukuo” (61 min.)
2. **READ:** “Manchurian Days”
3. **READ:** “In the Willow Shade”
  - a. **Note:** The author of this short story, Zhong Lihe, was a Chinese-Taiwanese who lived most of his life under Japanese rule on Taiwan.
4. **\*\*\* MAP QUIZ \*\*\***
  - a. The map quiz will be administered during the last ten minutes of class today.

### WEEK 7

#### **October 10: Baseball and the Japanese Empire**

1. **LISTEN:** “Baseball in the Japanese Empire” (79 min.)
2. **READ:** “Tsuneo ‘Cappy’ Harada”
3. **READ:** “Wally Yonamine”
4. **OPTIONAL VIEWING:** *Kano* (2014, 184 min.)

**October 13: \*\*\* NO CLASS \*\*\***

### WEEK 8

#### **October 17: Technology of Empire**

1. **LISTEN:** “Technology and Film in the Japanese Empire” (76 min.)
2. **READ:** “Filming the News”
3. **READ:** “Reporting from Imperial General Headquarters”
4. **READ:** “I Loved American Movies”

#### **October 20: The Imperial Ueno Zoo**

1. **READ:** “The Adventures of Dankichi”

### WEEK 9

#### **October 24: Manchukuo & Occupied China**

1. **READ:** “Japanese Pan-Asianism in Manchukuo”

2. **READ:** “Manchu Girl”
3. **READ:** “A Village Boy Goes to War”
4. **READ:** “Spies and Bandits”

**October 27: The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere**

1. **WATCH:** “The Japanese Invasion of Asia” (16 min.)
2. **READ:** “Holy War for the Reconstruction of Asia”
3. **READ:** “Doctrinal Basis for the War”
4. **READ:** “The Manual of Home Cuisine”
5. **READ:** “Passive Resistance”
6. **READ:** “To the People of the Japanese Metropole”
7. **STUDY GUIDE: Study guide for Exam #2 uploaded to Canvas today**

**WEEK 10**

**October 31: \*\*\* EXAM #2 \*\*\***

**November 3: Japanese Soldiers at War**

1. **READ:** “The ‘Green Desert’ of New Guinea”
2. **READ:** “Soldiers’ Death”
3. **READ:** “Forced Labor”
4. **READ:** “Place of the Loyal Samurai”
5. **WATCH:** *The Emperor’s Naked Army Marches On* (1987, 122 minutes)

**WEEK 11**

**November 7: Japan in Southeast Asia**

1. **LISTEN:** “Japanese Rule in Southeast Asia” (55 min.)
2. **READ:** “Building the Burma-Siam Railroad”
3. **READ:** “Keeping Order in the Indies”
4. **READ:** “I Wanted to Build Greater East Asia”

**November 10: Comfort Women**

1. **LISTEN:** “The Comfort Women” (66 min.)
2. **READ:** “Testimonies from Imperial Japan’s Sex Slaves”

**WEEK 12**

**November 14: The Nanjing Massacre & Unit 731**

1. **LISTEN:** “The Nanjing Massacre and Unit 731” (83 min.)
2. **READ:** “Excerpts from the Diaries of Minnie Vautrin and Tsen Shui-fang”
3. **READ:** “Army Doctor”
4. **READ:** “Unit 731”

**November 17: The Atomic Bomb**

1. **WATCH:** *Know Your Enemy: Japan* (62 minutes)
2. **READ:** “Eight Hundred Meters from the Hypocenter”

3. **READ:** “A Korean in Hiroshima”
4. **READ:** “The Fourth Day”
  - a. **Note:** The author of this short story, Zhong Lihe, was a Chinese-Taiwanese who lived most of his life under Japanese rule on Taiwan.

### WEEK 13

#### **November 21: Repatriating Overseas Japanese**

1. **LISTEN:** “Sending the Japanese ‘Home’” (69 min.)
2. **READ:** “Flight”
3. **READ:** “From Bandung to Starvation Island”
4. **READ:** “Homecoming”
5. Today’s session will be conducted via Zoom (check Canvas “Announcements” for the link).

**November 24: \*\*\* NO CLASS \*\*\***

### WEEK 14

#### **November 28: The American Occupation**

1. **WATCH:** “The American Occupation of Japan” (15 min.)
2. **READ:** “Affirmation of the Greater East Asian War”
3. **READ:** “Meeting at the Yasukuni Shrine”

#### **December 1: Super Mario and the Legacy of Empire**

1. **LISTEN:** “Legacies of the Japanese Empire” (58 min.)
2. **STUDY GUIDE: Study guide for Exam #3 uploaded to Canvas today**

### WEEK 15

**December 5: \*\*\* EXAM #3 \*\*\***

**December 8: \*\*\* SKIT PERFORMANCES \*\*\***