

The Modernization of the Samurai

Instructor: Henry Smith

Course Description: This course explores the dramatic transformations in Japan's military class over half a millennium. We will proceed through three stages, first the period 1550-1650 when the hardened battlefield warriors of the late medieval period were "tamed" into city-dwelling bureaucrats in an era of sustained peace. Next came the abolition of all samurai status after the Meiji Restoration of 1868, and its replacement by a modern conscript army. Third and most apparent to us is the pervasive re-imagining of the "samurai" and his code of "bushidô" in the modern period, both in Japan and abroad, and the creation in the post-World War II era of a global media world of samurai that has taken on an entire life of its own. We will read basic texts, primary and secondary, and look at examples of samurai stories and film. Throughout, the primary goal is to *historicize* and *contextualize* the samurai, both as a living historical figure and as a creation of the imagination, and to think about the relationship between the two.

Prerequisites: A basic survey-level knowledge of both pre-modern and modern Japanese history is highly desirable, although not required.

Requirements and Grading:

1) **Attendance.** You are expected to attend every class, or to let me know by email, before class unless it's an emergency, when and why you are unable to attend. More than 2-3 unexplained absences may be reflected in your grade.

2) **Commentaries:** On most days, every member of the class is asked to write a commentary of up to one page (A4, single-spaced) on the assigned readings, in which you offer your thoughts on the key issues that they raise. These should *not* be summaries of the reading, but a presentation of issues, primarily historical, that are of interest or concern to you. In addition, one or two **discussants** will be designated for each class, who will prepare a brief introduction to specific readings, and to lead the discussion. Discussants should prepare a longer commentary (2-3 pages) on their specific assignment, using it as the basis for introducing the material and provoking discussion. All commentaries will be read and returned at the next class meeting. You will be excused from three commentaries (including absences) during the semester. (50% of grade)

3) **Film Reviews:** A series of films will be shown on Wednesdays beginning at 12 noon in Fusôkan 214. These will be open to anyone interested, but those enrolled in the course should watch at least *three* of the five films, and write one-page (single-spaced) reviews of *two* of them. Note that the Inagaki version of *Chûshingura*, which will be shown in two parts, counts as a single film. (15% of grade)

CLASS: "Gonza the Lancer" (*Yari no Gonza*); dir Shinoda Masahiro, 1986

CLASS: "Bushido: The Cruel Code of the Samurai" (*Bushidô Zankoku Monogatari*); dir Imai Tadashi, 1963

CLASS: "Chûshingura," dir. Inagaki Hiroshi (1962).9:

ON OWN: "Twilight Samurai" (*Tasogare Seibei*); dir Yamada Yôji (2002), 129 min.

ON OWN: “Harakiri” (*Seppuku*); dir Kobayashi Masaki (1962), 133 min.

5) *Final paper* (35% of grade)

Textbooks and readings:

The only text you are asked to purchase is Donald Keene’s translation of *Chushingura: The Treasury of Loyal Retainers* (Columbia University Press, 1971). All other assigned readings on CourseWorks (courseworks.columbia.edu, for which an activated Columbia ID is required): go to “Class Files” → “Shared Files.” A variety of useful books will be placed on reserve.

SYLLABUS

#00 Introductions

#01 Ways of Looking at the Samurai

Harold Bolitho, "The Myth of the Samurai," Alan Rix and Ross Mouer, eds, *Japan's Impact on the World* (Japanese Studies Association of Australia, 1984), pp. 2-9.

Henry Smith, "The Paradoxes of the Japanese Samurai," from Smith, ed., in *Learning from Shôgun* (Program in Asian Studies, UCSB: 1980), pp. 86-98.

Karl Friday, "Bushidô or Bull: A Medieval Historian's Perspective on the Imperial Army and the Japanese Warrior Tradition." *The History Teacher* 27:3 (May 1994), pp. 339-49.

"The 47 Rônin': The Most Popular Play in Japan Reveals the Bloodthirsty Character of Our Enemy," *Life*, November 1, 1943, p. 52.

Compare these two websites created on the occasion of for the "Lords of the Samurai" exhibit at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco in 2009 <http://www.asianart.org/Samurai.htm> , and <http://www.asiansart.org/> . As you will see, one is official and one is not.

#02 The Primal Samurai: From Heian to Kamakura

For historical background: Peter Duus, *Feudalism in Japan* (2nd ed, Knopf, 1976), pp. 1-14, 37-59.

Hiroaki Sato, *Legends of the Samurai* (The Overlook Press, 1995), stories from *Konjaku monogatari*: pp. 19-21 ("The Duel"), 47-51 ("The Meaning of Revenge"), 71-79 ("Let Your Little Kid Be Stabbed"), and 88-90 ("The Silent One").

Karl Friday, "What a Difference a Bow Makes: The Rules of War in Early Medieval Japan," in Gordon Berger et al, eds., *Currents in Medieval Japanese History: Essays in Honor of Jeffrey P. Mass* (Figueroa Press, 2009), pp. 53-80 (plus notes).

Martin Collcutt, "The 'Emergence of the Samurai' and the Military History of Early Japan," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 56:1 (June 1996), pp. 151-164.

#03 The Warrior in his Medieval Prime: Tales and Codes

For historical background: Peter Duus, *Feudalism in Japan*, pp. 61-84.

Paul Varley, *Warriors of Japan as Portrayed in the War Tales* (University of Hawaii Press, 1994), pp. 56-66, 82-87, 167-83.

Helen McCullough, trans., *Genji & Heike* (Stanford University Press, 1994), ch. 9 (pp. 370-97).

Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, pp. 157-87 (on Kusunoki Masashige) and pp. 188-203 (on Kô no Moronao).

William Scott Wilson, trans., *Ideals of the Samurai: Writings of Japanese Warriors* (Burbank, CA: Ohara Publications, 1982): "The Regulations of Imagawa Ryoshun" (pp. 58-63), and "The 17 Articles of Asakura Toshikage" (pp. 66-72).

#04 Sex, Violence, and Beauty in Samurai Culture

Hitomi Tonomura, "Sexual Violence Against Women: Legal and Extralegal Treatment in Premodern Warrior Societies," in Tonomura et al, eds, *Women and Class in Japanese History* (University of Michigan Center for Japanese Studies, 1999), pp. 135-152

Ikegami, Eiko, *The Taming of the Samurai: Honorific Individualism and the Making of Modern Japan* (Yale University Press, 1995), ch. 4 (pp. 95-117)

Fuse Tomomasa, "An Institutionalized Form of Suicide in Japan," *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 5 (1978), pp. 48-66.

Algernon Bertram Mitford, *Tales of Old Japan* (1871), account of seppuku, pp. 263-87 (available on-line at: <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/13015>).

#05 The Sixteenth-Century Revolution

John Whitney Hall, "Japan's Sixteenth-Century Revolution," in George Elison and Bardwell Smith, eds., *Warlords, Artists, & Commoners: Japan in the Sixteenth Century* (University Press of Hawaii, 1981), pp. 7-21.

Hayashiya Tatsusaburo with George Elison, "Kyoto in the Muromachi Age" (in John Hall and Toyoda Takeshi, eds., *Japan in the Muromachi Age*, 1977), pp. 15-20, 27-36.

Michael Birt, "Samurai in Passage: The Transformation of the Sixteenth-Century Kanto," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 11-2 (Summer 1985), pp. 369-99.

#06 Foreigners and Firearms

Michael Cooper, ed., *They Came to Japan--An Anthology of European Reports on Japan, 1543-1640*, pp. 40-47, 53-55, 93, 101-103, 141-2, 160-63.

David Howell, "The Social Life of Firearms in Tokugawa Japan," *Japanese Studies* 29-1 (May 2009), pp. 65-80.

Anne Walthall, "Technologies of War and Masculine Identities: The Introduction and Diffusion of Guns." Paper presented at Modern Japan Seminar, Columbia University, Dec. 12, 2008 (15 pp).

#07 The Establishment of the Pax Tokugawa

For historical background: Peter Duus, *Modern Japan*, 2nd ed. (Houghton Mifflin, 1998), "Emperor, Shogun, and Daimyo," pp. 21-26, "The Samurai Elite," pp. 29-31.

Wilson, *Ideals of the Samurai*, "The 21 Precepts of Hôjô Sôun" (pp. 74-80) and "The Last Statement of Torii Mototada" (pp. 121-125).

David Lu, *Japan: A Documentary History* (M. E. Sharpe, 1997), pp. 189-93 (Hideyoshi's regulations) and 203-08 ("Laws of Military Households" (*Buke shohatto*)).

"Miyamoto Musashi: *Gorin no Sho* (Book of Five Elements)," in Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, pp. 254-72.

John W. Hall, "Rule by Status in Tokugawa Japan," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 1:1 (autumn 1974), pp. 39-49.

Henry Smith, "Five Myths About Early Modern Japan." In Ainslee Embree and Carol Gluck, eds., *Asia in Western and World History: A Guide for Teaching* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1997), pp. 514-522.

Ikegami, *The Taming of the Samurai*, ch. 10 (pp. 197-222).

#08 Samurai Searching in the Era of Transition from War to Peace

Ikegami, *The Taming of the Samurai*, ch. 12 (pp. 241-64).

"Yamaga Sokô and the Origins of Bushidô," *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, vol. I (paperback), pp. 385-91.

"Yamamoto Tsunetomo: *Hagakure*," in Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, pp. 287-303.

Ihara Saikaku, *Tales of Samurai Honor*, trans. Caryl Ann Callahan (Tokyo: *Monumenta Nipponica*, Sophia University, 1981): "Introduction," pp. 5-7, 12 bot-16; "Umbrellas in an Ill Wind that Blew Their Lives to Shreds" and "The Midô Drum is Beaten—So Too the Enemy" (pp. 51-61, also see appendix 147-8); "Inspiration from a Gourd," pp. 71-4; "At Least He Wears His Youth's Kimono," pp. 96-101; "Far Better to Consider What She Said at the End," pp. 118-121.

#09 Tales of Samurai Love

Gregory M. Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire: Male-Male Sexuality in Japanese Discourse, 1600-1950* (Univ. of California Press, 1999), pp. 23-44.

Paul Gordon Schalow, "Male Love in Early Modern Japan: A Literary Depiction of the 'Youth,'" in Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey, Jr., eds., *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past* (NY: NAL, 1989), pp. 118-128.

Ihara Saikaku (trans. Paul Schalow), *The Great Mirror of Male Love* (Stanford U. Press, 1990), pp. 27-34 (portion of Schalow's introduction), 85-96, 125-133 and endnotes

#10 The Forty-Seven Rônin in History: The Akô Incident of 170-03

Henry D. Smith II, "The Capacity of Chūshingura." *Monumenta Nipponica*, 58:1 (Spring 2003), pp. 1-42.

Bitō Masahide, "The Akō Incident of 1701-1703." Translated by Henry D. Smith II. *Monumenta Nipponica*, 58:2 (Summer 2003), pp. 149-70.

"The Forty-Seven Samurai: An Eyewitness Account, with Arguments," in Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, pp. 304-38.

#11 The Forty-Seven Rônin on Stage: *Kanadehon Chûshingura*

Takeda Izumo, Miyoshi Shôroku, and Namiki Senryû, *Chushingura: The Treasury of Loyal Retainers*, trans. Donald Keene (Columbia University Press, 1971), pp. 1-103 (Introductions and Acts I-VI);

#12 (*Kanadehon Chûshingura* Continued)

Chushingura: The Treasury of Loyal Retainers, pp.104-180 (Acts VII-XI).

#13 FILM SHOWING: “Chushingura” (1962, dir. Inagaki Hiroshi) Part I [Part II will be shown at 12:30 pm in Samurai Film Series on Wed, Mar 9]

#14 Musui’s World

For historical background: Duus, *Modern Japan*, “The Social Impact of Economic Growth,” pp. 54-57.

Katsu, Kokichi, *Musui’s Story: The Autobiography of a Tokugawa Samurai*, trans. Teruko Craig (Univ.of Arizona Press, 1988), complete (including introduction).

Optional (required for discussants): Oguchi Yujiro, “The Reality behind *Musui Dokugen*: The World of the Hatamoto and Gokenin,” *JJS* 16-1 (Summer 1990), pp. 289-308.

#15 The Samurai in the Meiji Restoration

For historical background: Duus, *Modern Japan*, “The Foreign Threat,” pp. 61-66, “‘Revere the Emperor and Expel the Barbarians’,” pp. 71-75.

Lu, *Japan: A Documentary History*, “Decay of the Tokugawa System,” pp. 273-77.

Tsunoda et al, eds., *Sources of Japanese Tradition* (NY: Columbia Univ. Press, 1964), pp. 591-603 (Mito School), 616-23 (Yoshida Shôin), and 624-37 (Fukuzawa Yukichi).

Fukuzawa Yukichi, “*Kyûhanjô* [Conditions in My Former Domain],” *Monumenta Nipponica*, 9:1-2 (April 1953), pp. 304-29.

Albert Craig, “The Restoration Movement in Choshu,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 18 (1959), pp. 187-197.

#16 Women Samurai and the Women of the Samurai

Royall Tyler, “Tomoe: The Woman Warrior,” in Chieko Irie Mulhern, ed., *Heroic with Grace: Legendary Women of Japan*, pp. 129-50.

Yamakawa Kikue, *Women of the Mito Domain: Recollections of Samurai Family Life*, trans. Kate Wildman Nakai. (Stanford UP, 1996): Introd. (ix, xi, xix-xx), Preface (3-5), “The Days of a Housewife” through “Food” (15-36, 39-44, 49-61), “Marriage and Divorce” (101-15), “Concubines, Abortion and Infanticide” (169-174). [Total, ca. 70 pp]

#17 The Birth of the Martial Arts

C. Cameron Hurst III, *Armed Martial Arts of Japan: Swordsmanship and Archery* (Yale UP, 1998), pp. 1-100, 147-169.

Inoue Shun, "The Invention of the Martial Arts: Kanô Jigorô and Kôdôkan Judo," in Steven Vlastos, ed., *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan* (University of California Press, 1998), pp. 163-73.

#18 The Demise of the Bushi and the Birth of Modern Bushidô

For historical background: Duus, *Modern Japan*, "The End of the Samurai Class," pp. 93-95; "'Civilization and Enlightenment,'" pp. 99-102; "Peasant Riots and Samurai Rebellions," pp. 103-08.

C. Cameron Hurst, III, "Death, Honor, and Loyalty: The Bushidô Ideal," *Philosophy East and West*, 40:4 (October 1990), pp. 511-27.

Nitobe, Inazo, *Bushido, The Soul of Japan: An Exposition of Japanese Thought* (Tokyo, 1899), "Preface" (ix-xii), chs. 1-2 (pp. 1-22) and 15-17 (pp. 158-93).

From Howes, ed., *Nitobe Inazô: Japan's Bridge Across the Pacific* (Westview Press, 1995): Cyril Powles, "Bushido: Its Admirers and Critics" (pp 107-18) and Yuzo Ota, "Mediation Between Cultures" (pp 237-52).

For report by discussant: Donald Roden, "Toward Remaking Manliness" (in Howes, ed., *Nitobe Inazô*, pp. 133-56).

#19 The Samurai and the Modern Military

REVIEW (from start of course): Karl Friday, "Bushidô or Bull: A Medieval Historian's Perspective on the Imperial Army and the Japanese Warrior Tradition."

Mark Peattie, "The Last Samurai: The Military Career of Nogi Maresuke," *Princeton Papers on East Asia: Japan*, vol. 1 (1972).

NEW: Doris Bargaen, "The Sword and the Brush," from *Suicidal Honor: General Nogi and the Writings of Mori Ogai and Natsume Soseki* (Univ. of Hawai'i Press, 2006), pp. 64-81.

NEW: Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period* (Princeton UP, 1985), pp. 220-227 top. (Page 220 is last page of longer section on death of Meiji.)

"Fundamentals of Our National Polity," in Ryusaku Tsunoda et al, eds. *Sources of Japanese Tradition* (NY: Columbia UP, 1964), pp. 785-795.

Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, *Kamikaze, Cherry Blossoms, and Nationalisms: The Militarization of Aesthetics in Japanese History* (University of Chicago Press, 2002), Ch. 5 ("The Tokkôtai Operation," pp. 157-85), and the introductory sections of Ch. 6 ("Five Tokkôtai Pilots"), pp. 186-193), and also sample some of the following descriptions of the writings of five different pilots (pp. 193-239).

#20 Mishima Yukio and the Way of the Samurai

“Mishima Yukio (1925-1970)--The Man Who Loved Death,” in Robert Jay Lifton, Shûichi Katô, and Michael Reich, *Six Lives/Six Deaths*, pp. 231-65.

Mishima Yukio, *The Samurai Ethic in Modern Japan: Yukio Mishima on Hagakure* [*Hagakure nyûmon*, 1967], trans Kathryn Sparling (Tuttle, 1978), pp. 3-11 (“*Hagakure* and I”), 15-29 (“*Hagakure* Is Alive Today”), and 99-105 (“The Japanese Image of Death”).

#21 The Samurai in Film

FILMS TO WATCH:

“Seppuku” (Eng: ‘Harakiri’); dir Kobayashi Masaki (1962); 133 min.

“Tasogare Seibei” (Eng: ‘Twilight Samurai’); dir Yamada Yôji (2002); 129 min. **ALSO:** if you have the DVD version, be sure to watch the bonus section interviews with Yamada Yoji and Sanada Masayuki.

READINGS (all on CourseWorks):

1) Lisa Spalding, “Period Films in the Prewar Era,” in Arthur Nollenti, Jr., and David Desser, eds., *Reframing Japanese Cinema* (Indiana UP, 2006), pp. 131-42.

2) Tadao SATO, *Currents in Japanese Cinema*, trans. Gregory Barrett (Kodansha International, 1982), pp. 45-51 (on postwar *jidaigeki*). Original: *Nihon eiga shisoshi* (1970).

3) Sybil Thornton, *The Japanese Period Film* (McFarland & Co, 2008), selections from Ch. 1 (on “The Japanese Period Film”) and Ch. 3 (on “The Japanese Hero”).

4) Thornton, *ibid.*, Ch. 12, “Traditional Narrative and Yamada Yoji” (pp. 173-92). NOTE: This entire chapter is about “Twilight Samurai” (*Tasogare Seibei*), of which I have asked you to read only the pages assigned, but the last part (pp. 193-203) is included in the file in the hopes that you might be interested in reading this as well.

5) YOUR REVIEWS of the films we already watched as a class: “Yari no Gonza” (1986), *Bushido zanokoku mongatari* (1963) and “Chushingura” (1962).