Course Description

This course is intended to introduce students to the modern history of Pacific Asia, with a focus on the East Asian countries of China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. However, our primary focus will be on Japanese and American economic expansion along the western Pacific Rim. Chronologies and topics covered will include:

- responses of East Asian states to the challenge posed by foreign imperial expansion;
- the regional emergence of industrialized nation-states and empires;
- war and its aftermath;
- the agendas and policies of the United States as a Pacific power;
- the rise of regional economies based on state planning and export.

One of the many seeming paradoxes that we will encounter is how both empires and nation-states, though built on unequal social relations, were often legitimized through appeals to development and security – two themes that will, as a result, appear frequently in the course. In addressing these themes, we will need to understand not only how empire was constructed, but also how it was justified and rationalized in the eyes of its practitioners. While formal empires ceased to exist in East Asia after 1945, their prior existence created complex patterns of interdependence and antagonism that continue to affect relations between states, and peoples, into the present day. With respect to the post-1945 international order, we will pay particular attention to how international rivalries shaped the political and economic trajectories which define contemporary East Asia.

Course Goals, Structure, and Requirements

**NOTE: THIS COURSE IS READING- AND WRITING-INTENSIVE**

Much of our class time will be devoted to discussion of sources. For this reason, it is expected and required that you will come to each class having read the assigned texts, that you will have addressed (in your thinking, and in your notes) the pre-circulated questions which are intended to guide you in your approach to those texts, and that you will participate actively and regularly in class discussions. Preparing for discussion involves extrapolating larger implications from the readings and grappling with their significance. To that end, you should bring these questions to each day’s readings:
• How do the texts for the day relate to one another and to the larger themes and other readings in the course?
• Do these readings reinforce or complicate a particular angle of interpretation?
• What overlaps or discrepancies emerge when you hold up these texts next to each other?
• What kind of story do they tell about continuity and change over time?

You must cite evidence, both in discussion and in your written work. In the context of discussion, “citation” refers to specific details and, ideally, texts and page numbers. In the context of your written work citation means either MLA (http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/) or Chicago (http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html) style.

Finally, while the content goal of this course concerns East Asian history, there is also an important set of process goals which are intended to build your general skills in the following areas:
• Writing and revision -- that is, writing as a process.
• Effective reading which allows you to engage constructively and critically with existing interpretations in a scholarly field.
• Library-aided research.
• Approaching knowledge from both positivist (“what do we know through observation?”) and critical (“how might we be wrong?”) perspectives.
• Understanding and testing of big themes, often derived from social science and historiographical literature (e.g. state-society relations, technological change, etc.), within a specific global and/or historical context.

Course Texts
These required texts are available at the college bookstore. Additional readings will be available online via PWeb. It is a requirement of this course that you will have in-class access to all texts assigned for each session.

Wm. Theodore de Bary, ed., Sources of East Asian Tradition, Volume 2: The Modern Period (Columbia)
Merle Goldman and Andrew Gordon, eds., Historical Perspectives on Contemporary East Asia (Harvard)
Michael Hunt and Steven Levine, Arc of Empire: America’s Wars in Asia (UNC)
Ezra Vogel, The Four Little Dragons: The Spread of Industrialization in East Asia (Harvard)

Questions to Ask of Course Readings
I. For primary sources (texts produced during the period under investigation, i.e. pieces of the historical record):
1) What was the writer’s intent in creating that text?
2) Who or what is the subject of the piece? Whom does the author claim to represent or speak for?
3) Who was the intended audience? How does the author attempt to connect with that audience?
4) What kind of story is the author trying to tell, and how does he/she structure that narrative? What argument does the author seek to advance? Which passage best exemplifies the underlying point of the piece?
5) What rationale or evidence does the author employ to make his/her case? Which elements of the story are factual, and which are subject to interpretation?
6) What was the larger historical context in which the author was working?
7) What kind of background or bias shaped the author’s message?
(NOTE: if any of above questions cannot be answered by the text itself, or if any textual references are unclear, do a little digging!)

II. For secondary sources (historians’ analyses of the past):
1) What question is the writer posing?
2) How does the author answer that question? Which sentence(s) best state the writer’s overall argument?
3) What other interpretation(s) does the author appear to be arguing against?
4) How does the author develop the argument throughout the piece? What are the sub-arguments that bolster the main argument? What kind of story is the author trying to tell?
5) How does the author use evidence to prove the argument? (Note: you need to read footnotes in order to answer that question!)
You may be called upon to provide answers to any/all questions that apply on a given day, and to support your answers with specific points in the text.

Assignments and Grading

Paper: Early Modernity in Japan’s Early Tokugawa Period – 15%

Outline (section): Asia and Europe in the Early Modern Global Order – 5%

Outline (section): European Divergence and Expansion – 5%

Outline (section): Imperial Collisions – 5%

Paper (final): The Transition from Sinosphere to Asia – 20%

Research Paper: topic proposal and literature review – 5%

Research Paper: final version – 15%

Class participation – 30%
A significant requirement of course is active and informed participation in classroom discussions. In general, I’ll be looking for evidence that you’ve done the reading, that you’re thinking about the themes and issues covered by the class, and that you’re making a good-faith effort to improve the classroom experience for everyone enrolled in the course. Remember that there are many ways to make useful contributions: the simplest way is to answer one of my questions or to bring up a detail from the readings, but participation also involves responding to your classmates, making connections between the day’s readings and earlier discussions, synthesizing comments made by classmates, and asking questions of the class, the professor, or both. Using specific passages in the text to support your ideas will be a key part of your participation grade as well. Over the course of the semester, I’ll encourage everyone to participate in different ways, both to recall details, anecdotes, and ideas from the readings and to analyze our course materials in light of the themes of the course and the results of our discussions. I will also be assigning periodic ungraded, but mandatory, homework the completion of which will also contribute to your participation grade.

I do not have an ironclad rule about how often each student needs to speak in class: you should generally average at least one comment or question per class period, but I understand that some of you will always be more reserved than others and that everyone has days when they’re less likely to participate. My main advice, then, is that you come speak to me if you’re concerned about your level of participation or want advice on how to get more involved in class, and that you remember that the thoughtfulness of your classroom comments is more important than the frequency with which you speak. Remember that class participation depends on attendance. I’ll be keeping track of attendance throughout the semester; if you miss class once or twice, that won’t affect your performance in the class, but if you have more than two unexcused absences, your participation grade will go down.

A final note: If you have any concerns about your grade, please contact me. Likewise, I will do my utmost to help you to improve your performance in the class, particularly if you are encountering challenges in meeting the requirements.

**Accommodations and Academic Honesty**

Grinnell College makes reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students need to provide documentation identifying any special needs to the Dean for Student Academic Support and Advising, Joyce Stern, whose office is located on the third floor of the Rosenfield Center. Students should then notify me within the first few days of class. Students should also be aware of Grinnell’s policy on academic honesty. Plagiarism, it goes without saying, will not be tolerated in this course.
UNIT ONE: A WORLD OF EMPIRES, WARRING STATES, AND TRADE

WEEK 1: Approaching the Modern World

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lMNM42zpJUs
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OQPA11MxE_c
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vAWXiAWbZCg

Fri., Jan. 23: Global Connections and Global Visions

WEEK 2: Comparing “Asia” and “Europe”

Weds., Jan. 28: Early Modern States and Empires

Fri., Jan. 30: The Transformation of the Medieval Order—Other Perspectives

**UNIT TWO: EARLY MODERN EAST ASIA AS CONFUCIAN STATE SYSTEM**

**WEEK 3: Confucianism and China’s Past – Changing Views in Japan and Korea**

Weds., Feb. 4: Japan – Early Tokugawa Political and Intellectual Transformations


**PAPER WORKSHOP – “Early Modernity in Japan’s Early Tokugawa Period”**

Fri., Feb. 6: Korea – Chosŏn Neo-Confucianism’s Rise and Reform

• “Politics” and “Reform Proposals,” *Sources of East Asian Tradition, Volume 2: The Modern Period*, pp. 373-383, 403-422 [selections TBA].

**WEEK 4: Boundaries and Interaction Zones**

**DUE MONDAY, Feb. 9: Paper 1 – “Early Modernity in Japan’s Early Tokugawa Period”**

Weds., Feb. 11: China – Ming and Qing Civilization in Eurasian Context


**ACTIVITY: The Manchu Qing empire in world historical time**

Fri., Feb. 13: Interregional Trade and Cross-Cultural Influence

- [Nanyang merchants, TBA]

**UNIT THREE: THE GREAT DIVERGENCE I (ca. 1750)**

WEEK 5: The Modern Transformation

Weds., Feb. 18: Foundations of a “New World Order”


**DUE: Section outline (1 of 3), “Asia and Europe in the Early Modern Global Order”**

Fri., Feb. 20: European Divergence Explained?

WEEK 6: The Modern Transformation; Japan and Europe in East Asia

Weds., Feb. 25: Modern Globalization and Imperial Expansion


**ACTIVITY: Early modern trade routes**

**DUE: Section outline (2 of 3), “European Divergence and Expansion”**

UNIT FOUR: NEW ORDERS – JAPAN AND EUROPE

Fri., Feb. 27: A New East Asian Order


WEEK 7: Responses to Europe

Weds., Mar. 4: Christianity and Empire


**DUE: Section outline (3 of 3), “Imperial Collisions”**

Fri., Mar. 7: Ideological Pluralism and “Dutch Learning” in Tokugawa Japan
**ACTIVITY: Locating sources in space and time

WEEK 8: National Trajectories – Japan and Korea

Weds., Mar. 11: Renewal and Decay
• Michael J. Seth, “Late Chosŏn, Early 18th Century to 1876,” A History of Korea: From Antiquity to the Present, pp. 189-224.
**WORKSHOP: Thesis statements

Fri., Mar. 13: Reform and Restoration

**SPRING BREAK, Mar. 14 – 29**

UNIT FIVE: THE GREAT DIVERGENCE II (ca. 1850)

WEEK 9: The Industrial Transformation

Weds., Apr. 1: The Industrial Revolution and Its Consequences

Fri., Apr. 3: From Difference to Subordination?

**UNIT SIX: THE ASCENDENCE OF JAPAN AND THE UNITED STATES**

**WEEK 10: Enlightenment and Empire – Japan “Renewed”**

**DUE MONDAY, Apr. 6: Paper – “The Transition from Sinosphere to Asia”**

Weds., Apr. 8: The Meiji Restoration and End of the Tribute System

Fri., Apr. 10: Japan’s Empire – Makers and Subjects
• Marius B. Jansen, “Japanese Imperialism: Late Meiji Perspectives,”
• Carter J. Eckert, “Korea’s Transition to Modernity: A Will to Greatness” [sections] pp. 119-139.
• Yamamuro Shin’ichi, “The Evolving Meiji State: Its Dual Character as a Nation-State and Colonial Empire,”

**WEEK 11: Displacing China**

Weds., Apr. 15: Late Qing China in Reform, Revolution, and Decline
• “Chinese Statecraft and the Opening of China to the West,” “Moderate Reform and the Self-Strengthening Movement,” and “Radical Reform at the End of the Qing,” *Sources of East Asian Tradition, Volume 2: The Modern Period*.
• Mary Backus Rankin, “Social and Political Change in Nineteenth-century China” and Ernest P. Young, “China in the Early Twentieth Century: Tasks for a New World,” *Historical Perspectives on Contemporary East Asia*.

Fri., Apr. 17: The United States in Asia
• Warren I. Cohen, “The Foreign Impact on East Asia,” *Historical Perspectives on Contemporary East Asia*.

**ACTIVITY: Views on globalization and the “Asian century”**

**WEEK 12: Tensions in Empire – Nationalism and Internationalism, Modernization and War**

Tuesday, Apr. 23: Japan’s Asia, Asia’s Japan

WORKSHOP: Research topic proposals and literature review

Thursday, Apr. 25: Total War in Asia


UNIT SEVEN: THE ORIGINS OF CONTEMPORARY ECONOMIC POWER

WEEK 13: Industrialization and Decolonization – the Post-War Wave

**DUE MONDAY, Apr. 27: Research topic proposal and literature review

Weds., Apr. 29: The Emergence of a Post-War Order?


Fri., May 1: Post-War Contrasts and Continuities – Japan

• [Postwar sources, TBA]

WEEK 14: From “East Asia” to “Asia-Pacific”

Weds., May 6: Pursuing Growth


**WORKSHOP: Research paper

Fri., May 8: Origins of the Present?

**EXAM WEEK, May 11 –15**

EXAM WEEK

Friday, May 15
**DUE (by 5pm): Research paper, revised version**