

Japan in the Age of the Samurai

History and Film



Image removed due to copyright restrictions.
Image from anime, *Samurai Champloo*.

Course Description




- ✓ Intro to History of Japan's Medieval Period, 1185-1867
 - ✓ Pre-1185: Rule by emperor and aristocrats
 - ✓ Japan ruled by warrior class(samurai)
 - ✓ Feudal Society/Period of war and fragmentation, then peace and unification
 - ✓ Flourishing of Buddhist values and arts
- ✓ Experiences of warriors, courtiers, clerics, peasants, and merchants
- ✓ Films: How is Medieval Japan Viewed Today?

Unit 1

I. Ways of the Warriors

- What was the warrior ideal and how did it evolve and change over time?
- Why was such an ideal necessary? What function did it serve?
- What types of warriors were there? How did they *really* act?

Unit 2

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- ✓ **Spiritual and Supernatural Worlds**
 - ✓ What is Japanese “spirituality”?
 - ✓ How did it operate in popular and elite culture?
 - ✓ Zen Buddhism, Secular Buddhism, Christianity, Popular Tales

Unit 3: Worlds of Pleasure/Worlds of Pain

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See <http://www.unicamultimedia.com/p1/images/Utamaro.jpg>

- ✓ What were the experiences of women ?
- ✓ How did different classes interact with each other?
- ✓ What were the tensions between social values and human feelings/relationships?

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Why Medieval Japan?

- ✓ Development of traditional Japanese arts, philosophy and religion
- ✓ Continued presence in contemporary popular imagination
- ✓ Dynamic, rich, multi-faceted society populated by diverse peoples

Temples



Images courtesy of Wikipedia.



- ✓ Great Buddha (Daibutsu): Statue of Amida Buddha cast in 1252
- ✓ Kinkakuji (Golden Temple): Zen Temple Built by Yoshitsune in 1397

Zen Gardens

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Photograph of Daisen-in Garden.



- ✓ Daisen-in Garden (Kyoto): Built in 1509 by monk, Kogaku Sotan
- ✓ Ryōanji (Temple of the Peaceful Dragon) Noh/Kabuki

Noh/Kabuki



Images removed due to copyright restrictions.
Photographs of modern Kabuki and Noh actors.

Bunraku (Puppet Theater)



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Bunraku puppet.

See: <http://www.city.osaka.jp/yutoritomidori/susume/eng/images/showbiz/bunraku.jpg>

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Bunraku puppet and operator.

See: <http://www.bookmice.net/darkchilde/japan/japan/raku.jpg>

Tea Ceremony (Chanoyû)



Image removed due to copyright restrictions.
Ceremonial tea cup.

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.
Schoolgirls practice performing the tea ceremony.

Mito Kômon



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Photographs from the television series *Mito Kômon*.

Abarenbô Shogun



Image removed due to copyright restrictions.
Photograph from the television show *Abarenbô Shogun*.



Image removed due to copyright restrictions.
Image from anime *Samurai 7*.

See: http://www.samurai-7.com/download/s7k_1024_768.jpg



Image removed due to copyright restrictions.
Promotional image for animated series, *Afro Samurai*.
See: http://static.flickr.com/9/12514638_a7e54edf58_o.jpg

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Films for Unit 1

- ✓ “Hôichi the Earless” from *Kwaidan* (Kobayashi Masaki, 1964)
- ✓ Seven Samurai (Kurosawa Akira, 1954)
- ✓ Forty-Seven Rônin (Mizoguchi Kenji, 1940-1941)
- ✓ Recommended: Throne of Blood (Kurosawa Akira, 1957)

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Films for Unit 2



- ✓ Ugetsu (Mizoguchi Kenji, 1953)
- ✓ Onibaba (Shindô Kaneto, 1964)
- ✓ Sen no Rikyû (Teshigahara Hiroshi, 1990)

Films for Unit 3




Image removed due to copyright restrictions.
Image from *Samurai Rebellion*.

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.
Image from *Utamaro and His Five Women*.

- ✓ Utamaro and His Five Women (Mizoguchi, 1946)
- ✓ Double Suicide (Shinoda Masahiro, 1969)
- ✓ Life of Oharu, (Mizoguchi, 1952)
- ✓ Samurai Rebellion (Kobayashi, 1967)

Assignments



- ✓ **Class Participation: 20%**
 - ✓ Attendance
 - ✓ Contribution to Class Discussions
 - ✓ Weekly Response Papers
 - ✓ Around 250 to 300 words.
 - ✓ Usually, I'll give a question beforehand
 - ✓ Post to website by Thursday, class time!
 - ✓ Also bring to class
 - ✓ You may skip 1 response paper

Assignments (cont.)



- ✓ Three essays: **45%**
 - ✓ 1,500 words, **six** double-spaced pages
 - ✓ Grading based on presentation of argument, organization, and articulateness of writing
 - ✓ Show familiarity with readings, films, and lectures
 - ✓ **Do not plagiarize:** When in doubt, cite or insert quotation marks, then cite.
 - ✓ Questions in syllabus

Assignments (cont.)



- ✓ Short Exam (Sept. 26): **10%**
 - ✓ ID format
 - ✓ Based on “historical overview” and readings until exam.
- ✓ Final Exam: **25%**
 - ✓ IDs and essay questions
 - ✓ Covers course as a whole

Geography, 1185-1600



- ✓ Pre-1185 Japan was a group of countries under authority of court in Kyoto
- ✓ 4 main islands: Kyûshû, Shikoku, Honshû, Hokkaidô
- ✓ East vs. West Japan
- ✓ Main Regions: Kinai, Kantô, Kyûshû, Chûgoku, Shikoku, Tôhoku, Hokkaidô



Image removed due to copyright restrictions.
Map of twelfth-century Japan.

Kinai Region



- ✓ Heart of the Country
- ✓ Around 2 million people
- ✓ Kyoto: Imperial Court
- ✓ Nara: Ancient capital/Center of Buddhism
- ✓ Lake Biwa: major trade area
- ✓ Heavy rice cultivation

Western Regions



- ✓ Kyûshû, Chûgoku, Shikoku
- ✓ Sanyôdô: Road linking Kinai to Kyûshû
- ✓ Maritime culture along sea route to Kyûshû: fishing, shipping
- ✓ Around 2 million people
- ✓ Base of Taira (Heike) warrior clan

Kantô



- ✓ Tôsandô: Road from Kyoto to northern and eastern Kantô
- ✓ Best land for rice cultivation, high yields
- ✓ Plains for horse breeding
- ✓ Tôkaidô: Coastal road from Kyoto to Edo (southern and western Kantô)
- ✓ Kamakura: Seat of warrior political power: 1185-1333
- ✓ Base of Minamoto (Genji) warrior clan

Tôhoku, Hokkaidô, Tsushima, Ryukyu islands

- ✓ Tôhoku: sparsely populated, mountainous, semi-independent
- ✓ Hokkaidô: Semi-nomadic North Asian peoples, Ainu tribes peoples
- ✓ Ryukyu: semi-independent kingdom with strong ties to China
- ✓ Tsushima: Economic and political ties to Korea



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Map of the provinces of medieval Japan.

See: http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~chgis/japan/images/hall_medieval_prov.jpg

Tales of the Heike



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Modern illustration for *Tales of the Heike*.

Story



- ✓ Genpei War, 1180-1185
- ✓ Genji (Minamoto) vs. Heike (Taira) warrior clans
- ✓ Taira leader: Taira no Kiyomori
- ✓ Dominates Kyoto imperial court of Go-Shirakawa (Hô-ô)
- ✓ Genji Leader: Minamoto no Yoritomo

Taira no Kiyomori



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See http://www.sonic.net/~tabine/Heike/Heike_Graphics_aGeneral/heike_kiyomori03.jpg

Go-Shirakawa (Hô-ô)




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See http://www.sonic.net/~tabine/Heike/Heike_Graphics_aGeneral/heike_goshirakawa.jpg



Story (cont.)



- ✓ First half of Tales of Heike focuses on the history of Kiyomori (Sadler, 22-110)
- ✓ Second half: fall of the Taira (Sadler, 110-end)
- ✓ Focuses on fates of various Taira figures who suffer and die because of Kiyomori's sins

Other Minamoto leaders



- ✓ Kiso Yoshinaka: Genji leader who drove Heike from Kyoto to the Inland Sea in 1183.
- ✓ He plunders Kyoto and asserts independence. Defeated by Genji forces in 1184.
- ✓ Minamoto Yoshitsune: Yoritomo's half-brother. Defeats Heike forces at Ichi-no-tani in 1184.
- ✓ Last of Heike forces killed at Dan-no-ura in 1185.



Image removed due to copyright restrictions.

See <http://www.amy.hi-ho.ne.jp/gehen/picture/Yosinaka3.jpg>

✓ Kiso Yoshinaka

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.

See <http://images.artelino.com/images/images/heike-monogatari2.jpg>

✓ Minamoto
Yoshitsune

Other Important Facts



- ✓ Most famous example of “Warrior Tale” genre
- ✓ Originally sung by *biwa hōshi*: wandering blind minstrels who entertained commoners
- ✓ Sung to appease restless spirits of those who died in Genpei War
- ✓ By late 1200s, numerous written versions appeared: each different
- ✓ Definitive **Kakuichi Version** (1371): upper-class acceptance and patronage

Biwa hōshi



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See http://www.sonic.net/~tabine/Heike/Heike_Graphics_aGeneral/Biwa_hoshi_Tokyo_Museum.jpg

What to Look for



- ✓ Romantic tales/anecdotes of emerging warrior ethos during Early Medieval Age
- ✓ Buddhist sense of “impermanence of things”; pathos
- ✓ Non-warrior characters: women, priests, and nobles

Caution!!



- ✓ Don't get overwhelmed by all the names and ranks.
- ✓ If overwhelmed, use character glossary
- ✓ Just get a sense of the different tales.
- ✓ Chinese figures and tales often appear
- ✓ Start reading now!

Historical Readings



- ✓ Kamakura Age (1185-1333)
- ✓ Muromachi Age (1333-1568)
 - ✓ Azuchi-Momoyama (1568-1600)
- ✓ Edo Period (1600-1868)
- ✓ Do not get overwhelmed by density of facts.
- ✓ Get sense of basic structures and developments of each period