Japan in Today’s World Program, Semester 2, 2017

Cultural Evolution of Japan—Course Syllabus

Class meets: Wednesdays, Period 5, 4:40-6:10 p.m., 1607 Center Zone 1, Ito Campus
Instructor: Jordan Pollack, Professor, International Student Center
Office: D-402, West Zone 1, Ito Campus
Office hours: Thursdays, 3:30-5:00 p.m., or by appointment
Office phone: 092-802-4380; mobile: 080-5602-7368; JTW office: 092-802-2228
Email: pollack.jordan.679@m.kyushu-u.ac.jp or pollackj@gmail.com

Course Overview
This course examines changing patterns of Japanese material and social life in archaic times, tracing the rise of the first political state. Lectures, readings, and discussions will explore important evolutionary transformations in ecology, demographics, technology, settlement, economy, kinship, governance, religion, and aesthetics, using anthropological (i.e., archaeological) and historical resources. Transitions in primary adaptive strategy, from foraging to extensive agriculture, are emphasized as key determinants in the broader evolutionary process, and will order our review of Japan’s ancient past. A field trip to Yoshinogari, an important Yayoi period archaeological site, is planned. Grading will take account of effort in class Q&A, reflections on several readings, and a narrative exercise.

Procedure, Requirements, and Evaluation
Each class meeting will involve a lecture treating an evolutionary phase or sequence and class discussion of relevant readings and topics.

The course requires that you…
1) attend all classes;
2) complete the readings assigned for each course segment;
3) participate regularly in class Q&A;
4) summarize and react to three selected readings;
5) write a brief historical narrative (due July 19).

The quality of your Q&A participation, for which thoughtful familiarity with the assigned readings is expected, will comprise 10% of your final grade; the reading reflections, in which you are asked to synopsize and comment upon the arguments and evidence provided, in 500-word responses, 30%; and the narrational exercise, for which you must efficiently chronicle and explain, based on course content, the emergence of the early Japanese state, or alternatively reconstruct the subjective world of an imagined inhabitant of a selected pre- or proto-historic period, in a 2500-word final essay, 60%. Differences in English skill will not factor into grading.

In preparing for class discussion and in writing your reflections (to be emailed to me using pollackj@gmail.com when finished), you should develop answers to one or more of the following questions:

What does the author tell you about human evolution in general or about Japan's evolution in particular? That is, what particular claims (assertions, arguments,
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explanations, etc.) are made? How are the claims generalized, evidenced, and/or illustrated? What, if any, criticisms do you have of the author’s claims and methods? How do the author’s claims relate, if at all, to those of other authors, to what has been discussed in class, or to historical experience elsewhere? In what way(s) has the reading affected your understanding of human nature?

This course awards two credits for satisfactory completion. JTW students may earn a third credit, however, by completing additional readings and submitting additional reflections.

Readings and Reference Materials

Weekly readings will be drawn primarily from the following sources:


Additional readings are listed in the below schedule. Those marked by an asterisk (*) may be used to fulfill the written reflection requirement.
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**Class Meeting, Discussion, and Reading Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading Material</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 5</td>
<td>Course introduction</td>
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<td>Friday, 2012: Friday, Karl F., “Sorting the Past”</td>
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<td>April 19, 26</td>
<td>Age of Foraging (pre-400 BCE)</td>
<td><strong>Friday, 2012:</strong> Aikens, C. Melvin. “Origins of the Japanese People”; Barnes, Gina L. “Japan’s Natural Setting”</td>
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<td><em>Mizoguchi, 2002: selected excerpts on paleolithic and Jōmon life</em></td>
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<td>Barnes, 1999: “Innovations of Modern Humans: 40,000—10,000 Years Ago”</td>
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<td>“Littoral Foragers: 10,000—1,000 BC”</td>
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<td>Barnes, 1999: “The Spread of Rice Agriculture: 1,000 BC—AD 300”</td>
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<td>Habu, 2004: selected excerpts on Jōmon life</td>
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<td>Imamura, 1996: selected excerpts on Jōmon life</td>
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June 7, 14, 21, 28
July 5, 19

**Age of Cultivation—Extensive Agriculture (400 BCE-794 CE)**

*Mizoguchi, 2002: selected excerpts on Yayoi and Kofun life


Friday, 2012:
Barnes, Gina L. “The Emergence of Political Rulership and the State in Early Japan”
Teeuwen, Mark. “What Used to Be Called Shinto”

Barnes, Gina L., 2007, selected excerpts on Yayoi and Kofun life

Imamura: selected excerpts on Yayoi life

Lu, 1997:
“Dawn of Japanese History”
“The Impact of Chinese Civilization”

Morton and Olenik, 2005:
“The Introduction of Chinese Thought and Culture—Asuka Period, 552-710”


July 10

Yoshinogari field trip (approximately 4.5 hours, small admission fee required)

July 19

narrative assignment due

*May 3, July 12

no class