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**course time:** This is an asynchronous online class. All course work will be completed between May 15 and June 2, 2023

**office hours:** Students can sign up for virtual office hours at <https://calendly.com/michael-strausz/10min>. If none of the times on that link work for you, please email me at [michael.strausz@tcu.edu](mailto:michael.strausz@tcu.edu) to make an appointment

**e-mail:** [michael.strausz@tcu.edu](mailto:michael.strausz@tcu.edu)

**response time:** I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours during the week, and within 48 hours during weekends and holidays.

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### **Course Description**

In the years since 1854, when American warships forced Japan to open itself up to trade, Americans have seen Japan as a rising power, a bitter wartime enemy, an economic rival and powerhouse, the home of a mysterious and exotic culture, the world headquarters of cutting-edge technology, and the source of karate, sushi, Hello Kitty, Pokémon, and Shohei Ohtani. In this class, we aim to look beyond these superficial images of Japan. We will examine Japanese politics and society through both the scholarship of those who have dedicated their lives to studying Japan and through movies, both documentary and fictional films.

Sometimes conversations about Japan include statements like this: “that is how they do things because they are Japanese, and that is their culture.” The assumption in this kind of statement is that, from the perspective of non-Japanese people, Japan is a mysterious, exotic, and inscrutable place with a homogenous and uniform culture. We will use the analytic tools of various social science disciplines to critically examine that kind of assumption in two ways. First, we will learn to think about Japanese people as often responding to institutional rules in a way that makes sense once we understand those rules. Second, we will learn to think about Japanese culture as a series of sometimes contradictory practices, ideas, and norms that individuals—even Japanese individuals—often chafe against. Ultimately, we will strive to understand how Japanese politics and society work, and we will use this understanding to deepen our sense of how politics and societies function more generally.

### **Required Texts / Materials**

All required readings are available on the course’s D2L cite.

Students should have access to a computer or tablet on which they can write papers and participate in text-based discussions.

Students should also have access to a device with a reasonably fast internet connection on which they can listen to audio files and watch feature-length movies.

To access the movies in this class, you will need:

1. An account with the Criterion Channel. To get such an account, you will need a credit card, but, assuming that you have never had an account with the Criterion Channel, you get a free one-week trial. We will watch our movies on the Criterion Channel on May 16, May 19, and May 22. So, if you subscribe on May 16 to watch the first Criterion Channel Movie, *Burmese Harp*, you will have until May 22 to cancel, so you can just cancel right after you watch our third Criterion movie, *Tampopo*. Remember to cancel if you don't want to be charged. If you don't cancel, or if you have already used your free trial, it will cost \$10.99 for a one-month subscription.
2. A free account with Vimeo. We will watch *Campaign* on Vimeo, which you can rent for \$6.00.

### Course Policies and Requirements

#### **Assignments**

Watching movies and taking quizzes: You are required to watch each movie by the deadline specified in the schedule below, and take the corresponding movie quiz. There are links to each movie and in the related module on the course's D2L site, and there will also be links to the relevant movies and quizzes in the announcements section of the D2L site. I will drop your lowest movie quiz grade.

Movie thoughts: After watching a movie, you are required to ask a question or make an observation on a discussion board. There are links to discussion boards in their related Modules and in the course announcements. These can be brief (1-3 sentences), and are graded on a pass-fail basis. I will drop your lowest "movie thought" grade (i.e. you can skip one without penalty).

Watching minilectures and responding to prompts in discussion boards: I have a short lecture on each unit. By the deadline specified in the schedule below, I expect you to watch each lecture video and post a response to one of the discussion questions that I post online in the discussion boards. There is a more specific assignment in the module called "Course Introduction," and there are links to discussion boards in their related Modules and in the course announcements. I will drop your lowest lecture discussion grade.

Reading discussion questions: We will have an online text-based discussion of each reading that we do for this class. I expect you to make a post in each of those discussions. There is a more specific assignment in the module called "Course Introduction," and there are links to discussion boards in their related Modules and in the course announcements. I will drop your lowest reading discussion grade.

Responses to posts on discussion boards: Each student is required to respond to at least three discussion board postings (either on the minilecture discussion boards or the reading discussion boards) per week (these are due by 5pm Friday of each week). If someone responds to one of your posts, you can respond to that, and that will count as

one of your three responses for that week. Responding to posts by me also counts as a response. There is a more specific assignment in the module called “Course Introduction,” and there are links to discussion boards in their related Modules. I will drop your lowest response grade.

**Papers:** Students in this class will write two papers (between 4-5 pages each) in this class. There is a paper due at **5pm on Wednesday, May 25** and at **5pm on Friday June 2**). The second of these papers will function as the final exam for the class. More specific assignments will be available as the term progresses.

**Grading**

Grades are determined on a 100-point scale as follows:

A: 93.45 and above	B: 82.45-86.44	C: 72.45-76.44	D: 62.45-66.44
A-: 89.45-93.44	B-: 79.45-82.44	C-: 69.45-72.44	D-: 59.45-62.44
B+: 86.45-89.44	C+: 76.45-79.44	D+: 66.45-69.44	F: 59.44 and below

Grade Breakdown:

Assignment	Percentage of final grade
Movie quizzes	10%
Movie thoughts	5%
Minilecture discussion	10%
Reading discussion	15%
Online responses to others' discussion posts	5%
First paper (Due May 25 at 5pm)	25%
Final paper (Due June 2 at 5pm)	30%

If you feel that you have been graded unfairly on any course assignment, please wait 24 hours after the assignment is returned and then contact me with a typed statement about why you believe you were graded unfairly. This statement must provide substantive reasons why you believe that you were graded unfairly. The appeal process must be started one week after the exam/homework was returned.

**Late Work**

I will not accept late movie quizzes or discussion board postings except in the case of serious illness or other personal or family emergency. Hopefully no one will have a serious illness or a personal or family emergency, but if you do, please let me know, and we will work out alternate deadlines for your assignments.

Deadlines for papers exam are strictly enforced. Unless otherwise noted, an assignment submitted after the deadline will lose 10 points (out of 100) if it is submitted within 24 hours after the deadline, 20 points (out of 100) if it is submitted between 24 and 48 hours after the deadline, 30 points (out of 100) if it is submitted between 48 and 72 hours after the deadline, etc. So, for example, if a paper deadline is 11am on Monday and you submit your paper at 11:30am on Monday, you will automatically lose 10

points. Once grades have been officially submitted for the course, late assignments will no longer be accepted.

These penalties are waived in the case of serious illness or other personal or family emergency. Hopefully no one will have a serious illness or a personal or family emergency, but if you do, please let me know and we can discuss alternative arrangements for turning your work in. The opportunity to work out alternative arrangements for all assignments expires one week after the assignment was due.

### **Class Norms & Netiquette**

All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, discussions, and chats. If I deem any of them to be inappropriate or offensive, I will forward the message to the Chair of the department and appropriate action will be taken, not excluding expulsion from the course. The same rules apply online as they do in person. Be respectful of other students. Foul discourse will not be tolerated. Albion College has some basic information about netiquette on their website: <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/>.

Participating in the virtual realm, including social media sites and shared-access sites sometimes used for educational collaborations, should be done with honor and integrity. Please review TCU's guidelines on electronic communications (email, text messages, social networks, etc.) from the Student Handbook (<https://tcu.codes/policies/network-and-computing-policy/e-mail-electronic-communications-social-networks/>).

### **Email**

Only the official TCU student email address will be used for all course notification. It is your responsibility to check your TCU email on a regular basis.

### **Office Hours**

I encourage students to take advantage of my [office hours](#) in order to ask questions about the course materials or to chat about issues related to the course or political science more generally. While you are free to drop by without an appointment, if you want to make sure that I will be available right when you drop by, please feel free to sign up for an appointment here: <https://calendly.com/michael-strausz/10min>. That link gives you a choice of either an in-person meeting or a Zoom meeting; please feel free to select whichever is more convenient for you. If I am not able to hold in-person office hours at any point, I will email the class and temporarily move office hours to Zoom. If you have classes or other obligations during my office hours and would like to meet with me, please email me to make an appointment.

### **TCU Policies**

This course will be conducted in accordance with all relevant TCU policies. For specific language, please see the syllabus appendix on the course's D2L site. The syllabus appendix includes the following policies: Academic Misconduct, Anti-Discrimination and Title IX Information, TCU Policy for Religious Observations & Holidays, and Student Access and Accommodation.

## **Daily Schedule:**

### **UNIT 1: WAR AND ITS AFTERMATH**

#### **Monday, May 15**

Read over syllabus

Watch my "self-introduction" short video

Post a short response to my prompt by Tuesday at 9am

Skim Fabe, Marilyn. 2004. "Glossary." In *Closely Watched Films: An Introduction to the Art of Narrative Film Technique*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (*this is a very short overview of some of the language that we can use to discuss movies*).

Read Tanizaki, Jun'ichirō. 1977. *In Praise of Shadows*. New Haven: Leete's Island Books (NOTE: all readings are linked to the D2L page)

Post a discussion question by Tuesday at 9am

Read Dower, John W. 1999. "Shattered Lives." In *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*. New York: Norton, pp. 33-64.

Post a discussion question by Tuesday at 9am

#### **Tuesday, May 16**

Watch "Overview of Japanese History" short video

Post a short response to my prompt by Wednesday at 9am

Watch *The Burmese Harp*.

Take the movie quiz by today (Tuesday) at 11:59pm

Post a brief question or observation to the movie thoughts board by Wednesday at 9am

### **UNIT 2: POLITICS TODAY**

#### **Wednesday, May 17**

Read Rhyu, Sang-young. 2023. "Japan in 2022: Abe's Death, the Declining Economy, and a New Security Strategy." *Asian Survey* 63 (2):186-198.

Post a discussion question by Thursday at 9am

Watch "Politics" short video

Post a short response to my prompt by Thursday at 9am

Watch *Campaign*

Take the Movie quiz by today (Wednesday) at 11:59pm.

Post a brief question or observation to the movie thoughts board by Thursday at 9am

### UNIT 3: DISASTER AND RECOVERY

#### **Thursday, May 18**

Read Tsutsui, William M. 2004. "Godzilla Mon Amour" and "The Birth of Gojira." In *Godzilla on my Mind: Fifty Years of the King of Monsters*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan

Post a discussion question by Friday at 9am

Listen to Miki Meek's 22-minute radio story "Really Long Distance."

Post a discussion question by Friday at 9am

Watch "Disasters" short video

Post a short response to my prompt by Friday at 9am

#### **Friday, May 19**

Watch *Godzilla*

Take the movie quiz by Monday at 9am

Post a brief question or observation to the movie thoughts board by Monday at 9am

Be sure that you have replied to at least 3 discussion board posts by 5pm

### UNIT 4: FOOD AND DRINK

#### **Monday, May 22**

Read Kushner, Barak. 2012. "Ramen Popular Culture." In *Slurp!: A Social and Culinary History of Ramen, Japan's Favorite Noodle Soup*: Global Oriental Leiden.

Post a discussion question by Tuesday at 9am

Watch "Food" short video

Post a short response to my prompt by Tuesday at 9am

Watch *Tampopo* (CONTENT WARNING: nudity and sexuality)

Take the movie quiz by Monday at 11:59pm

Post a brief question or observation to the movie thoughts board by Tuesday at 9am

### UNIT 5: DEATH AND DYING

#### **Tuesday, May 23**

Read Kawano, Satsuki. 2010. "The Grave-Free Promotion Society" and "Ash Scattering and Family Relations." In *Nature's Embrace: Japan's Aging Urbanites and New Death Rites*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press

Post a discussion question by Wednesday at 9am

Watch "Death and dying" short video

Post a short response to my prompt by Wednesday at 9am

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Watch *Departures*

Take the movie quiz by Tuesday at 11:59pm

Post a brief question or observation to the movie thoughts board by Wednesday at 9am

### **Wednesday, May 24**

Optional Zoom from 10:00am-11:00am to discuss paper ideas as a group

Turn in your first paper by 5pm

## **UNIT 6: THE FAMILY**

### **Thursday, May 25**

Read Goldfarb, Kathryn. 2019. "Beyond Blood Ties: Intimate Kinships in Japanese Foster and Adoptive Care." In *Intimate Japan: Ethnographies of Closeness and Conflict*, edited by Allison Alexy and Emma E. Cook, 181-198. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Post a discussion question by Friday at 9am

Watch "Families" short video

Post a short response to my prompt by Thursday at 9am

### **Friday, May 26**

Watch *Shoplifters*

Take the movie quiz by Tuesday at 9am

Post a brief question or observation to the movie thoughts board by Wednesday at 9am

## **UNIT 7: EDUCATION AND SPORTS**

### **Tuesday, May 30**

Read Cave, Peter. 2004. "Bukatsudō': The Educational Role of Japanese School Clubs." *The Journal of Japanese Studies*: 383-415.

Post a discussion question by Wednesday at 9am

Read William W. Kelly's "Viewing Notes for 'The Learning Machine'"

Post a discussion question by Wednesday at 9am

Watch "Education and Sports" short video

Post a short response to my prompt by Wednesday at 9am

### **Wednesday, May 31**

Watch *High School Baseball*

Take the movie quiz by 11:59pm

Post a brief question or observation to the movie thoughts board by Thursday at 9am

(continued on next page)

Watch *the Learning Machine*

Take the movie quiz by 11:59pm

Post a brief question or observation to the movie thoughts board by Thursday at 9am

## UNIT 8: TYING IT ALL TOGETHER

### **Thursday, June 1**

Read Kato, Norihiko. 2006. "Goodbye Godzilla, Hello Kitty: What Japan's Pop-Culture Products tell us about its Struggles with Defeat, Democratization and Globalization."

*American Interest*, September 1.

Post a discussion question by Wednesday at 9am

Read Murakami, Haruki. 2002. "super-frog saves tokyo." In *after the quake: stories*.

Translated by Jay Rubin. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Post a discussion question by Wednesday at 9am

There is no short lecture video for today, but there is still a final short discussion prompt

Post a short response to this prompt by Friday at 9am

### **Friday, June 2**

Optional Zoom from 10:00am-11:00am to discuss paper ideas as a group

Turn in your final paper by 5pm