

Godzilla and the World: the history of postwar Japan

Syllabus for History 3992
UNO-Japan at Dōshisha, Summer 2024
Class meets Period I (9:00-10:30)

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Through the lens of the Godzilla movies, this course is a survey of postwar and contemporary Japan in global contexts from 1945 to the present.

Objectives

After successfully completing this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the historical narrative of Japan from the end of the Pacific War to the present
- Identify continuities and discontinuities in Japanese society
- Utilize a personal journal to see how the individual experience interacts with the metanarrative
- Compose coherent essays describing Japanese history

Texts

Students will be required to have access to the following texts

Richie, Donald. *The Japan Journals*, 1947-2004, Stone Bridge Press, 2004 (ISBN 978-1880656914)

Articles posted electronically

Writing Assignments

All students will have two writing assignments in the course. Each essay will account for 20% of the course grade.

Assignment 1 (2000 words) – Students will evaluate the movies “Ikiru” produced by the Toho Company (1956), and “Giants and Toys” produced by Daiei Studios (1958) and write an analytical paper describing how these two films are representative of the period they were made in.

Assignment 2 (2000 words) – Students will write an essay utilizing *The Japan Journals* to show how the individual experience intertwines with the metanarrative.

Exams

There is a reading quiz and a final exam. The reading quiz will be worth 10% of your final grade. It will be online with open-book and open-notes. The final will be an essay connecting all the Godzilla movies and will be worth 30% of your final grade.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. Due to the very intense and fast-moving nature of this program, only ONE unexcused absence is permitted. On the second unexcused absence, your participation grade in the course will be reduced by 7%. For each subsequent absence, your participation grade will be reduced an additional 7%. More than five unexcused absences will automatically result in a failing grade for the course.

Participation

It is important to understand, however, that the class is not just about showing up. During the discussions you will have a chance to explore the issues of the class. Don't let uncertainty and the fear of "being wrong" or "sounding stupid" stop you from speaking! Active class participation can take many forms: an informed analysis, a succinct synopsis, a well-timed guess, a directed question, or even a statement of utter confusion—all could inform and clarify difficult issues. Remember, participation also includes respecting your peers and helping to foster an atmosphere conducive to the sharing of ideas. It is likely that you may not agree with everything that is said or discussed in the classroom. No student should hesitate to speak his or her mind, and all comments should be respected, even when challenged. Courteous behavior and responses are expected. Also remember that talking for talking's sake is not useful to anyone. Participation will be graded at the end of the semester and will account for 20% of the course grade.

Student Conduct

Be in class on time. Do not come late, as these distractive disruptions are inconsiderate and time-wasting. Timely arrival to class is also required; repeated tardiness will have an effect on your grade. Sleeping is not permitted in class and it will be treated as an absence.

Students with Disabilities

Students who qualify for services will receive the academic modifications for which they are legally entitled. It is the responsibility of the student to alert the UNO-Japan program before departure if academic modifications are being sought.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic integrity is fundamental to the process of learning and evaluation academic performance. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, plagiarism, tampering with academic records and examinations, falsifying identity, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. Refer to the UNO Judicial Code for further information, which is accessible from: <http://www.studentaffairs.uno.edu/pdfs/AcademicDishonestyPolicy.pdf>

Grading for History 3992

90-100% = A
80-89% = B
70-79% = C
60-69% = D
< 60% = F

Class organization:

Week 1 – online

The Japan Journals Introduction, pp 2-18, 43-46, 48-54

月 - 金 – “Godzilla and the Japanese Nightmare: When Them! Is U.S.” **Reading Quiz Due**

Week 2 –

The Japan Journals pp 79-109

月 - 火 - “Godzilla’s Footprint”

水 - Film: “Gojira” (Toho 1954 Version) first half

木 - Film: “Gojira” (Toho 1954 Version) second half

金 - Kyoto Field Trip

Week 3 –

The Japan Journals pp 113-119, 119-137

月 - 火 – “The Hidden Dimensions of Japanese Administration: Culture and Its Impact”

水 - Film: “Ikiru” first half

木 - Film: “Ikiru” second half **Assignment 1 Due**

Week 4 –

The Japan Journals pp 158-176, 215-225

月 - 火 – “Consumption, Leisure and the Middle Class in Transwar Japan”

水 - Film: “Giants and Toys” first half

木 - Film: “Giants and Toys” second half **Assignment 2 Due**

金 - Osaka Field Trip

Week 5 –

The Japan Journals pp 283-313

月 - 火 – “Godzilla: A Monster in Midtown”

水 - Film: “Godzilla” (Tri Star 1998 Version) first half

木 - Film: “Godzilla” (Tri Star 1998 Version) second half

Week 6 -

月 - 火 – “Debt and Denunciation in Post-Bubble Japan: On the Two Freeters”

水 – Film: “Godzilla vs. Kong” first half **Japan Journals Assignment Due**

木 - Film: “Godzilla vs. Kong” second half **Final Examination**

金 - Nara Field Trip