Creating National Identity in 20th-Century China and Japan

Despite their radically different ideologies and political systems, both China and Japan faced the challenge of defining their national identities in the 20th century world. There were several dimensions to this process. First, China and Japan sought to carve out new roles for themselves within Asia. In addition, they tried to position themselves relative to perceptions of the West. Finally, they attempted to reconcile their national pasts with current identities. Furthermore, within each country, we see different opinions about how to represent the nation. Attempts to define national identity are not purely "historical" phenomena; they continue to shape society and culture in China and Japan—even as they create tensions that trouble regional and international relations today.

Readings
John Dower, War Without Mercy

The above books are available for sale at the bookstore.

Other materials are available through MSE Library Reserves
Recommended and Required Films are on reserve in the AV Center at MSE Library

This class has no prerequisites. You are not expected to have extensive prior knowledge of Chinese or Japanese history. But we will be moving rapidly over a century of history—and covering two countries. You might therefore find it useful or necessary to consult a textbook or two. For background information, relevant chapters of Peter Duus, Modern Japan (2nd edition, 1998), will be available on electronic reserves. You may also wish to consult the relevant chapters of Jonathan Spence, Search for Modern China (2nd edition, 1999, also on electronic reserves).

Because film has reflected and contributed to the formation of national identities in Asia and elsewhere (and because I have found certain movies helpful in thinking about questions related to this course), I have placed a number of films on reserve for optional viewing in conjunction with this class. These optional films are listed in the syllabus at points where they are most relevant. Students are encouraged to watch them as their schedules permit—or even to watch them at their leisure after the semester ends. Tests and papers will only cover films listed as “Required Viewing.”

Useful Websites for students wanting to follow current events in East Asia:
Japan Focus: http://www.japanfocus.org/
SUP China: http://supchina.com/
Asahi Shimbun: http://www.asahi.com/ajw/
China Digital Times http://chinadigitaltimes.net/
Course Objectives:
Students will gain a deeper understanding of key concepts such as nationalism and national identity in historical, regional, and national contexts. They will make use of both primary and secondary readings to develop critical arguments and as they participate in civil and lively class discussions. They will have several formal opportunities to demonstrate mastery of course content and their developing skills as close and careful readers of sources. In order to situate their learning in its geographical context, students will be required to prepare for and pass a simple map quiz.

Grading

Class Participation: 20%
2 Papers (5-6 pp/20% each) 40%
Internet Assignment: 15%
Final Exam 20%
Map Quiz 5%

The class participation grade (20%) will be based on the students’ preparation for and contribution to class discussion. This class will be run as a blended lecture and seminar and students are expected to provide substantial content. To that end, all students are required to complete the assigned readings before scheduled class meetings--and to come to class prepared with thoughtful and thought-provoking discussion questions. Students will submit a thoughtful and thought-provoking question responding to assigned reading at least once per week over the course of the semester. These questions will be used in class—and should thus be submitted via Blackboard in advance of class discussion in order to count (by no later than 9 am). A good question reflects thoughtful engagement with the reading material.

Obviously, students cannot contribute to class discussion if they are absent; consequently, repeated unexcused absences will be reflected in their participation grade.

National identity and nationalism are sensitive topics. We should be prepared to disagree—with a high degree of civility and a willingness to listen to alternative viewpoints. Incivility or disruptiveness will result in removal from the class roster.

This class does not assume any familiarity with the history of East Asia in the twentieth century. Students without any background in Asian Studies may find it helpful to consult the recommended textbook readings. Page numbers are provided to facilitate easy reference. Historical background will be provided during class sessions as well and in chronological handouts where appropriate.

Please Note: Unexcused late papers will be penalized 3 points per day (A becomes A-). In cases of illness, emergency, or deadline conflicts please request an extension from the instructor as early as is feasible. All papers should have page numbers.

*** A Note on Classroom Etiquette: Please turn off all electronic devices, including cellular phones, and shut down non-essential computer programs before the beginning of class. Please arrive punctually and if you must arrive late or depart early, do your best to avoid inconvenience to your fellow students by sitting close to the door! **
The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course, you must be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition. All suspected ethical violations will be reported to Dorothy Sheppard, Associate Dean of Student Life.

Report any violations you witness to the instructor. You may consult the associate dean of students and/or the chairman of the Ethics Board beforehand. See the guide on “Academic Ethics for Undergraduates” and the Ethics Board web site (http://ethics.jhu.edu) for more information.

Class Schedule

1/29  Introduction and Overview—The Useful Past: History and National Identity in East Asia—and beyond

1/31  Theorizing National Identity: What is National? What is Identity? A Roundtable Discussion focused on the following readings:


2/5 Western Imperialism, Regional War and National Identity in Meiji Japan and Qing China


Duus, pp.35-40 (“The Bafuku and the Outside World”)

2/7 Imperial Ritual and National Identity in the late Meiji Era

Reading: Takashi Fujitani, Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan, pp. 105-154.


MAP QUIZ in CLASS!!!

2/9 Optional Discussion session

2/12 Hokkaido as Frontier or Colony

2/14 Japan’s Colonial Empire: Origins, Histories, and Legacies

Takekoshi Yosaburo, "Japanese Rule in Formosa" (1907)
http://books.google.com/books?id=TnkLAAAAIAAJ&pg=PP1#v=onepage&q&f=false


2/19 The Evolution of Chinese Identity in the Early Twentieth Century


2/21 Awakening the Chinese Nation?
Lu Xun, introduction to *A Call to Arms*


First Paper due via TURNITIN--NOON

2/23 Optional discussion session

2/26 Gender, Modernity and National Identities in Pre-War East Asia—Japan
Reading: Tanizaki Junichiro, “Aguri” in *Seven Japanese Tales*, pp.186-204.

Reference: Duus, 195-199


Optional Film: *The Makioka Sisters* (on reserve as “Sasameyuki”)

2/28 Gender, Modernity and National Identities in Pre-War East Asia—China


Reference: Spence, 352-359

3/5 Crucible of National and Political Identities: The Long War against Japanese Aggression


The document from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is cited as: Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Relations of Japan with Manchuria and Mongolia, Document B, Tokyo 1932, pp. 126-129. It was part of a collection of materials justifying Japan’s position in Manchuria written in English by a team at Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs.


Reference: Duus, 200-230, Spence 366-374, 413-419

3/7 The War of Resistance: The Yan’an Way: Lecture by Xiaqian Ji

Reading: Ding Ling, “New Faith” in *Barlow, I Myself am a Woman*, 280-297

Spence, pp. 431-449. (Two sections from chapter 17: “Chongqing and Yan’an, 1938-1941” and “Chongqing and Yan’an in the Widening War”
3/12 Race in the Pacific War: Identities and Atrocities
Reading: Dower, War without Mercy, pp. 3-76, 203-292.

Reference: Duus, 231-250.

3/14 The Occupation and the Rehabilitation of Japanese National Identity

Reference: Duus, 253-290.

3/19-3/25 SPRING BREAK!!

3/26 Atomic Bombs (Remembered)


Recommended Film: Black Rain (Kuroi ame)


Reference: Duus, 291-311, 331-350.10/23


Note: Please think about the chronology of the reading for this week in relation to the reference reading and time-line handout.

“Chairman Mao Thought Illuminates the Whole World” (Peking Review), (1966).

4/4 The Problem of History, or “Alienation” and “Humanism”: Intellectuals Rethink Identity after Mao -- In class viewing of *Deathsong of a River* (River Elegy) –


Reference: Spence, pp. 618-676.
Optional Film: The Yellow Earth (Huang tudi)

4/6 Optional discussion session

4/9 World War II as Current Event in Japan—1980s and 1990s


Sensô: The Japanese Remember the Pacific War (Letters to the Editor of Asahi Shimbun [1986]), ed. Frank Gibney, pp. 65-6, 73-75, 81.


4/11 Patriotic Education after Tiananmen and the New Left

Reading: Zhang Xiaobo and Song Qiang: “China Can Say No to America,” in *New Perspectives Quarterly*, 1996. Can be read on line http://cio.ceu.hu/extreading/CIO/China_can_Say_No.html

Recommended Film: *Gate of Heavenly Peace*
Internet Assignment DUE IN CLASS

4/16 World War II as Current Event in China


**Recommended Film:** *Devils on the Doorstep (Guizi laile)*

4/18 Globalization and Uniqueness—Eating National Identity?


**Recommended Films:** Tampopo (Japan), Jiro Dreams of Sushi (Japan) and Eat, Drink, Man, Woman (Taiwan)

4/20 Optional discussion session

4/23 Yasukuni: Fraught Site of Memory/Identity in Japan and China
Reading:

http://japanfocus.org/-James-Shields/4031


Reference: Duus, 351-368.

4/25 Nationalism and National Identity in Contemporary China—Guest Speaker: Jessica Chen-Weiss

**PAPER #2 Due at NOON on TURNITIN!!!**

5/2 Roundtable Discussion: Reinventing Tradition: National Identity in Twenty-first Century Asia (Submit questions tying together themes of course as whole for class discussion—You may wish to refer to specific or multiple specific readings to help facilitate comparisons)