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# A Social History of Education and Training in Japan

## Description

Japan is now known as a highly educated country with a particularly skilled and well trained work force. It is also known for its so-called "examination hell" in which difficult university entrance examinations play a notable role in selecting future elites. This course documents the development of the contemporary system and places it in comparative perspective by reference to developments in Northern Europe, the US, and China. By using education and training, something found in all modern societies, this course seeks to show what was and is distinctive about Japanese society as well as what it shared and shares with other societies.

## Format

Lectures supplemented by slides and other visual materials.

## Grading and Required Work

Students will be expected to write one short paper on some aspect of Japanese training or education in international perspective, preferably in comparison with another Asian nation. There will be a final examination for the course based on the lectures.

## Text

## Readings

Readings for specific lecture topics will be drawn from the attached bibliography.

## Lecture Topics

- u Basic concepts in the history and sociology of education
- u Education and training in Japan before the Tokugawa
- u Apprenticeship in early modern Japan and Europe
- u The samurai as scholar - intellectual life in Tokugawa Japan
- u Learning from the barbarians - Western studies before the opening of Japan
- u Academies, academics, and revolution - merit as ideology in Tokugawa Japan
- u Honoured foreigners and the introduction of Western knowledge
- u Self-made Victorians; Self-Made Confucians - the remarkable reception of Samuel Smiles

in Japan

- u The End of Meiji and the Beginning of the Examination Hell
- u The industrial revolution in Japan - motivation and mobility among industrial workers
- u Salaried men and career women - education and the rise of the new middle class in interwar Japan
- u Putting academic theory into practice - Manchuria as an academic and intellectual frontier
- u Education in the service of militarism - myths and realities concerning education and militarism
- u Marxist academics and the rise of militarism and fascism - hapless victims or clumsy opportunists?
- u The Japanese military as a scholastic meritocracy - "prize students" lead Japan to defeat
- u More than just shouting banzai - the knowledge and skills legacy of the Pacific War
- u What, if anything, did the American Occupation actually do to Japanese education?
- u Mass higher education and the generalization of the "examination hell"

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