

AC190, Section 29

From Perry to Pokemon: Japan in the United States, the United States in Japan
Spring 2003

Susan Smulyan
Department of American Civilization
82 Waterman Street
863-1694
Susan_Smulyan@brown.edu

Office Hours: Wednesday, 3-5 and by appointment

Description

This course traces the cultural interactions between Japan and the United States beginning with Matthew Perry's 1854 voyage. Topics include Japanese scrolls depicting Perry's arrival; paintings, architecture and musical forms that traveled between the two countries; the U.S. occupation of Japan after World War II; the popularity of anime and other Japanese films in the U.S.; and the importance of American popular culture in post-war Japan.

Books available for purchase at Brown Bookstore

Warren I. Cohen, The Asian American Century

William Horsley, The Japan Idea: Art and Life in Victorian America

Monica Soane, Nisei Daughter

John Dower, Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II

E. Taylor Atkins, Blue Nippon: Authenticating Jazz in Japan

Aviad E. Raz, Riding the Black Ship: Japan and Tokyo Disneyland

Karen Kelsky, Women on the Verge: Japanese Women, Western Dreams

OR

Cathy Davidson, 36 Views of Mount Fuji

Antonia Levi, Samurai from Outer Space: Understanding Japanese Animation

Optional

Jeff Yang, Dina Gan, Terry Hong, Eastern Standard Time : A Guide to Asian Influence on American Culture from Astro Boy to Zen Buddhism

Reading Packet, Available at Allegra Copy, corner Waterman and Thayer

*starred readings are in the packet

Weekly Readings

January 27: Intro (Readings Handed out in Class)

Kubo Masakazu, "Why Pokemon Was Successful in American," Japan Echo 27 (April, 2000): 59-62.

Bruce Westbrook, "'The First Movie' may be invincible," Houston Chronicle, 10 November 1999, 1.

February 3: Overview

Warren I. Cohen, The Asian American Century (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2002).

February 10: Perry Comes to Japan (**MEET AT THE JOHN HAY LIBRARY**)

*Peter Booth Wiley, Yankees in the Land of the Gods: Commodore Perry and the Opening of Japan (New York: Penguin, 1991):223-325.

*Robert Tomes, The Americans in Japan: An Abridgment of the Government Narrative of the U.S. Expedition to Japan, under Commodore Perry (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1857), 148-169; 213-263.

*Peter Duus, The Japanese Discovery of America: A Brief History with Documents (Boston: Bedford Books, 1997),1-42; 90-116; 210-214.

*Steve Lubar, "In the Footsteps of Perry: The Smithsonian Goes to Japan," Public Historian 17 (1995): 25-59.

February 24: Imperialism

Selections from:

*James C. Thomson, Jr., et. al., Sentimental Imperialists: The American Experience in East Asia (New York: Harper & Row, 1981), 1-19; 61-78; 134-161.

*Chalmers Johnson, Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2000), x-xix; 3-64; 175-192.

March 3: Art

William Horsley, The Japan Idea: Art and Life in Victorian America (Hartford, Ct.: The Wadsworth Atheneum, 1990).

March 10: Japanese-Americans/ Discuss final paper topics

Monica Soane, Nisei Daughter (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1957).

March 17: WWII/Occupation

John Dower, Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II (New York: The New Press, 1999).

March 31: Music

E. Taylor Atkins, Blue Nippon: Authenticating Jazz in Japan (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2001)

April 7: Discussion of Final papers/ presentation of paper prospectus/ Disney

Aviad E. Raz, Riding the Black Ship: Japan and Tokyo Disneyland (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999).

April 14: American Women want to be Japanese and vice versa

Karen Kelsky, Women on the Verge: Japanese Women, Western Dreams (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2001).

OR

Cathy Davidson, 36 Views of Mount Fuji (New York: Plume Book, 1993).

April 21: Anime

Antonia Levi, Samurai from Outer Space: Understanding Japanese Animation (New York: Open Court Publishing, 1996).

Requirements:

Short paper, to be used on web site about Perry Scroll, 300-500 words – due **Friday, February 28th**; comment on each other's papers, due **Friday, March 7**; rewritten version due **Friday, March 14**, 20%

Lead class; prepare discussion questions; arrange field trip; and/or locate interesting materials; actively engage in weekly seminar, 10%

Research Paper Proposal, 3-5 pages, outlining topic, evidence, method, and potential thesis, **due Monday, April 7**, 10%

Research Paper, due **Monday, May 12**, 50%