



HIS 4935-002: Senior Seminar

Japanese Imperialism & War. 1868-1945

Class Times/Location: T, 9:00 a.m.-11:45 a.m. in Bellamy 421

Professor: Annika A. Culver, Ph.D., Professor of East Asian History;
Scholar, US-Japan Network for the Future, Cohort II.

Email: aculver@fsu.edu

COURSE OBJECTIVES: This hands-on senior seminar course teaches history majors how to engage the tools of the historian's trade to approach both primary and secondary materials, and begin to think like a scholar while learning how to write as a historian. Using the platform of imperialism and war in Japanese history, we will also cover influential philosophies, prominent historians in the past, varieties of history, approaches and disciplines, and skills and techniques. The course breaks down research into manageable parts to allow students to "discover" processes that work for them, which culminate in a research paper in a topic of interest. Sections focus on brainstorming ideas, creating manageable topics, crafting arguments, compiling sources, organizing ideas and notes, proper citation methods, bibliography forms, creating outlines for a paper, organizing sub-sections in papers, and polishing final drafts. This class involves two library tutorials, one on web-based library databases and another on material objects as source materials (Japanese wartime accouterments from Institute on World War II and the Human Experience collections), and a presentation on the final product and the process towards it.

TOPICS: We will examine imperialism as a modernizing force in the mid-Meiji period (1868-1912), and investigate how Japan's possession of an ever-expanding empire bolstered ideological premises of nationalistic pride and domestic self-defense. Themes of war and perceptions of military power will be highlighted as we look at Japan's domestic and foreign struggles from the 1870s until the nation's defeat in WWII. This course also investigates the role of women in constructing the nation-state from the Meiji period into wartime, supporting (or contesting) the nation's *ryosai kenbo* [good wife, wise mother] ideology by engaging in labor, political participation, and patriotic activities. We also look at how Japanese imperialism and the nation-state's organization of colonies in East Asia accelerated exchanges of goods, peoples, and ideas throughout the Japanese empire as it influenced the politics and culture of the imperial capital, Tokyo. We will read a textbook, excerpts from recent books in Japanese studies, and scholarly articles while observing the aesthetics of urban spaces influenced by the cosmopolitanism of empire in interdisciplinary materials such as photographs, film, propaganda posters, and maps.