1. Course description

World War II (1939-1945) was unprecedented in its global scope, its mobilization of and impact on civilians, and its destructiveness. This conflict transformed the technologies and organization of warfare and ushered in a new era of international politics defined by powerful ideological rifts and the threat of nuclear war. From the perspective of many in Asia, the outbreak of WWII was inseparable from earlier trends surrounding Japan’s stunningly successful industrialization and the country’s expanding political and economic influence over other societies in East Asia and Southeast Asia. For Japanese, Chinese, Koreans, and others, WWII was thus connected to deeper conflicts and tensions of modernity, colonialism, race, and pan-Asian ideology.

In this graduate reading seminar, we will read journal articles and books that have transformed scholarly understandings of the contexts, meaning, and consequences of WWII as it unfolded in Asia and globally. Some of the themes that we will explore include the rise and decline of empires; the social, political, and ideological dimensions of war; and critical approaches to the study of race, ethnicity, and identity as these informed the history of WWII. We will also consider how the historical significance of WWII in Asia has been negotiated in public memory.

2. Learning goals

By the end of this course students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate in class and through their writing an understanding of the historical origins, course, and consequences of WWII, understood as a global war which was inseparable from regional conflicts and tensions, both in Europe and Asia. Students will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of WWII not simply as a series of diplomatic, political, and military events, but as a complex historical process touching on questions of ideology, everyday life, and other areas of society and culture.

2. Demonstrate in class and through their writing an understanding of how scholars have studied WWII in Asia (and globally) and interpreted its historical significance. Specifically, students will be expected to demonstrate the ability to identify the thesis or main arguments of scholarly articles and books, put different scholars into dialogue with
each other, and critically think about the approaches, concepts, and debates that inform the study of history as well as the primary sources that are used.

3. Produce essays that demonstrate mastery of the conventions of academic scholarship and are persuasive in their argumentation and analysis.

3. Assignments and grading

Class participation – 25%
Two presentations on class readings – 15%
Short paper (5-6 pages) – 20%
Final paper (12-15 pages) – 40%

1. Class participation (25%). Because this is a discussion-based class it is essential that everyone actively participates in every single class session. This means asking questions when something is unclear, engaging with your classmates’ ideas, being respectful when doing so, and contributing as much as you can to the intellectual atmosphere of the class. Because our class only meets once a week it is crucial that you attend every single class session.

2. Two presentations on class readings (15% total). Over the semester you will give two ~8 minute presentations on assigned readings. We will arrange the schedule of presentations at the start of the semester. Each presentation must contain a succinct overview of the following: (1) the main argument(s) of the reading, (2) the major historiographical concerns, (3) a critical assessment of the reading (Were you convinced by the argument/evidence? Why or why not?), and (4) questions for further discussion.

3. Short paper, 5-6 pages (20%): For this paper, I would like you to take a look at the assigned readings for the first five weeks of class (up to and including the February 20th class session) and choose two class sessions that have topics and readings that particularly interest you. For the paper I would like you to identify a common theme or question that emerges from the assigned readings from these two class sessions and write a 5-6 page paper that puts the authors into conversation with each other around this topic. No outside research or reading should be done. I would like you to be creative in drawing connections between weeks and readings and will grade the paper in part on how well it goes beyond what we have discussed in class. I would also like to see you discuss similarities and differences in the ways that the authors address the issue that you have identified. We will discuss the paper assignment, writing strategies, as well as my expectations for the paper in class.

4. Final paper, 12-15 pages (40%): For this assignment, you will write a 12-15 page paper that explores a larger question or issue of your choosing pertaining to World War II in Asia. You can choose the topic and approach, but you must do the following: (1) identify a question of historical significance on the basis of the readings that we have done over the semester, which should be the only sources used in the paper. (2) Include some discussion of the different approaches which scholars have used to study the history of World War II in Asia – in other words, questions of historiography. We will
discuss these approaches in class and by the time that you write the paper you will have a good sense of what they are and how they can inform your own work. We will spend time discussing this assignment in class and will also go over the feedback which I give you on your first paper, in preparation for writing this paper.

4. Course readings

Weekly reading assignments will include either substantial parts of a single book or several journal articles and book chapters. All readings will be posted on Canvas, except for the following books:


Both of these books are available for free as e-books through the Rutgers Libraries website. They can also be purchased from the campus bookstore.

5. Academic integrity

Academic dishonesty in this class will not be tolerated. Period. This includes plagiarism, cheating, and any other behavior described in the Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy. For this reason it is absolutely crucial that you familiarize yourself with this policy, which describes the actions that will be counted as violations of academic integrity: [http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/)

You must include the following Rutgers Honor Code Pledge statement on every assignment that you turn in: “On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this assignment. (Name) (Signature – typing your name is fine) (Date)”.

If anyone has any questions at all about this policy, what counts as a violation of academic integrity, or even simply how to cite sources on a paper (a topic that we will cover in class), I am always willing to discuss these issues with you. Students who plagiarize assignments or otherwise violate academic integrity will receive serious penalties, ranging from a failing grade in the class to suspension.

6. Accommodations and support

Rutgers University Newark (RU-N) is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students and the University as a whole. RU-N has identified the following resources to further the mission of access and support:
For Individuals with Disabilities: The Office of Disability Services (ODS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter barriers due to disability. Once a student has completed the ODS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and reasonable accommodations are determined to be necessary and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be provided. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at ods.rutgers.edu. Contact ODS at (973)353-5375 or via email at ods@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Individuals who are Pregnant: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy. Students may contact the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance at (973) 353-1906 or via email at TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Absence Verification: The Office of the Dean of Students can provide assistance for absences related to religious observance, emergency or unavoidable conflict (e.g., illness, personal or family emergency, etc.). Students should refer to University Policy 10.2.7 for information about expectations and responsibilities. The Office of the Dean of Students can be contacted by calling (973) 353-5063 or emailing deanofstudents@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Individuals with temporary conditions/injuries: The Office of the Dean of Students can assist students who are experiencing a temporary condition or injury (e.g., broken or sprained limbs, concussions, or recovery from surgery). Students experiencing a temporary condition or injury should submit a request using the following link: https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu.

For English as a Second Language (ESL): The Program in American Language Studies (PALS) can support students experiencing difficulty in courses due to English as a Second Language (ESL) and can be reached by emailing PALS@newark.rutgers.edu to discuss potential supports.

For Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance can assist students who are experiencing any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking. Students can report an incident to the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance by calling (973) 353-1906 or emailing TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu. Incidents may also be reported by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm. For more information, students should refer to the University’s Student Policy Prohibiting Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence, Relationship Violence, Stalking and Related Misconduct located at http://compliance.rutgers.edu/title-ix/about-title-ix/title-ix-policies/.

For support related to interpersonal violence: The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance can provide any student with confidential support. The office is a confidential resource and does not have an obligation to report information to the University’s Title IX Coordinator. Students can contact the office by calling (973) 353-
1918 or emailing run.vpva@rutgers.edu. There is also a confidential text-based line available to students; students can text (973) 339-0734 for support.

**For Crisis and Concerns:** The Campus Awareness Response and Education (CARE) Team works with students in crisis to develop a support plan to address personal situations that might impact their academic performance. Students, faculty and staff may contact the CARE Team by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNCARE or emailing careteam@rutgers.edu.

**For Stress, Worry, or Concerns about Well-being:** The Counseling Center has confidential therapists available to support students. Students should reach out to the Counseling Center to schedule an appointment: counseling@newark.rutgers.edu or (973) 353-5805. If you are not quite ready to make an appointment with a therapist but are interested in self-help, check out TAO at Rutgers-Newark for an easy, web-based approach to self-care and support: https://tinyurl.com/RUN-TAO.

**For emergencies,** call 911 or contact Rutgers University Police Department (RUPD) by calling (973) 353-5111.

**Some technology resources that might be useful:**
- Link to RU-N “Technology LaunchPad”: https://mytech.newark.rutgers.edu/tp
- Rutgers-Newark Tech Support: https://mytech.newark.rutgers.edu/techsupport

7. **Schedule**

**Jan. 23** Welcome to World War II in Asia!
- Introduction/Overview of class

**Jan. 30** Long-Term Contexts: The Collapse of the Qing and the Rise of Japan
- Phyllis Birnbaum. _Manchu Princess, Japanese Spy: The Story of Kawashima Yoshiko, the Cross-Dressing Spy Who Commanded Her Own Army_. Columbia University Press, 2015. We will read most of the book – pages TBA.

**Feb. 6** Long-Term Contexts: Colonialism, Scientific Racism, and Pan-Asianism
Feb. 13  Paths to Global War: WWI to 1930s


Feb. 20  Paths to Global War: 1930s to Pearl Harbor


Feb. 27  Life in Wartime China


Paper #1 Due – Friday March 3rd, 11:59pm

Mar. 6  US-China Wartime Alliance in History and Memory


SPRING RECESS

Mar. 20  Mobilizing for War within Japan’s Empire

• Takashi Fujitani. Race for Empire: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans during World War II. University of California Press, 2013, 1-77.

**Mar. 27  War and Race: American Perspectives**

• Fujitani, *Race for Empire*, 78-205.

**Apr. 3  Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere**

• Fujitani, *Race for Empire*, 299-334.

**Apr. 10  War in the Pacific and the US Atomic Bombings of Japan in Public Memory**

• Dower, *War Without Mercy*, 3-14, 33-73.

**Apr. 17  Post-War Mobility and Displacement**


**Apr. 24  Japanese Military Sexual Slavery in Scholarship and Public Memory**

May 1       Final Discussion

- Reading TBA
- Review your notes from the semester and be prepared to discuss overarching themes from the class.

**Paper #2 Due Date TBA**