Since myth is usually construed as a form of fabrication and history is typically understood as a record of facts, the term “mythical histories” may seem like an oxymoron. The term recognizes, however, the most pervasive “fact” about history: that the past and the written record of it is used to explain, justify, or critique the state of things in the historian’s (or reader’s) own time. Such uses of the past are rarely innocent; history is rarely written and read without motives that are external to the historical facts themselves. The pervasive use of history in this way is to “mythologize” the past. This does not mean that we can only write and read history tendentiously. Nor does it mean that we, as readers of history, should reject historical accounts as merely biased renderings of objective historical truths. To the contrary, this poses an interesting challenge for us to read histories from a variety of perspectives in order to uncover the manifold ways that the past continually resonates in the present: in the present of the writers of history as well as the readers of it.

1. Introduction (1/17)

2. Myth & History (1/24)
Stefan Tanaka, Japan’s Orient: Rendering Pasts into History, 1-103
* précis (2 pp., or approx. 600 words; send to me as an email attachment by 10:00 AM)

Further Readings:

3. Origins: China (1/31)
“Sheng min” 生民, Book of Odes, 198-202 (Bernhard Kalgren trans.)
K.C. Chang, Art, Myth, and Ritual, 9-55
Conrad Schirokauer, A Brief History of Chinese and Japanese Civilizations, 4-26

Further Readings:
Wu Hung, “Ancient Sovereigns,” The Wu-liang Shrine, 244-52
Richard Strassberg, A Chinese Bestiary: Strange Creatures from the Guideways Through Mountains and Seas

4. Origins: Japan (2/7)
Record of Ancient Matters (Kojiki 故事記), 37-92
Chronicles of Japan (Nihonshugi 日本書記), 1-63
Sources of Japanese Tradition, 12-33
Conrad Schirokauer, A Brief History of Chinese and Japanese Civilizations, 130-154

Further Readings:
Anne Birrell, Chinese Mythology: An Introduction

5. The Sovereign (2/14)
China: Son of Heaven 天子, Mandate of Heaven 天命, Legitimate Succession 正統
Yang Wei-chen (1296-1370), “Polemics on Legitimate Succession,” 51-72
Richard L. Davis, “Historiography as Politics in Yang Wei-chen’s ‘Polemics on Legitimate Succession’,” 33-51
* précis
Chan Hok-lam, Legitimation in Imperial China: Discussions Under the Jurchen Chin Dynasty (1115-1234), 3-48

Japan: Divine Emperor 天皇
Kitabatake Chikafusa (1293-1354), A Chronicle of Gods and Sovereigns 神皇正統記, 1-41, 49-129

Further reading:
6. Truth (2/21)

Chu Hsi (1130-1200), *Reflections of Things as Hand*, 279-308
Wing-tsit Chan, “Chu Hsi’s Completion of Neo-Confucianism,” 103-138
Thomas A. Wilson, *Genealogy of the Way*, 72-111
Chang Hsiêh-ch’êng (1738-1801), “On the Tao”
Tetsuo Najita, “Interpreting the Historicism of Ogyû Sorai,” *Tokugawa Political Writings*, xiii-liv

Further reading:
Liu Shu-hsien, “The Problem of Orthodoxy in Chu Hsi’s Philosophy,” *Chu Hsi and Neo-Confucianism*, 437-460
David S. Nivison, “History and the Tao,” *The Life and Thought of Chang Hsiêh-ch’êng*
Herman Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology: Early Constructs, 1570-1680*, 3-62
Peter Nosco, “Neo-Confucianism and Tokugawa Discourse,” *Confucianism and Tokugawa Culture*, 3-26

7. Student planning session (2/28)

(1) description of topic and central problem; (2) historical background to topic & problem; (3) statement of interpretation, thesis; (4) plan for session

8. Geography (3/7)

Carol Gluck, “The Invention of Edo,” *Mirror of Modernity*

Further Readings:
Hashimoto Mitsuru, “Chihô: Yanagita Kunio’s ‘Japan,’” *Mirror of Modernity*
Partha Chaterjee, “Whose Imagined Community?,” *The Nation and Its Fragments*, 3-13


Julia Thomas, “Naturalizing Nationhood: Ideology and Practice in Early Twentieth-Century Japan,” *Japan’s Competing Modernities*, 114-32
Kevin Doak, “Culture, Ethnicity, and the State in Early Twentieth-Century Japan,” *Japan’s Competing Modernities: Issues in Culture and Democracy, 1900-1930*, 181-205

Further Readings:
James Ketelaar, *Of Heretics and Martyrs*, 3-135
Theresa M. Grew, *Construction of Ethnicity and Minorities in Japan: An Examination of Nation-building and*
the Japanese Myth of Homogeneity
Dipesh Chakrabarty, “Afterword: Revisiting the Tradition/Modernity Binary,” Mirror of Modernity

10. Colonialism & Empire (4/4)
Louise Young, “Colonizing Manchuria: The Making of an Imperial Myth,” Mirror of Modernity
Tomiyama Ichirô, “Colonialism and the Sciences of the Tropical Zone: The Academic Analysis of Difference in ‘the Island Peoples,’” positions 3 (Fall 1995) 2: 367-391

Further readings:
Prasenjit Duara, Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern
Hyun Sook Kim, “History and Memory: The ‘Comfort Women’ Controversy,” positions: East Asia Critique 5 (Spring 1997) 1
Sean Reedy, Mechanisms of State Control: An Historical Study of the Treatment of the Pacific War in Japanese High School History Textbooks from 1945 to 1995
Peter Duus, The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895-1937
Ramon Myers, The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895-1945
Bruce Cumings, Japanese Colonialization in Korea: A Comparative Perspective

11. Women, Gender, & Sexuality (4/11)
Hosoi Heishu, “A Sermon,” 400-413
Miriam Silverberg, “The Cafe Waitress Serving Modern Japan,” Mirror of Modernity
Sabine Frühstück, “Managing the Truth of Sex in Imperial Japan,” JAS 59 (May 2000) 2: 332-58
Jennifer Robertson, Takarazuka: Sexual Politics and Popular Culture in Modern Japan

Further readings:
Rayna Rapp, “Gender and Class: An Archaeology of Knowledge Concerning the Origin of the State,” 309-316
Pan Chao, “Lessons for Women,” 82-99
Susan Mann, “‘Fuxue’ (Women’s Learning) by Zhang Xuecheng (1738-1801): China’s First History of Women’s Culture,” Late Imperial China 13 (June 1992) 1: 40-62
Tsuneo Watanabe and Jun’ichi Iwata, The Love of the Samurai: A Thousand Years of Japanese Homosexuality
Mishima Yukio, Confessions of a Mask

12. paper sessions (4/18)
*draft of paper due

13-14. Student presentations (4/25-5/2)
*final version of paper due on May 5

final course grade determined on the basis of the following:
participation 30%
précis (two assigned; one of student’s choice) 30%
final projects 40% (draft, final version, presentation)