In August 1945, Japan was a devastated country—its cities burned, its people starving, its military and government in surrender. World War II was over. The occupation had begun. What sort of society emerged from the cooperation and conflict between occupiers and occupied?

The course focuses first on key issues in Japanese history, like the fate of the emperor, constitutional revision, and the emancipation of women. The course then zooms out for a wider perspective of the collapse of Japanese empire and the rise of American empire in Asia, and considers the long-term legacy of the occupation for Japan and the world.