

ANTY242D Contemporary Japan

Fall 012, Montana State University
MW 1:10-2:00pm (WIL1122) and Online

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Course Description

Welcome to ANTY242D, Contemporary Japan! This course is offered as a hybrid course combining online and face-to-face instructions. Mostly we meet once a week on Wednesdays, while there are occasional dates that we will meet on Mondays to watch films. Pay close attention to the course schedule on this syllabus, and the announcements on D2L. Because the online component of the course is extremely important, I expect you to check in D2L every day during the semester, so that you can catch up with the progress of the online component of the course. It is a 3 credit course and requires 9-12 hours a week, or more depending on your own pace of studying, reading and writing.

This course introduces students to major political, economic, social and cultural issues in contemporary Japanese society. While covering various issues as an introductory course on Japanese society and culture, we will pay particularly close attention to the recent disaster in Japan that began on March 11, 2011: the Tohoku earthquake, tsunami and major accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, the impact of which is continuing to unfold. This series of catastrophic events has had major impacts on the direction of Japanese society and the people living there. Because of the nature of this course is to focus on the “contemporary,” this year, our major focus will be on various issues relevant to this recent series of event. Specifically, we will spend significant time discussing issues concerning the environment, natural disasters, nuclear power, the economy, the rural/urban divide, labor, and so forth.

In order to discuss contemporary social issues, it is necessary to gain a historical understanding of these matters. Therefore, this class also contains an overview of the political and socio-cultural history of Japan in the post-war period. While discussing mainstream values and dominant ideologies prevalent in contemporary Japan, a particular focus will be on the diversity in Japan in terms of race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, urban/suburban/rural communities, and so on. We will critically examine disparities and discrimination against minorities and disadvantaged populations in Japan, and their resistance to such treatment. For example, the situations of ethnic minority populations (such as *zainichi* Koreans and Chinese, Japanese Brazilians, the Ainu and Okinawans, among others), *burakumin*, day laborers, recent migrants to Japan, *hibakusha* (A-bomb survivors, and the word now may include the residents near Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant), the so-called “lost generation” youths, girls and women, temp workers and the unemployed in a troubled economy, will be discussed in detail. At the same time, the still ongoing legacy of World War II, re-emerging nationalism, and the backlash against the

ideas and institutions that supported diversity in Japan will be investigated.

In order to reflect the ongoing political, economic, and socio-cultural situations in contemporary Japan, material to be covered in this course varies from year to year; as already mentioned, this year's major focus will be on the ongoing impact of the recent earthquake and the accident at the nuclear power plant.

Learning Outcomes

- Demonstrate an introductory knowledge on post-WWII Japanese society
- Demonstrate an introductory understanding of contemporary politics, economy, society and culture of Japan.
- Demonstrate a critical understanding of diversity within Japan.
- Understand the historical and contemporary positioning of Japan in the world and its relation with the United States.
- Develop a skill to critically assess the media and online information on contemporary Japan.

Course Materials

Books:

- Kingston, Jeff. (2010) *Contemporary Japan: History, Politics, and Social Change since the 1980s*, Wiley-Blackwell, ISBN 1405191937
- Murakami, Haruki (2003). *After the Quake* Vintage, ISBN 0375713271
- Oyama, Shiro (2005) *A Man With No Talents: Memoirs of a Tokyo Day Laborer*, Cornell University Press, ISBN 080144375X
- Kouno, Fumiyo. (2009) *Town of Evening Calm, Country of Cherry Blossoms*, Last Gasp, ISBN 0801488087
- Roth, Joshua (2002) *Brokered Homeland: Japanese Brazilian Migrants in Japan: History, Politics, and Social Change since the 1980s*. Cornell University Press, ISBN 1405191937

All the books can be purchased at the MSU bookstore, and are on reserve at the library. Kingston is available as a kindle version, too.

Articles:

Articles can be downloaded/are linked from D2L. I would also like to utilize a lot of web-based information for the instruction of this course, due to the “contemporary” nature of the materials that we deal with.

Films:

You are required to watch required films outside of the class meeting times. Make sure to check out the films either from the library reserve, Netflix or a local video store before the date designated on the course schedule. The films are the required element for the course. Some films will be shown during class meeting times.

Films that you are required to watch *at home*.

- Stephen Okazaki, *White Lights, Black Rain* (2007) 86 min.
- Masato Harada, *Bounce Ko-gals* (1997) 110 min.

In-class Films

- *Campaign*
- *Fukushima Never Again*
- *Sour Strawberries*

There will be other online videos that you are required to watch. Follow the D2L on further information.

Warning: *This class includes readings, films and videos depicting visual images of violence, bodily injuries and diseases. We will also have discussion on controversial issues, such as Atomic bombs and sex work. If you are not comfortable with the materials, consider not taking the course.*

Course Resources:

D2L is the Learning Management System that we will use for our course. You can login to D2L at www.montana.edu

For help with D2L, visit http://eu.montana.edu/d2l/help/learner_help/

Have access to Microsoft Word as I would like you to submit your essay assignments in .doc or .docx files. When you submit assignments, use the following format: assignmentname.yourlastname.docx (e.g. essay1.yamaguchi.docx), or assignmentname.yourgrouppname.docx

Course Activities:

Instructor Presentations

Most weeks there will be an introductory Instructor presentation posted on Sundays on camtasia relay or in text, posted onto D2L, related to the course material.

Face-to-face Class Meetings:

Participation in face-to-face meetings is a must, due to the limited number of face-to-face meetings. We will mostly meet on Wednesdays, and occasionally on Mondays. Missing classes will reflect on your final grade. You are required to participate in the class discussion actively and thoughtfully. Your participation in discussion will be evaluated.

Online Discussions:

In order to earn the Discussion Points, **you must post one message and two replies (where you reply to someone else's message) for each Discussion Topic.** Usually you are required to

post **two discussion posts per week**. There are individual and group assignments that you are required to submit online. Each topic is closed at the end of the following week (Friday).

Grading Criteria:

Students' grades will be evaluated based on both face-to-face and online components of the course.

- **In-class Participation: 70 points**
- **D2L Discussion Board: 120 points**
 - News Postings (at least 7 posts per semester for different weeks, with a short summary and commentary for each post.) Extra credits could be earned if you post more than the required number, with good summaries and commentaries.)
 - Discussion on the course materials
 - Images of “Contemporary Japan” Journals—What are your images of “contemporary Japanese society”? How were those images formed? How and why have your thoughts changed since last time you wrote in the journal? Write two journal entries over the course of the semester at the beginning and the end)
- **Quizzes: short answers: 50 points**
- **Essays: 90 points**
- **Small Group Projects: 80 points**
 - a. Group on Politics
 - b. Group on Minamata
 - c. Education
 - d. Fukushima
- **Course Project: 90 points**

Total: 500 points

A 94-100 percent
A- 90-93 percent
B+ 87-89 percent
B 83-86 percent
B- 80-82 percent
C+ 77-79 percent

C 73-76 percent
C- 70-72 percent
D+ 67-69 percent
D 63-66 percent
D- 60-62 percent
F 0 - 60 percent

Note: I may alter parts of this syllabus as the term progresses. In order to keep up with the changes, please visit D2L frequently to get announcements.

Course Policies

Instructor Feedback/Communication

I will be reading the Discussion Boards and replying to messages occasionally. You will receive specific feedback on your Assignments in the form of text comments appended to your electronic submissions.

I will use the News tool in D2L to communicate changes to the course and other course information.

I will contact individual students via D2L email.

Late Work

Late work due to procrastination will not be accepted. Late work due to legitimate emergency may be accepted.

If you experience a legitimate emergency (according to my standards) that will prevent you from completing required coursework on time, I expect you to communicate with me at the earliest reasonable opportunity. Please state the nature of the emergency, and when you expect to turn in the coursework.

The due date and time associated with each quiz, discussion, exam and assignment are stated clearly in the Course Schedule.

Writing

Writing is an integral part of this class, and in the discipline of anthropology. The quality of writing will be taken account for the evaluation of your papers. If you have trouble in writing, please visit Writing Center so that you can submit good quality writing for your assignments.

D2L

I will use internet resources a lot in this class, especially, to make announcements, post relevant information, and facilitate discussion. Make sure you check the D2L site every day during the semester.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is illegal. Even if you are borrowing someone else's idea and putting in into your own words, you are required to cite that source. Visit http://www.plagiarism.org/learning_center/what_is_citation.html, if you are uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism or other forms of inappropriate academic conduct. Also see the site that describes the University's procedures for handling such cases:

http://www2.montana.edu/policy/student_conduct/cg400.html

Plagiarized essays (or segments thereof) will receive an "F" (0% credit) for the entire assignment and, if the offense is judged by the anthropology faculty to be intentional, the student may be sent to the academic review board. The MSU academic review board has the power to suspend or expel a student who is found

guilty of plagiarism.

Note: I may alter parts of this syllabus as the term progresses. In fact, it is highly likely that some changes will be made to the syllabus in the middle of the term after I have gotten to know you better. In order to keep up with the changes, please visit D2L (and the class blog) frequently to get announcements.

Accommodations for Disabilities

If you have a documented disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation(s), you are encouraged to contact me and Disabled Student Services (DSS) as soon as possible. You can find additional information relating to accommodations provided through DSS at www.montana.edu/wwwres.