

## ANTY242D Contemporary Japan

Fall 2011, Montana State University  
TR14:10-15:25  
WIL1122

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### Course Description

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. Students from any academic fields are welcome to take the course, due to the highly interdisciplinary content of the class.

## Course Materials

### Books:

Murakami, Haruki. *After the Quake*

Oyama, Shiro. *A Man With No Talents: Memoirs of a Tokyo Day Laborer*

Kouno, Fumiyo. *Town of Evening Calm, Country of Cherry Blossoms*

Roth, Joshua. *Brokered Homeland: Japanese Brazilian Migrants in Japan*

All the books except for Kouno are on reserve at the library.

### 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.

Please check the two websites frequently for up-to-date information on Japan.

- The Atomic Age blog <http://lucian.uchicago.edu/blogs/atomicage/>
- Japan Focus <http://japanfocus.org/home>

## Evaluation:

Students’ grades will be evaluated based on participation, journals, a quiz, weekly discussion questions, presentations, a group paper and a media anthropology paper, and two examinations.

- **Journals: 30 points**  
Images of “Contemporary Japan” Journal—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 three journal entries over the course of the semester (#1- at the beginning, #2- mid to late October, #3 - at the end of the class). One page for each journal entry.
- **Quiz on basic facts on Japan: 10 points**
- **D2L Participation (Discussion Questions, film reactions): 50 points**  
Formulate one question relating to the readings for the day for posting by 10 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays on the appropriate discussion board on D2L (You are, of course, welcome and encouraged to comment on each others’ questions and comments, and post reflections on class discussion in the same space.) Post your reaction to the films shown for the class as instructed.
- **Participation: 30 points**
- **Presentations: 30 points**
- **Papers: 150 points**
  - a. LEAPer interview group paper 50 points
  - b. Media Anthropology Paper 100 points
- **Two Examinations (Essay-style, 20% each): 100 points each=200 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

## **Films:**

Some of the required films will be shown outside of the class meeting times, especially for feature-length films. If you cannot make those times, make sure to check out the films either from the library or from me and watch them for classroom discussion. The films are the required element for the course and will be covered in the exams. Some films will be shown during class meeting times.

**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.

## **Schedule**

Aug 30 (Tue) Introduction to the course - 3.11 and Beyond

### Foundations of “Post-war” Japan

Sep 1 (Thu) The Post-War System and Politics

- 1946 Constitution of Japan
- McCormack, Ch 1

In-class Film: *Campaign* (2007)  
***Journal #1 Due (post it onto D2L)***

***From 4pm~ Asian Studies Information Session (free pizza!)***

Sep 6 (Tue) Politics

- McCormack, *The Client State*, Chap 3 and 9 (D2L)  
*Quiz on basic facts about Japan*  
*Short presentation on major political parties in Japan*

### Education

Sep 8 (Thu) Foundations of Educational System in Japan

- Sugimoto, Yoshio. “Diversity and Unity in Education” in *An Introduction to Japanese Society*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Cambridge U Press, 2003
- Horio Teruhisa, “Conflicting Approaches to the Reform of Japanese Schooling: Economic Liberalization versus Educational Liberation” Ch. 14, from Horio, *Educational Thought and Ideology in Modern Japan: State Authority and Intellectual Freedom*, Tokyo U.P., 1988

***Post your questions to LEAPers (D2L)***

Sep 13(Tue) Higher Education – LEAPer interview session

- McVeigh *Japanese Higher Education as a Myth*. Chapters 1, 2 and 10 (D2L)

Sep 15(Thu) Nationalism, school practices, and textbooks

- Horio Teruhisa. "From the Front Lines of Human Rights Battle in Japan: Constitution, Flag, and Anthem in the Schools" *Celebrating Protest* website (D2L)
- Nozaki, Yoshiko and Mark Selden. "Japan's Textbook Controversies, Nationalism, and Historical Memory: Intra- and Inter-national Conflicts" *Japan Focus* (D2L)

### Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Sep 20 (Tue) Hiroshima and Nagasaki

- Selden, Mark. "Introduction: The United States, Japan, and the Atomic Bomb" *Citizen's Memoirs*, Kyoko & Mark Selden, xi-xxxvi (D2L)
  - Sodei, Rinjiro. "Were We the Enemy? American Hibakusha." (1997) (D2L)
  - Sasamori Shigeko article in Bozeman Daily Chronicle (D2L)
  - Tamara Hall article in Bozeman Daily Chronicle(D2L)
- In-class film: *White Light, Black Rain*  
***LEA Per interview paper due (D2L)***

Sep 22(Thu) Hiroshima and Nagasaki

- Kono, Fumiyo. *Town of Evening Calm, Country of Cherry Blossoms*

Film: *Town of Evening Calm, Country of Cherry Blossoms* (2007)-outside of class

### Economy, Natural Disasters and Environmental Hazards

Sep 27 (Tue) Rapid Economic Growth and its Aftermath: Minamata

- Minamata slides - Aileen archive (D2L)
- Johnston, Eric. "Minamata at 50: The tragedy deepens." In *Japan Focus* (D2L)
- Asahi Shimbun. "Minamata Disease at Fifty" in *Japan Focus* (D2L)
- Hirano, Keiji. "Minamata Disease at 50: Death, Despair, and Discrimination Continue" in *Japan Focus* (D2L)

Sep 29(Thu) The 90s Japan - Collapse of the "Bubble" and The Hanshin Earthquake

- Leheny, David. Chapter 2 "A "Vague Anxiety" in 1990s Japan" in *Think Global, Fear Local: Sex, Violence and Anxiety in Contemporary Japan*. Cornell University Press, 2006
- Murakami, Haruki. *After the Quake*.

***Midterm Exam Posted***

### The Tohoku Earthquake and Fukushima

Oct 4 (Tue) Tohoku Earthquake

- Murakami Haruki. *After the Quake. Cont'd*
- Oguma, Eiji. "The Hidden Face of Disaster: 3.11, the Historical Structure and Future of Japan's Northeast" in *Japan Focus* (D2L)
- Selections from *Japan Focus* articles (D2L)
- Selections from the articles posted on The Atomic Age site (D2L)

Oct 6(Thu) Fukushima

- Kanamana Hitomi and Norma Field “Complicity and Victimhood: Director Kamanaka Hitomi’s Nuclear Warnings” in *Japan Focus* (D2L)
- Selections from *Japan Focus* articles (D2L)
- Selections from the articles posted on The Atomic Age site (D2L)

Film: *Rokkasho Rhapsody* (2006) or *Ashes to Honey* (2010)-outside of class

**Midterm Exam due Oct 10 (Mon) at 9am**

Oct 11(Tue) Library Session for Media Anthropology Project (Meet at the library classroom)

**Journal #2 due (D2L)**

Labor

Oct 13 (Thu) Day Laborers, Buraku Issues

- Oyama, Shiro. *A Man With No Talents: Memoirs of a Tokyo Day Laborer*
- McLaughlin, “Japan’s burakumin” in *Japan Focus* (D2L)
- *Japan Times* “Breaking the silence on burakumin: Minority community has plenty to offer (D2L)

Oct 18 (Tue) Day Laborers, Nuclear Power Plants Workers

- Oyama, Shiro. *A Man With No Talents*
- Jobin, Paul. “Dying for TEPCO? Fukushima’s Nuclear Contract Workers.” In *Japan Focus*. (D2L)

Fukushima and Beyond

Oct 20 (Thu) The Ongoing Impact of the Earthquake and Fukushima

- Robertson, Jennifer. “Rubble, Radiation and Robots” in *The American Interest*. Autumn 2011, Vol VII, No.1 (D2L)
- Kamanaka, Hitomi. “Rokkasho, Minamata and Japan’s Future” *Japan Focus* (D2L)
- Selections from *Japan Focus* articles (D2L)
- Selections from the articles posted in *The Atomic Age* (D2L)

Youths

Oct 25(Tue) The Lost Generation, NEET and *hikikomori*

- The “Integrated Community”: Toward the Transformation of the Hikikomori Archipelago Japan: A Dialogue by Asano Shirou and Futagami Nouki, *Japan Focus* (D2L)
- Kosugi, Reiko. “Youth Employment in Japan’s Economic Recovery: ‘Freeters’ and ‘NEETs’” in *Japan Focus* (D2L)
- Akagi, Tomohiro. “War is the Only Solution. A 31-year-old freeter explains the plight and future of Japan’s Marginal Workers” in *Japan Focus* (D2L)

Oct 27(Thu) Girls and Women in the 90s and Beyond

- Leheny, David. Chapter 3 “Whatever it is, it’s bad, so stop it” in *Think Global, Fear Local*. (D2L)
- Edwards, Elise. “Not a Cinderella Story: The Long Road to a Japanese World Cup Victory.” Stanford University Press Blog. (D2L)

Film: *Bounce Ko Gals* (1997)-outside of class

### Ethnic Diversity and Globalization

Nov 8 (Tue) Indigenous Peoples: the Ainu and Okinawans

- Cotterill, Simon. “Ainu Success” in *Japan Focus*. (D2L)
- Yoshida, Kensei. “US Bases, Japan and the Reality of Okinawa as Military Colony.” In *Japan Focus* (D2L)
- Penney, Matthew. “Okinawa’s Fukushima Connection: Nuclear Workers at Risk. In *Japan Focus*. (D2L)

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*In-class video on Okinawa*

Nov 10 (Thu) Old Comers: Zainichi Koreans

- Selections from Ryang, Sonia ed. *Diaspora without Homeland: Being Koreans in Japan*. (D2L)
- Ryang “The Denationalized Have No Class: The Banishment of Japan’s Korean Minority-- A POLEMIC” in *Japan Focus* (D2L)
- Japan Times “Young ‘Zainichi’ Koreans look beyond Chongryun ideology” (D2L)

Film: *Dear Pyongyang* (2007) –outside of class

Nov 15 (Tue) New Comers

- Ross *Brokered Homeland*

Nov 17 (Thu) in-class film *Sour Strawberries* (2009)

Nov 22 (Tue) Research Day (no class)

Nov 24(Thu) Thanksgiving (no class)

Nov 29 New Comers: cont’d

- Ross *Brokered Homeland*

## Re-emerging Nationalism

### Dec 1            Anti-ethnocentrism or Nationalism? : The Whaling Debate

- McNeil, David. “Taiji: Japan’s Dolphin Cull and the Clash of Cultures” in *Japan Focus* (D2L)
- “Unfaced by ‘The Cove,’ Taiji Fishermen Prepare to Resume Dolphin Hunt” in Bloomberg.com (D2L)
- Walsh, Bryan. “Why Japan Keeps Fighting the Whale Wars?” in *Time* (D2L)
- Fackler, Martin. “Japanese Town Mulls Future Without Whaling” in *New York Times*. (D2L)
- Sea Shepherd website (D2L)  
    In-class film (excerpts): *The Cove*  
    In-class video: *South Park* ep.

*In-class Film: The New God (excerpts)*

***Media Anthropology Paper due – Dec 2***  
***Final Exam Posted – Dec 5 (Mon)***

### Dec 6            Nationalism and Xenophobia

- Sakamoto, Rumi. “‘Koreans, Go Home’ Internet Nationalism in Contemporary Japan as a Digitally Mediated Subculture.” In *Japan Focus*. (D2L)
- Sakamoto and Allen “Hate Korean Wave” comics in Japan Focus (D2L)
- NYT article on anti-Korean activism in Japan (D2L)

### Dec 8            Conclusion to the course

***Journal #3 due (D2L)***  
***Final Exam Due on Dec 12 (Mon) at 5pm (D2L)***