

3 Credits/45 Contact Hours

No Prerequisites

**Fall 2017 -- Oberlin University, Machida**

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Office Location:  
Office Hours:

Commonsense knowledge has always presented Japan as a homogeneous society—culturally, ethnically, and racially. While this has never been true of the past, it is even less so in today's globalized world, where cross-border mobility, connections, and exchanges have created a transnational world that impacts every nation. This course examines the different flows across and within Japan's border and considers how it has created a multicultural society—full of potentials as well as conflicts. In this way, multi-cultural issues go beyond the boundaries of the nation-state as experienced by migrants, refugees, diasporic communities, foreigners, and others who they come to live and work in Japan

This course presents an interdisciplinary look at Japan and its “Others”—both those coming from the outside as well as those with long roots in the country—to understand how this impacts notions of “being Japanese.” It analyzes tensions this creates as well as the struggles of those who seek an equal place in society. Particular attention is paid to the effects of globalization and changing economic-political circumstances that create situations of exploitation and subordination as well as resistance.

Students will gain an understanding of current transformations in Japanese society and their consequences for furthering an internationalized and multiethnic nation.

**Learning Outcomes:**

- understand the variety of cultural, ethnic, and racial groups in Japan and the current changes impacting them.
- acquire knowledge of key concepts and theoretical perspectives relating to interpreting issues relating to multiculturalism.
- demonstrate an understanding of major issues that affect different groups in Japan and, their own perspectives and responses to such issues, as well as an awareness of our cultural values and biases.
- encourage questions that challenge our previous assumptions about the nature of Japanese society leading to new insights about our own multicultural and multiracial society and expand awareness of the relationship between our lives and those of people in Japan.
- improve writing skills through a variety of assignments that enhance the learning process.

- apply critical thinking skills through oral and written assignments designed to encourage analytical thinking that shows the ability to construct increasingly sophisticated arguments.
- demonstrate the ability to appreciate multiple views and to communicate with a diverse population in your study abroad environment.

**Texts:**

John Lie, *Multiethnic Japan* (Harvard University Press 2001)  
Class Reader

**Laulima:** information will be posted there and you will receive notice of this; be sure to change your email if you use one other than the UH.

**Email Communications:** Information and material relating to the class will often be conveyed through email notices; make sure I have the current email address that you check regularly.

**Pagers/Cell Phones** to be turned Off; **Computer Use:** for classroom only

**Course Requirements and Student Evaluations:**

Attendance and Punctuality Matter:

Participation in the class requires regular attendance as learning takes place *inside* the classroom as well as through the work you do outside it. After three unexcused (i.e., without a doctor's note) absences, each one will result in a 3% lowering of your grade. Both the instructor and the students are also expected to **be on time**. Three late entries are considered an absence, as is anything over 15 minutes after the start of class.

Class Participation and Presentations: (10 % of grade)\*

Active engagement with the readings and participation in class discussions (this means attending class!) will make the course work for you and ensure you remain interested and stimulated by the material. This is essential to both your own learning experience and the overall progression of the course. While I will lecture, especially on background and other material, your input is critical. In other words, this course emphasizes THINKING as well as reading and writing.

Students (working in pairs) are also **responsible for making one presentation** that discusses and expands upon the class readings for that session. This is a *not* to be a detailed repetition of the work as *everyone* is expected to come to class having thoughtfully read the assigned materials. Rather, one person is responsible for *highlighting the main points* and raising or clarifying what may be unclear. The other should also add to what the first one has said and/or present some different views. He/she is also responsible for raising several questions (c. 3 to 4) used to generate class discussion. The first presenter should conclude in no more than 15-20 minutes max. This means you need to prepare and time yourself in advance. The second presenter has more time flexibility depending upon class responses that are posted on laulima and discussion. *It is important for the presenters to meet beforehand to think about and coordinate how they want the presentation to go.* A critical part of the grade is preparedness.

Innovative and creative ways of presenting the materials and encouraging others to join in are particularly encouraged. You will be graded on how carefully you have read the material, thought about it, and then presented it to the class. **A one page outline of your presentation must be handed in at the beginning of the class session.**

### Writing Requirements: Learning by Writing

As a writing-intensive course, there will be a number of opportunities to variety of "low" stakes (ungraded, but commented on for quality) and "high stakes" activities (reading journals, essays, and spontaneous in-class writing). Not all of these will be graded; these assignments will have comments on how to improve the next submission. You will also receive different sorts of feedback on your writing.

Please note that I read your work with care and respect. On "high" stakes writing, I will also comment extensively; e.g., from correcting grammatical mistakes, spelling errors, and stylistic difficulties to reflecting on content. These and any other comments are presented with the positive view of helping you to make a good piece or, in the latter case, of making a good piece of writing even better.

### *Goals of Writing Exercises: What the Reader Looks For*

The main goal of writing is to learn through experience with different sorts of writing for specific purposes. Writing alone is not significant unless there is a point to be made; this has to be made in a logical and coherent manner, presenting "evidence" (empirical and conceptual) that substantiates its validity. A reader will look for the main point/s to be made, the information that supports the statements, the logical way in which this is presented, and the clarity and attention to writing style. See further, "grading guidelines," below.

**Writing Activities:** late work is *highly discouraged* and is marked down; nothing will be accepted beyond one week late.

#### **1. "Thoughts about the Readings": [15% of grade]**

Three short—one page each/c. 250 words—commentaries on a specific day's readings posted on laulima by **10 p.m. of the day before**. The dates will be assigned after the first week of class. One of these should be a response to a film seen in class (these will be marked with a "\*\*\*" on the syllabus) and is **due one week after the class viewing**. These are to be well thought-out comments.

**Due Dates:** TBA

#### **2. Expository Essays on the Readings: [45% of grade]**

These are three essays of c. five pages/1250 words each that address a specific topic or question set by the instructor. The purpose is to assess how carefully you have read the readings and the depth of your comprehension. You should critically analyze what is being said and then agree, disagree, support with evidence, expand upon, and illustrate your position. These essays are considered "high stakes" writing, where spelling, punctuation, and grammar are important and reflect care and attention to your work.

**Due Dates:** TBA; Rewrites as needed—due one week later

### 3. Paper on Contemporary Affairs in the Japanese Media [30% of grade]

This is a six-page/1750 word paper that will present an analysis of information gleaned from reading two Japanese English language newspapers (a list of those available on the web is presented below). You are to read **at least two news articles per week** (weeks 3 through 14; total of 24 articles), **chosen from two different newspapers** (you may stick with the two the entire semester). Keep *all* articles chosen in one, single file and note the important points as you read them. This file must be sent as an email attachment to me at the time your paper is submitted. The articles should **relate to three different areas of your choice that relate to the topics discussed in class**. Individual meetings with the instructor will help to guide your topics choice and work on this paper. See further, the guidelines—attached.

**Due Date to Email 3 areas of your choice:**

**Due Date for Paper:**

Links to Japanese English language press:

*Asahi Shimbun*: <http://www.asahi.com/ajw/>

*Japan Herald / National Japan News Source*: <http://www.japanherald.com/>

*Japan - News - NHK WORLD*: <https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/japan/>

*The Japan News*: <http://www.the-japan-news.com>

*The Japan News (by Yomiuri Shimbun)*: : <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/adv/chuo/dy/>

*Japan Morning Post*: <http://www.japanmorningpost.com/>

*The Japan Times*: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/> (highest rated)

*Japan Today*: <https://www.japantoday.com/>

*Mainichi Shimbun*: <http://mainichi.jp/english/>

*\*All percentages given are to be understood as general guides.*

**Field Trips:** I will schedule two field trips relevant to the course that will be determined and scheduled in consultation with the students.

#### **PLAGIARISM:**

This is a **most serious** academic offense and will be treated accordingly. It is defined as “to steal and use” the ideas or writings of another and pass it off as one’s own. Whether done *consciously or unconsciously*, appropriating others’ writings or language—without acknowledging the sources—is a legal offense (some universities may expel students who plagiarize). The act is not excused because of oversight, ignorance, or sloppiness. Plagiarism is considered a form of theft (of the work of others) as well as fraud (i.e., misrepresentation of others’ work as yours).

With the easy accessibility of the web, there is the real danger of being seduced by a “cut and paste” mentality. Learn from others—that’s fine; but be sure the final presentation and interpretation of ideas are your own. Anything you locate I can locate as well (and I know most of the online sources)!! Further information is available at the back of the University Catalogue. Don’t hesitate to talk to me if you are unsure about citing others’ work. Direct quotations must be indicated, paraphrasing must be acknowledged, and ideas taken from others must be attributed to their sources.

## SYLLABUS

### I. Multiculturalism in Japan: An Overview

- Week I** Introduction to the Course and Ourselves
- Week II** Conceptualizing Multiethnic Japan: some key issues

**Reading:**

David B. Willis and Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu, “*Transcultural Japan: Metamorphosis in the cultural borderlands and beyond.*” From David B. Willis and Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu, *Transcultural Japan: at the borderlands of race, gender, and identity* (Routledge 2008), 3-33

John Lie, *Multiethnic Japan*, “Introduction” and Chap 1, 1-26

**Week III**

**Reading:**

Lie, Chaps 2-4, 27-110

**Week IV**

**Reading:**

Lie, Chaps 5-Conclusion, 111-184

### II. Internal “Others”

- Week V** Ainu and Burakumin: Indigenous Minorities/Historical Underclass

**Reading:**

Richard M. Siddle, “*Ainu: Indigenous People of Japan.*” From *Japan’s Minorities; the Illusion of Homogeneity*, ed. Michael Weiner (Routledge 1997) Chap 2, 17-49

Joseph D. Hankins, “Introduction: the Labor of Multiculturalism” and “*Locating the Buraku: A Political Ecology of Pollution.*” From *Working Skin: Making Leather, Making a Multicultural Japan* (University of California 2014) Chap 1, 1-16 and chap 3, 93-120

Buraku Liberation League, “What is Buraku Discrimination?” (<http://www.bll.gr.jp/eng.html>), and “The Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute” (<http://www.blhrii.org/english/>).

**Video clips:**

### Essay (1) Due

- Week VI** Okinawans: Internal Colonials

**Reading:**

Tomiya Ichiro, “*On Becoming 'a Japanese': The Community of Oblivion and Memories of the Battlefield.*” *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 3 (10) 2005, 1-14

Koya Nomura, et al., “*Undying Colonialism: A Case Study of the Japanese Colonizer.*” *CR: The New Centennial Review. Special Issue: Toward a New Paradox: OR, Japan—In Another Transversal of the Transpacific* 12 (1) 2012, 93-116

Annmaria Shimabuku, “*Transpacific Colonialism: An Intimate View of Transnational Activism in Okinawa.*” *CR: The New Centennial Review. Special Issue: Toward a New Paradox: OR, Japan—In Another Transversal of the Transpacific* 12 (1) 2012, 131-158

**Video:**

**Week VII**                      *Zainichi: Japan's Generational Foreigners***Reading:**

Sonia Ryang, "Introduction." From *Hidden Treasures: lives of first-generation Korean women In Japan*, Jackie J. Kim (Rowman & Littlefield 2005), xiv-xix,

Eika Tai, "'Korean Japanese:' A New Identity Option for Resident Koreans in Japan." *Critical Asian Studies* 36 (3) 2004, 355-382

Sonia Ryang, "The Denationalized Have No Class: The Banishment of Japan's Korean Minority-- A POLEMIC." *Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 16 (6) 2008

Kyo Nobuko, *A perfectly ordinary ethnic Korean in Japan: Reprise.* From Willis and Murphy-Shigematsu, *Transcultural Japan: at the borderlands of race, gender, and identity*, 47-64

**Video:****Week VIII**                      *Nikkeijin (Japanese Descendants): Burajirujin and Japanese Americans***Reading:**

W. Lawrence Neuman, "Review Essay. *The Nikkeijin Dekasegi: Returning Ethnic Japanese from Latin America.* *Critical Asian Studies* 36 (2) 2004, 303-311

Takeyuki G. Tsuda, "Crossing Ethnic Boundaries: Japanese Brazilian Return Migrants and the Ethnic Challenge of Japan's Newest Immigrant Minority." From *Multiculturalism in the New Japan: crossing the Boundaries Within*, ed. Nelson Graburn et al. (Berghahn Books 2008), 117-138

Ayako Takamori, "Rethinking Japanese American 'Heritage' in the Homeland." *Critical Asian Studies* 42 (2) 2010, 217-238

**Video clips:****IV. Japan's "Foreigners:" *Gaijin* and Racialized Others****Week IX**                      **Migrant Workers****Reading:**

Shinji Yamashita, "Transnational Migration in East Asia: Japan in a Comparative Focus." *Senri Ethnological Reports* 77 2008, 3-13

Mark Levin, "The *Wajin*'s Whiteness: Law and Race Privilege in Japan." *Horitsu Jiho* 80 (2) 2008, 1-20

Debito Arudou, "From Foreign Fetishization to Fear in the Japanese Media." From *Embedded Racism: Japan's Visible Minorities and Racial Discrimination* (Lexington Books 2015), 80-90 and 201-224

Kyungyeon Chung, "Symbiosis in the World of Beauty: The Cosmetics Industry and the Western Beauty Ideal." *Japan Sociology* [February 10, 2014](#)

**Video:** Koenig and Kremers, "Sour Strawberries" (2008)

**Essay (2) Due****Week X**                      **Migrant Workers: II****Reading:**

Apichai W. Shipper, "The Political Construction of Foreign Workers in Japan. *Critical Asian Studies* 34(1) 2002, 41-68

Keiko Yamanaka, "Feminization of Japanese Brazilian Labor Migration to Japan." From *Searching for Home Abroad: Japanese Brazilians and Transnationalism*, ed. Jeffrey Lesser (Duke University Press 2003) 163-200

News Articles, Filipino and Thai Workers in Japan

**Week XI** Refugees**Reading:**

News Articles--Thomas Wilson, etal, “*Rough Refuge: Banned from working, asylum seekers are building Japan’s roads and sewers.*” *Reuters* Aug. 8, 2016 and *The Japan Times*, “*Japan to speed up refugee screenings,*” Aug. 16, 2016

Iwasaki Atsuko, “*Open the Door: Japan’s Policy of “Exclusion of Refugees.”*” *Asia-Pacific Journal* 4(2) 2006, parts I and II

**V. Racializing Others****Week XII** Blackness in Japan**Readings:**

Tessa Morris-Suzuki, “*Race.*” From *Re-Inventing Japan: Time, Space, Nation* (M.E. Sharpe 1998), 102-109 and illustrations

John Russell, “*Playing with Race/Authenticating Alterity: Authenticity, Mimesis, and Racial Performance in the Transcultural Diaspora.*” *CR: The New Centennial Review* 12(1) 2012

Mitzi Carter and Aina Hunter, *A Critical Review of Academic Perspectives on Blackness in Japan.*” From *Multiculturalism in the New Japan: crossing the Boundaries Within*, ed. Nelson Graburn etal., 188-198

**Video:****Essay (3) Due****Week XIII** Love Across Boundaries**Reading:**

Paul Green, “*Explorations of difference in a homogeneous field: Inter-marriage and mixedness amongst Brazilian migrants in Japan.*” *Anthropological Notebooks* XVIII (2) 2012

Nobue Suzuki, “*Between Two Shores: Transnational projects and Filipina wives in/from Japan.*” From Willis and Murphy-Shigematsu, *Transcultural Japan: at the borderlands of race, gender, and identity*, 65-85

Masako Kudo, “*Pakistani Husbands, Japanese Wives: A New Presence in Tokyo and Beyond.*” *Asian Anthropology*, 8(1) 2009, 109-123

Kimie Oshima, “*Perception of Hafu or Mixed-Race People in Japan: Group-Session Studies Among Hafu Students at a Japanese University.*” *Intercultural Communication Studies* XXIII (3) 2014, 22-34

Philip Kendall, “*Hafu Project.*” *Japan Today Arts & Culture* Nov. 16, 2013

**Video:** *Hafu: The Mixed-Race Experience in Japan* (2013)

**Week XIV** Lived Realities of Multi-Ethnic Japan: Integrating Others**Reading:**

Petrice Flowers, “*From Kokusaika to Tabunka Kyosei: Global Norms, Discourses of Difference and Multiculturalism in Japan.*” *Critical Asian Studies* 44(4) 2012, 515-542

Yuko Okubo, “*Newcomers’ in Public Education: Chinese and Vietnamese Children in a Buruku Community.*” From *Multiculturalism in the New Japan*, ed. Nelson Graburn etal, 171-187

**Video:****News Media Paper Due**

**Grading Guidelines:**

A work: outstanding work that demonstrates significant mastery of subject materials; i.e., shows analytical reading and critical engagement with conceptual issues.

Responds to questions (all parts)

Shows original thinking in presentation of own ideas

Excellent presentation; i.e., develops a focused and clear argument and articulates a sustained train of logical thought.

Pays attention to spelling and grammar.

B work: shows clear evidence of engagement with the materials as well as critical insight

Responds to questions (all parts)

Develops a focused and clear argument that proceeds logically (i.e., has a beginning, middle, and conclusion)

Very good standard of presentation

C work: shows some understanding of the key factual and/or theoretical issues and addresses them

Responds to question (all parts)

Reveals, in places, examples of a clear train of thought or argument

Concludes properly

Good standard of presentation

D work:\* shows some awareness and understanding of the materials or theoretical issues, but with little development

Questions or parts are omitted

Misunderstandings are evident

Shows some evidence of planning, although irrelevant/unrelated material included

Fails to develop a clear or coherent response, but shows occasional knowledge or insight

F work: \*fails to address materials or develop an argument; irrelevant response

Fails to address question

Fails to demonstrate knowledge of the key issues or arguments

Contains clear conceptual or factual errors or misunderstandings

Poorly organized/or poorly written

\*I will make every effort to help you to obtain a passing grade