

ASAN ST/WO ST 463 [WI]

GENDER ISSUES IN ASIA: FOCUS ON JAPAN

3 Credits/45 Contact Hours: No Prerequisites

Instructor:
Email:

Office Location:
Office Hours:

This course presents an interdisciplinary look at the construction of female and male identities in contemporary Japan and its impact on gender relations. We explore how this is influenced by and interfaces with other aspects of identity and difference—especially class, sexuality, and militarism—to reveal the many complexities and contradictions in the lives of both women *and* men. Particular attention is paid to the effects of globalization and changing economic 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 engendering economic, social, and political roles, alternative sexualities, as well as opportunities to forge new identities.

Throughout we will critically assess a range of perspectives and stereotypes relating to gender issues in Japan, particularly considering women's experiences and examine alternative frameworks of analysis--especially those proposed by women of that region--that might better express their realities and address their needs.

Learning Outcomes:

- understand the variety of gender arrangements and sexual roles in Japan and the current changes affecting them.
- acquire knowledge of key concepts and theoretical perspectives relating to interpreting gender issues.
- demonstrate an understanding of major social issues that affect women and men in Japan and their own perspectives and responses to such issues as well as an awareness of our own cultural values and biases.
- encourage questions that challenge our previous assumptions about Japanese women and men that lead to new insights about gender relations in our own 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 the study abroad environment.

Texts:

Kim, Jackie J. *Hidden Treasures: Lives of First-Generation Korean Women in Japan* (Rowman & Littlefield (2005).

Class Reader: all articles will be available on laulima.

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.

Course Requirements and Student Evaluations: cell phones to be turned Off; computers for classroom use only.

Attendance and Punctuality Matter:

Regular attendance is critical 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) *

Class attendance and participation in discussions is critical. While I will lecture, especially on background and additional material, it is expected that you come to class having carefully read and evaluated the materials. You should be prepared **to discuss** assigned readings as well as to contribute your own insights, thoughts, and questions to our collective consideration of the topic for each session. Active participation is essential to both your own learning experience and the overall progression of the class.

Students, working in pairs, will be responsible for making a presentation during a particular class session that is based on and reveals comprehension of the readings and will stimulate class discussion. This should be carefully thought out and well prepared.

Writing Goals and Requirements:

As a writing-intensive course, there will be several opportunities to engage in different sorts of activities (reading journals, essays, "Tuesday Letters," and spontaneous in-class writing). Not all of these will be graded--there will be a variety of "low" stakes (ungraded, but commented on for quality) and "high stakes" (graded) writing. You will receive different sorts of feedback on your writing.

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 must be constructed in a logical and coherent manner, presenting "evidence" (empirical and conceptual) that substantiates its validity.

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.

Writing Activities:A) "Tuesday Letters": (10% of grade)

Two, short (2-3 page) letters that you write to someone (a person you know, a well-known or imaginary person) that deal with *specific issues arising from the class materials* (readings and videos) *as well as discussions*. While you may be as creative as you like, you should be sure the letter reveals your critical understanding and is persuasive and meaningful.

It is suggested that you have someone "pre-read" the work to help get a sense of writing as a means of communicating with different audiences, rather than simply directing it towards the instructor for a grade. These letters are considered "high stakes" writing, where spelling, punctuation, and grammar are important and reflect care and attention to your work.

Due Dates: tba

B) Reading Journals: (30 % of grade)

Entries are to be made **once** a week (c. 1 page with standard margins/fonts) to log your learning experiences from the class materials and questions they may raise. Journals provide an excellent way to keep track of the reading material and will prove helpful in working on your responses to the essay questions (see below). While these are informal, and may be personal, they should *record your reaction to the readings* and visual information and indicate you are a) aware of the key issues that the readings/films address; b) can illustrate this with one or two main points that interest you, and c) can describe whether these are convincing. These are to be typewritten entries.

Due Dates: tba

C) Two Essays: (50 % of grade)

Responses of 1,500 words **each** to a specific question set by the instructor that will deal with the topics we have been discussing in class. These are also considered "high stakes" writing, where spelling, punctuation, and grammar are important and reflect care and attention to your work. Your essay should critically analyze course materials relevant to the response: what is being said and then agree, disagree, support with evidence, expand upon, and illustrate your ideas.

Due Dates: tba

**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 source—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. Speaking About Gender: what do we mean?

Week I Introduction to the Course and Ourselves

Week II Conceptualizing Gender: Speaking About Men & Women

Reading:

Joan Scott, “*Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis.*” *American Historical Review*, v. 91 (5) 1986, last section, 1066-1075

Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, ppt and reading selection

Erickson-Schroth, Laura and Benjamin Davi, *Gender: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford University Press, 2021), 1-29

II. Korean Women in Japan: the first generation

Week III Colonialism, Marriage and Migration to Japan

Reading:

Jackie Kim, *Hidden Treasures: Lives of First-Generation Korean Women in Japan*, “*Introduction and Prologue*,” xiii-xxiv and chaps. 1-3, 3-50

Video Clips: Japanese colonial rule in Korea

Week IV Making a Life

Reading:

Kim, chaps. 5-8 (53-132)

Reading Journal (1) Due

Week V Growing Up in Japan

Reading

Kim, chaps. 9-10 (135-165)

Video clips: Being *zainichi*

Tuesday Letter (1) Due

III. Performing Genders and Sexualities in Modern Japan

Week VI Sexuality in Popular Culture

Reading:

Jennifer Robertson, "Introduction" and Chap. 1, "Ambivalence and Popular Culture," (from *Takarazuka: Sexual Politics and Popular Culture in Modern Japan* (1998) 1-46

Yumiko Iida, "Beyond the 'feminization of masculinity': transforming patriarchy with the 'feminine' in contemporary Japanese youth culture." *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 6 (1) 2005, 56-74

Current News Articles, "Genderless" Japan

Video: Takarazuka Review

Week VII

Host/ess Clubs: men, women, and the foreign

Reading:

Nana Okura Gagné, "The Business of Leisure, the Leisure of Business: Rethinking Hegemonic Masculinity through Gendered Service in Tokyo Hostess Clubs." *Asian Anthropology*, 9 (1) 2010, 29-55

Akiko Takeyama, *Staged Seduction: Selling Dreams in a Tokyo Host Club* (Stanford University Press 2016), selections [male host clubs]

Rhacel Parrenas, *Illicit Flirtations: Labor, Migration, and Sex Trafficking in Tokyo* (Stanford University Press 2011, selections [foreign women hostesses]

Video: "Tokyo Girls"

Reading Journal (2) Due

Week VIII

Alternative Sexualities

Reading:

Mark McClelland and Romit Dasgupta, "Introduction," (from *Genders, Transgenders and Sexualities in Japan*, ed. by Mark McClelland, Romit Dasgupta 2005), 1-13.

Wim Lumsing, "The politics of okama and onabe: uses and abuses of terminology regarding homosexuality and transgender," (from *Genders, Transgenders and Sexualities in Japan*), 81-95

Romit Dasgupta, "Salarymen doing straight: heterosexual men and the dynamics of gender conformity," (from *Genders, Transgenders and Sexualities in Japan*) 168-182

Video clips: "Shinjuku Boys"

Essay (1) Due

IV. Gendered Work Places

Week IX

Women in the Work Place: beyond "Office Ladies"

Reading:

Alisa Freedman, L. Miller, C. Yano, "You Go, Girl! Cultural Meanings of Gender, Mobility, and Labor." From *Modern Girls on the Go: Gender, Mobility, and Labor in Contemporary Japan* (Stanford University Press 2013) 1-20

Week X

Salary Men and the Anti-Heroes

Reading:

Romit Dasgupta, *Creating corporate warriors: the "salaryman" and masculinity in Japan*, " (from *Asian Masculinities: The meaning and practice of manhood in China and Japan*, ed. Kam Louie; Morris Low 2003) 118-134.

Alisha Freedman, "Train Man and the Gender Politics of Japanese 'Otaku' Culture: the rise of new media, nerd heroes and consumer communities." *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific* 20 (2009), 16 pgs

Leo Lewis, "The Curse of the Salaryman." *Financial Times* May 2, 2016; and Podcast, 4 pgs

Reading Journal (3) Due**Week XI** Engendering Japanese Abroad**Reading:**

Guido C. Pigliasco, "Lost In Translation: From Omiyage to Souvenir: Beyond Aesthetics of the Japanese Office Ladies' Gaze in Hawaii. *Journal of Material Culture* 10(2) 2005, 177-196

Junko Obayashi, "Hawai'i in the Japanese tourist gaze: a reflection on imaginary Hawai'i.

M.A. Thesis, Pacific Islands Studies, University of Hawaii, 2000, selection

Christino Yano, "Wink on Pink: Interpreting Japanese Cute as It Grabs the Global Headlines." *Journal of Asian Studies* 68 (3) 2009, 681-688

Tuesday letter (2) Due**IV. Women and Militarization: Past and Present****Week XII** "Comfort" Women: Colonialism and Sex Slavery**Reading:**

Chin Sung Chung, "The Origin and Development of the Military Sexual Slavery Problem in Imperial Japan. *Positions* V (1) 1997, 219-253

Watanabe Kazuko, "Militarism, Colonialism, and the Trafficking of Women: 'Comfort Women' Forced into Sexual Labor for Japanese Soldiers. *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 26 (4) 1994, 3-18

Video:**Week XIII** Military Bases and Women's Movements in Okinawa (I)*Reading:*

Cynthia Enloe, "Feminism, Nationalism, and Militarism after the Cold War," (from *The Morning After: Sexual Politics at the End of the Cold War* 1993) 228-251

Linda Isako Angst, "The Sacrifice Of A Schoolgirl: The 1995 Rape Case, Discourses of Power, and Women's Lives in Okinawa." *Critical Asian Studies*, 33(2) 2001 243-266

Suzuyo Takazato, "Report from Okinawa: Long-Term US Military Presence." *Canadian Woman*

Studies, 19 (4) 2000, 6 pp

Video:**Reading Journal (4) Due****Week XIV** Military Bases and Women's Movements in Okinawa (II)**Reading:**

Caroline Spencer "Meeting of the Dugons and the Cooking Pots: Anti-Military Base Citizens' Groups on Okinawa" in *Japanese Studies*, 23 (2) 2003, 125-140

Miyume Tanji, "The Unai Method: The Expansion of Women-only Groups in the Community of Protest Violence and Militarism in Okinawa." *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context* (13) 2006

Ruth Ann Keyso, *Women of Okinawa: Nine Voices from a Garrison Island* (2000) selections

Video: "The wishes of 89,000 people"

Essay (2) Due**Week XV** Course Wrap Up and Final Presentations

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