ASAN 462  
Contested Issues in Contemporary Japan  
(Machida/Sagamihara Edition)

Brief Course Description:
While there is a widely held image of Japan being a monolithic “consensus society,” public discourse in that country is in fact characterized by lively, often heated debates over a wide range of hot button issues that reveal deep cultural fissures and dramatic differences of thought and opinion. In light of this, ASAN 462 aims to provide students with an understanding of key issues currently being debated in contemporary Japanese society. The two issue areas that will be the focus of this version of ASAN 462 are 1) the altered socioeconomic and political environment confronting Japan’s younger generations and 2) sustainable development in urban areas.

These issues will be approached in two ways. On the one hand, published English language texts will be used to provide background knowledge and analytical frames. On the other, in order to facilitate deeper engagement students will take advantage of their study abroad experience by paying attention and documenting their exposure to such “local” resources as Japanese media coverage, visiting relevant local sites, and engaging in conversations with Japanese acquaintances.

ASAN 462 is designed to meet the hallmarks of a UH GenEd’s “O” focus course. As such, students will have several opportunities to present their work orally and receive feedback and guidance from both the instructor and fellow class members.

Required Texts and Apps:
• Other readings (listed below) that can be downloaded or will be made available by the instructor.
• Polling device (tbd)

Student Learning Outcomes sought are as follows:
• Identify and explain the key points of contention in two major contested issue areas in contemporary Japan (specifically, issues associated with the country’s younger generations, and sustainable development in urban areas), and describe the sociopolitical and historical contexts out of which these emerged.
• For each of these points of contention, describe the differing positions taken by proponents of different sides in the debates associated with them and identify the differences in values and understandings that lay behind these points of contention.
• Discuss how the axes and parameters of these debates along with their salience is similar or different from those of parallel issues areas in your home country, and provide an explanation for these similarities or differences.
• Demonstrate an ability to synthesize information and ideas derived from a cultural or national context different from your own

• Comfortably and clearly present information and ideas orally before a live audience.

Course Grade Calculation
  o attendance/iclicker quizzes  25%
  o observation diary  20%
  o short presentations (t=2)  20%
  o major oral presentations (t = 2)  35%

Notes on Course requirements

• attendance
  o your attendance grade will be a percentage calculated as follows:
    no. of days attended / (total class days – 3)
  In other words, you may miss class 3 times without penalty. This includes days out due to illness but not days when you have a presentation scheduled. In the latter instance you will be counted as absent.

• In-class quizzes with polling device
  o At the start of each class session you will be given a brief multiple-choice quiz (usually 5 questions long) on material covered in the previous session and/or in the assigned readings. You will answer these questions on your electronic device—tentatively, using the iClicker Cloud app on your mobile phone or laptop.
  o Your quiz response will double as a record of attendance. Therefore, make sure you arrive when class starts so you will not be counted as absent.

• Observation Diary
  o Each student will have his or her own “blog” space in the course website.
  o Every week you will post to your blog space a thoughtful, 200-300-word entry noting observations and thoughts about your experiences in Japan during the preceding week, and in particular those which relate to contested issues covered in the course. (These do not need to be correlated with the topic being covered in class that week.) Some examples of what you might write about:
    ▪ Conversations you had with a home stay family member or Japanese friends
    ▪ Something you observed as you made your way to campus (e.g., a poster on the bus, the way people acted on the train, memorial you passed by)
    ▪ Something that was covered or said in another class you are taking that resonated with what is being covered in this course
  o Read a handful of postings from other class members and post a comment if you feel inclined

• Short oral presentations
  o At least once during each half of the course you will give a short, 5-7 minute oral presentation before the class as described in the sections below that detail the
specific activities associated with each of the two "contested issues" that will be covered this semester.
  o You will receive feedback on your oral presentation from the instructor.

- **major oral presentations**
  - You will make a 7-10 minute oral presentation as part of a panel during the last two weeks of each half of the course. (more detail below)
  - You will receive feedback on your oral presentation in the form of a) comments and suggestions from the instructor and b) a compilation of ratings from students entered via a classroom polling device (e.g., iClicker).
  - The grade for each of your presentations will be calculated as follows:
    - quality of content: 50%
    - delivery: 50%
## Class Schedule

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Topics and Associated Assignments Explained

Topic 1  Youth in Aging Japan (first half of course)

Description

Japan is widely recognized as the country where societal aging has progressed farthest and this, combined with a two-decade long period of economic stagnation, has confronted Japan with a variety of widely debated social, economic and political issues. While attention has tended to focus on Japan’s elderly, the situation confronting the country has also affected its youth in profound ways that will be analyzed in the first part of this course, along with the issues and debates associated therewith.

Coverage of the subject will begin with a discussion of readings from the text Being Young in Super-Aging Japan that analyzes the complicated causes and interrelated dynamics of ongoing social changes that have affected the younger generation. In order to foster individual engagement with the subject area, you will prepare a short oral presentation (described below). You will also be required to maintain an online blog where you will share your observations, conversations (without attribution) with students and other members of Japanese society, and experiences that appear to illustrate aspects of Japan’s “super-aging society” and/or the situation of the younger generation therein. During the last two weeks of this part of the course, you will work in a group to prepare a panel presentation (see below).

Readings

Listed in schedule (above)

Oral Presentations

Short Presentation (S1). You will be assigned to make a short oral presentation on one of the required readings. In a 5-7 minute presentation before the class: a) succinctly summarize the article’s argument and b) comment on the article, making sure to touch on whether you think claims in the article are valid and to what extent the situations in Japan described in the article are similar or different from that of youth in your home country.

Major Panel Presentation (M1). You will be assigned to a panel presentation group. Each member of the group will prepare and present a 5-7 minute oral presentation that takes a “deeper dive” into a topic of interest related to aging society issues in Japan. You are encouraged but not required to do some outside reading for their presentation. Each panel should also give a thematic title to their panel. (Note: Since individual panel members will be free to choose the topic that they will present, coming up with a title that captures all of the individual presentations can be difficult. If it is any consolation, panel organizers at academic conferences encounter this challenge all the time!)
Part 2  Urban Sustainable Development (second half of course)

Description

In the second part of the course we will explore how the concept of "sustainable development" as applied to urban areas has been interpreted and discussed in Japan. We will analyze recent sustainable development plans put forward by the Tokyo Metropolitan and Sagamihara City governments, the two entities that oversee the neighborhoods in which Obarin University's Machida and Fuchinobe campuses are located, along with parallel efforts in two other Japanese cities and two in the UK.

The first several weeks will be devoted to readings, class discussions and oral presentations designed to familiarize you with the historical development of and discourse associated with "sustainable development" internationally and in Japan. You will also prepare a short oral presentation (see below). The remaining weeks will be devoted to research and preparation for a major group panel presentation, followed by class discussions where we will compare and contrast the plans of Tokyo and Sagamihara, as well as a few other cities.

Readings

Background (required)

- Dillon Asher, "The Origins and Evolution of Sustainable Development Concepts" (2019). LinkedIn [link]
- Video: What is sustainable development? [link]
- UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, The 17 Goals. [link]
- [read after major panel presentations have been completed]. OECD, Sustainable Development Report: Japan (2021). [link].
  - Is Japan getting a fair "grade"? Look through the following to see how Japan's "grade" compares with other countries: Sachs et al Sustainable Development Report 2021

a. Panel-Specific (only the readings associated with your group is required)

   Tokyo Group
   - PwC Japan Group, From Urbanization to Aging Society: Lessons from Japan (2016). [link]
   - Tokyo Metropolitan Government, Tokyo Sustainability Action (2021). [link] [link to "pocket version" of original (Japanese)]

   Sagamihara Group
   - Japan Ministry of the Environment. The Basic Environmental Plan. (2018) [link (English)] [link (Japanese)]
• Translation of Sagamihara City, 第 3 次相模原市環境基本計画 [Sagamihara City Basic Environmental Master Plan (2020)]. link to original (Japanese)

Content Analysis Group
  o Refer to Ozawa-Mead, et al., above.
  o The Tokyo and Sagamihara plans
  o As needed:
    o City of Kyoto, Resilient Kyoto (2018) link (English) link (Japanese)
    o City of Bristol, One City Plan (2020). link
    o City of Kawasaki, Kawasaki City’s SDGs Future City Initiatives (2019) link (English). link (Japanese)
    o City of Nottingham Carbon Neutral Nottingham 2020-2028 Action Plan (2020) link

For a deeper dive (optional):
• Steve Harrell and Mary Alice Haddad, "The Evolution of the East Asian Eco-Developmental State," Japan Focus 19-6 (2021) link
• Dillon Asher, "The Role and Influence of Cities in Climate Change Governance" (2019), LinkedIn link
• Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan SDG Action Platform. link
  o Discussion Question: Does this seem like a reasonable response for Japan?
• Keidanren (Japan Business Federation). Keidanren SDGs. link
  o Discussion Question. Keidanren is the national voice of Japan's big business community. In response to the call to achieve SDGs it is pursuing an initiative called "Society 5.0 for SDGs." How would you describe "Society 5.0"? Explore the website and prepare your own assessment of what it puts forward.
• Rengō (Japan Trade Union Confederation) Rengo 2022-2023 link
  o Discussion Question: Rengō is the national voice of Japan's organized labor movement. In response to the call to achieve SDGs it is pursuing an initiative it calls "A Secure Society Based on Work." How would you describe this initiative? How does it fit into the UN SDGs

Oral Presentations

Short Presentation (S2). In a short 5-7 minute presentation before the class, share one of the following: a) your reactions to a specific required background or deeper dive reading, b) response to the discussion question listed below a reading or c) your experiences or observations while studying at Obirin that are relevant to the topic of sustainable development.

Major Panel Presentations (M2). You will be assigned to one of three panels. One panel will focus on Tokyo, one on Sagamihara and, if it can be arranged, a content analysis group. A
breakdown of the topics to be addressed in the panels is as follows. It is recommended that this breakdown be referred to in dividing up the work inside your panels:

**Tokyo and Sagamihara panels**

1. *Planning timeline* (who? when?). Create a timeline (including flowchart) of the development of the Sagamihara City Basic Environmental Master Plan that traces the planning process through the following stages:
   a. Pre-planning: track the relevant external developments at the international and national level (i.e., when, who, what) that preceded the drafting of the Sagamihara plan. Note: These are noted in Chapters 1 and 2 of the plan.
   b. Planning process: track the various stages involved in drafting the plan. (Chapter 1, Appendix 1)
   c. Planning implementation: what is the proposed timeline for implementing the major proposals put forward in the plan? (Chapter 1, 4, 5)

*Analysis:* what noteworthy conclusions can you draw about the planning process from the timeline and flowchart you created?

2. *Plan coverage* (what? where?). Map the plan’s geographic scope. What is the physical area that is covered under the plan? How is the geography of this area conceptualized? (e.g., Where is the plan area located in the context of the areas that surround it and what is the significance of this location for these external areas? How is the plan area divided internally and what is the logic used to justify this internal subdivision? What does the plan intend to do in these areas? What is the logic for that?)

*Analysis:* what noteworthy conclusions can you draw from your analysis?

3. *Implementation* (what? why? how?). Here you will be addressing one of the 6 basic goals of the Sagamihara plan or one of the sectors (i.e., economy, society, environment) of the Tokyo plan. Outline the goals of the plan and how it intends to attain them. Why take up these particular goals? What measures are to be implemented in order to attain them?

*Analysis:* To what extent do the goals fit with the SDGs they claim to address? does the approach to the issues involved make sense to you? Are they up to the task? Would you suggest some other approach? If so, how do you justify doing so?

**Content Analysis Panel (tentative)**

If it can be arranged one group will be assigned the task of using NVivo to do a content analysis of the Tokyo and Sagamihara plans and then comparing and contrasting the results of those found in the Ozawa-Meida et al. article.

*Analysis:* Compare and contrast the results for Tokyo and Sagamihara with each other and with the cities analyzed in the Ozawa-Meida article. What are the similarities? Where are the differences? What explains the similarities and difference?
Below are 9 steps that students can follow so that their oral communication presentation is successful.

**Step 1. Determine general purpose**

First, either assign or have students decide on the general purpose of their oral presentation: to inform, to persuade, or to entertain or move an audience.

*Oral Communication Foundations & Impromptu Speaking* (PowerPoint presentation)

*PowerPoint Viewer from Microsoft* - download free viewer if you do not have PowerPoint software.

Then, you can help your students by pointing out that effective oral communicators are concerned with three elements: (1) content; (2) organization and (3) delivery of messages.

- **Content** is the actual information that is conveyed in an oral presentation.
- **Organization** is how the presentation is structured, including the organizational pattern as well as the inclusion of an introduction, body, and conclusion to the message.
- **Delivery** includes the verbal and nonverbal means by which the message is conveyed to the audience.

**Step 2. Analyze the audience**

Communicators often say things they regret or that are not well-received by audiences simply because the communicator failed to properly analyze his or her audience before speaking. Students must analyze their audience in order to tailor their message to that audience.

Speakers analyze their audience prior to a presentation so she/he can determine the knowledge level of an audience as well as factors such as likes and dislikes, attitudes, values, and so on. Speakers should also analyze demographic characteristics of an audience such as sex, age, ethnicity, religion, political affiliations, and so on. In short, a speaker should gather as much information as possible prior to giving a presentation, so that she or he presents the most useful, relevant information possible and avoids offending or embarrassing audience members during the presentation.

A speaker analyzes an audience by making observations of audience members prior to the presentation, or by having audience members complete a questionnaire that includes demographic and attitudinal information. Information about audience
members in a particular organization can be provided by a contact person in the organization or from the organization’s Web site.

**Audience Analysis** (PowerPoint presentation, 5 slides)

**PowerPoint Viewer from Microsoft** - download free viewer if you do not have PowerPoint software.

**Step 3. Determine the specific purpose**

While a general purpose is to inform, to persuade, or to entertain or move an audience, a specific purpose indicates the thesis, or the specific content, of a presentation. For example, you may ask your students to give an informative presentation on the work of an eminent architect. The general purpose is to inform, and the specific purpose might be to provide the audience with information about the work of Frank Lloyd Wright. The specific purpose narrows the topic and focuses the presentation. The specific purpose should be stated in the presentation so the audience knows exactly what to expect.

**Informative Speaking** (PowerPoint presentation)

**Persuasive Speaking** (PowerPoint presentation)

**PowerPoint Viewer from Microsoft** - download free viewer if you do not have PowerPoint software.

**Step 4. Research the presentation**

Students should gather facts, figures, examples, testimony, and so on to present to their audience. This information is gathered, for example, from library sources, the Internet, interviews, periodicals.

**Establishing Your Credibility & Presenting Evidence** (PowerPoint presentation, 10 slides)

**PowerPoint Viewer from Microsoft** - download free viewer if you do not have PowerPoint software.

**Step 5. Organize and outline the presentation**

After gathering information regarding the topic of the presentation, students should organize the information. This requires determining an appropriate organizational pattern and dividing the information into major points.

Presentations can be organized chronologically, topically, spatially (how things relate to one another by location or position), or by cause-effect or problem-solution patterns. Typically, presentations contain two to five major points.

It is helpful to have students prepare written outlines of their presentations, including an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.

The introduction of a presentation outline usually includes some type of device to gain the attention of the audience, such as a story, an anecdote, a quotation, or a
question for the audience to think about or to answer aloud. Also in the introduction is the thesis or specific purpose statement, which is typically a single declarative sentence. Finally, it is helpful to include a sentence which previews each of the major points to be included in the body of the presentation.

The body of the presentation outline includes the major points and sub-points or details to be covered in the presentation.

The conclusion of the presentation outline includes a summary of the major points covered and a statement that concludes the presentation smoothly. Preparation of a concluding statement helps students avoid an awkward ending to the presentation.

Sample: Oral Presentation Outline Format for Students

Organizing (PowerPoint presentation)

Outlining (PowerPoint presentation)

Introductions & Conclusions (PowerPoint presentation)

PowerPoint Viewer from Microsoft - download free viewer if you do not have PowerPoint software.

Step 6. Prepare visual aids

It is useful to have visual representations of material in a presentation. Visual aids make a presentation more clear, interesting, and memorable. Visual aids help a speaker capture the attention of the audience and also make the presentation more understandable to the audience.

Types of visual aids that students may use include PowerPoint, overhead transparencies, videotapes or DVDs, objects, models, drawings, people, slides, maps, photographs and charts or graphs.

Since the purpose of using visual aids is to enhance a presentation by providing a visual representation, it is important that students follow some basic rules in using visual aids:

- **Visual aids should be substantive.** Visual aids should add to the presentation

- **Visual aids should be easily seen by the audience.** Words, charts, photos, and so on need to be large enough so that everyone in the room can see them. Visual aids that are too small to see do not add to a presentation; indeed, they compromise the credibility of the speaker.

- **Speakers should not obstruct the audience's view of the visual aids.** If a speaker displays visual aids on a screen in front of the room, he/she should not stand in front of the screen.
• **Maintain eye contact while using the visual aids.** In other words, talk to the audience, not to the visual aid.

• **Explain the visual aids.** A speaker cannot assume that the audience will understand the visual aids; interpret and explain the visual aids.

• **Do not pass objects among the audience.** Speakers sometimes do this so that audience members can get a closer look at the object. However, if the object was too small, the speaker should not have used it. Passing objects among the audience is distracting. It would be better for the speaker to invite audience members to look at the objects after the presentation, or after class.

• **Use handouts appropriately.** Unless a speaker will refer to a handout throughout the presentation, it is best to wait until after the presentation to distribute handouts. Audience members can become distracted by reading the handout rather than listening to the speaker.

• **Use appropriate visual aids.** Dangerous or illegal visual aids should be avoided.

• **Practice the presentation with the visual aids.** Students should prepare visual aids well enough in advance so they can practice their presentation with them. This will give the students a good indication of how long it will take to display and discuss the visual aids during the actual presentation in class.

• **Learn how to use the equipment in the classroom.** It is helpful to emphasize to students the importance of planning visual aids in advance and making sure they know how to use any electronic or computer equipment ahead of time.

Many classrooms at UHM contain computers and other electronic equipment, and include instructions for using the equipment. To determine what equipment your classroom has, see the UHM Center for Instructional Support Web site:

www.cis.hawaii.edu

**Visual Aids** (PowerPoint presentation)

PowerPoint Viewer from Microsoft - download free viewer if you do not have PowerPoint software.

**Step 7. Rehearse the presentation**

It is helpful for students to rehearse their presentations many times before delivering the presentation to the class. The best way to do so is for students to practice the presentation from beginning to end (from introduction to concluding statement), following their outline and incorporating their visual aids.
If you have given students a time limit for the presentation (e.g. 10-12 minutes), encourage them to time their presentation when they practice. Students often think that five minutes is a very long time to speak in front of the class, and are quite surprised to learn that their presentation was actually 15 minutes long!

**Delivery & Nonverbal Cues** (PowerPoint presentation, 7 slides)

PowerPoint Viewer from Microsoft - download free viewer if you do not have PowerPoint software.

**Step 8. Deliver the presentation to the class**

Finally, students are ready to give their presentations to the class. There are various modes of delivery, and it is helpful to direct students to use the most appropriate mode for the situation.

A *manuscript* mode of delivery involves writing a presentation word-for-word and reading the presentation to the audience. It is used when a speaker needs to be very precise in what she/he says. For example, the President of the United States primarily uses a manuscript mode so as not to say something inappropriate or inaccurate.

A *memorized* mode of delivery involves writing a presentation word-for-word and reciting the presentation from memory. It is used for shorter presentations, such as introducing a speaker or delivering a toast or a eulogy.

An *impromptu* mode of delivery involves very little or no preparation or practice time. It is used for "on-the-spot" presentations such as participating in class, giving directions to someone on the street, or for presenting results of in-class activities.

An *extemporaneous* mode of delivery involves thorough preparation and practice and is conversational in style. It is used for most types of in-class presentations because it allows students to use notes while they speak and allows for flexibility during a presentation. For example, if a student is presenting from a manuscript, he/she cannot adapt to audience feedback by deviating from their script. With extemporaneous delivery, students can adjust the complexity or the length of their message to fit the situation at hand. Perhaps the best argument for an extemporaneous mode of delivery is that it is conversational and therefore more interesting for the audience to listen to.

It is important to look at various aspects of delivery when evaluating a speaker: Gestures and movement, vocal variety, eye contact, and use of visual aids.

**Gestures and movement.** Speakers should be encouraged to move about the room as they speak, rather than standing behind a podium or lectern for the entire presentation. This movement makes the presentation more interesting to listen to, creates a more immediate environment in which the physical and psychological distance between the speaker and the audience is lessened, and also helps a speaker channel their nervous energy. A moderate amount of movement is best;
more movement than simply standing in one place but not so much movement that it seems the speaker is pacing during the entire presentation. Gestures should not be planned but rather should occur naturally as a speaker delivers her/his presentation.

**Vocal variety:** Vocal variety includes tone of voice, the rate at which we speak, pitch, volume, proper pronunciation, articulation, and the use of pauses. Effective vocal variety is crucial to effective delivery. We are all familiar with speakers who talk so fast that their words become jumbled, or those who talk so slow and monotone that they put us to sleep.

Speakers should avoid using filled pauses such as "um," "uh," "like," and "you know." Speakers often vocalize pauses because they are uncomfortable with even a second of silence while standing before an audience. Emphasize to students that unfilled pauses are perfectly acceptable and can be used to emphasize important points in a presentation (e.g. the dramatic pause).

**Eye contact and facial expression.** Eye contact with an audience makes a speaker seem more believable and trustworthy and it also helps speakers gauge audience feedback. Speakers can use facial expressions to convey their feelings, attitudes and emotions. Appropriate facial expressions make a speaker more interesting to listen to and enhance a speaker’s credibility.

**Step 9. Self assess the presentation**

In our public speaking courses, student presentations are videotaped and the students watch the tape and write a self-evaluation of their performance. Even if videotaping is not possible, it is useful to have students reflect in some way on their presentation - the strengths of the presentation as well as things to work on for the next presentation.

**Sample: Self Evaluation Form for Students**

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7. Communication apprehension

Many students suffer communication apprehension (CA) -- "a fear or anxiety associated with communicating" (Richmond & McCroskey, 1998). CA is quite common, especially when it comes to public speaking. Highly apprehensive students are hesitant to take courses where oral communication is a component, and do so only if they need to fulfill certain requirements for their major and/or graduation.

CA is experienced not only in public speaking, but in any oral communication situation such as interpersonal communication, meetings, small group communication, talking on the phone, employment interviews, and so on. CA is experienced differently by everyone. Some people are not apprehensive about communicating regardless of the situation.
Students can assess their level of apprehension in different settings by completing the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24) (McCroskey, 1982).

Personal Report of Communication Apprehension - web format

Personal Report of Communication Apprehension - Acrobat (PDF) format for easy printing
ASAN 462 Presentation Peer Evaluation Form

Team #: __________ Speaker: ___________________________________ Date: _____________________

Content and Organization (Rate using five-point scale)  Comments on Content and Organization:

_____ Effective attention getter
    (lowest) 1 2 3 4 5 (highest)

_____ Main points and subpoints were clear, substantive
    (lowest) 1 2 3 4 5 (highest)

_____ Presentation was organized well
    (lowest) 1 2 3 4 5 (highest)

_____ Speaker presented compelling argument
    (lowest) 1 2 3 4 5 (highest)

_____ Concluding statement - presentation ended smoothly
    (lowest) 1 2 3 4 5 (highest)

_____ Quality of Content—How informative was the presentation?
    (lowest) 1 2 3 4 5 (highest)

Delivery (Rate using 1/bad to 5/great scale)  Comments on Delivery:

_____ Extemporaneous delivery; speaker was enthusiastic about topic
    (lowest) 1 2 3 4 5 (highest)

_____ Appropriate and effective eye contact
    (lowest) 1 2 3 4 5 (highest)

_____ Appropriate vocal variety (rate, pitch, volume)
    (lowest) 1 2 3 4 5 (highest)

_____ Appropriate and effective gestures and movement
    (lowest) 1 2 3 4 5 (highest)

_____ Appropriate and effective use of language
    (lowest) 1 2 3 4 5 (highest)

_____ Visual aids were effective
    (lowest) 1 2 3 4 5 (highest)

What grade would you give this presentation? F D C B A

General Assessment (separate sheet)

What did you like about this presentation?

What suggestions do you have for the speaker?