

**POLS 307H (E/ WI)**

**Contemporary Social Issues and Social Movements in Japan**

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**Course Overview**

This course is designed to introduce contemporary social issues and various forms of social movements in Japan. We will explore social issues such as unemployment, gender inequality, poverty, violations of minority rights, and environmental issues. For example, Japan as one of the most developed countries in the world has also experienced poverty issues. What are those poverty issues? How are the issues being addressed in Japanese society? How would you compare and contrast the poverty issues in the third world countries with Japanese experiences?

Japan has experienced serious economic as well as socio-political turmoil from the mid-1990s, thereby, facing various challenges to the cultural underpinnings of inequalities and discrimination. Broad consensus and widespread contention on the role and importance of human rights from the mid-1990s also brought about dramatic changes of social movements in Japan. How does ethical deliberation (i.e. recognition of international human rights norms, ratification of treaties on human rights protection, etc.) change the landscape of social movements in Japan? We will explore theoretical and empirical questions about the role of human rights in the context of Japanese social movements.

“This course has Contemporary Ethical Issues (E) and Writing Intensive (WI) Focus designation. Contemporary ethical issues are fully integrated into the main course material and will constitute at least 30% of the content. At least 8 hours of class time will be spent discussing ethical issues. Through the use of lectures, discussions and assignments, students will develop basic competency in recognizing and analyzing ethical issues; responsibly deliberating on ethical issues; and making ethically determined judgments.”

**Course Objectives/ Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this semester, students will be able to

- 1> Understand various social issues in Japan.
- 2> Understand a variety of theoretical frameworks for analyzing contemporary ethical issues.

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- 3> Raise awareness in the ethical aspects of the social issues.
- 4> Explore grey areas of controversial issues in relation to personal experiences and values.
- 5> Discuss how Japanese belief about the cultural uniqueness have influences on Japanese social movements.
- 6> Understand how the adaptation of the universal human rights has changed the landscape of social movements in Japan.
- 7> Discuss how the international human rights have influenced changes in Japanese social and cultural norms.

### **Course Assignments & Grading**

This is an advanced undergraduate course, and what you learn in this course depends on the time you commit to reading material, the effort you make to understand the material, the quality of your contributions to the discussion, and the quality of your written assignments. Please keep this in mind that skipping readings and failing to turn in assignments on time will hurt your final grade. (You need to work at least 5 hours a week.)

This is an online course and we will use the UH Lulima system for assignment submission and communication. For the class discussion on Lulima, I suggest that you read the assignments well in advance and have enough time to think about them prior to the online discussion. I assigned a limited number of reading materials for intensive reading. Merely skimming your readings might cause you difficulties to participate in the discussions. I strongly recommend note-taking of the readings, and prepare questions and comments for discussion.

All writing assignments should be double-spaced, with 1-inch margins (top, bottom, left, and right), and in a font no smaller than Times New Roman 11. They should follow the general rules of academic writing including the rules of grammar and spelling. Students are expected to submit all assignments by the due dates. Unless accompanied by a legitimate and documented excuse, one full letter grade will be docked every 24 hours past the deadline. All paper assignments must be completed in order to receive a passing grade in the course. (There is no incomplete.) The instructor's comments and grades on written assignments will be given within 2 weeks of their submission.

#### **Critical Analysis Paper (15%).**

You will choose which week you want to lead the class discussion. You will be responsible for introducing the reading on the chosen week. You should explain major concepts of the readings,

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offer some analysis, highlight important arguments, and raise some questions in your critical analysis paper. (This paper should not be a mere list of your questions on the reading, though you should wrap it up by posing a question or two for discussion.) Your critical analysis paper should be within a range of 300-500 words. You will be graded on the organization of the paper, the content, and so on. More details will be handed out later.

### Three Short Papers (15% each).

There will be three short papers during the semester. The papers will be graded on mechanics, format, organization, style, substance, and logic. Your drafts of these assignments will be ungraded, but you will workshop a draft of each paper by a small group of your peers to facilitate the writing process. You will rewrite the paper based on those comments, then, you will submit the final version of your paper to the instructor for a grade and written comments. Working in this way will give you opportunities to help each other improve writing through processing of draft and revision.

Writing workshop groups will consist of 3-5 students each depending on the size of the class. You will be responsible for submitting copies of your draft to your group members. You will use your colleagues' comments to revise your draft. Instructor's feedback on your draft will be given only for the first short paper. All the due dates (dates for submitting drafts to your workshop group and dates for submitting your revised paper to the instructor) will be clearly marked in the separate POLS 307H calendar. A more detailed assignment sheet will be distributed later.

Paper 1: You will be asked to write a five-page analytical paper on five different approaches to values to deal with moral issues (Velasquez et al.). You should explain what these five approaches are, and how the arguments in the readings for week 2, 3, and 4, reflect these approaches. A more detailed assignment sheet will be provided later.

Paper 2: You will be asked to write a five-page critical analysis of how minorities' rights are defined in the readings for week 5, 6, and 7, and whether that conceptualization is adequate. If it is adequate, discuss why. If you think it is not adequate, why not and how can it be strengthened? You should also reflect on whether and how the understanding of minorities' rights in the United States (or your country of origin) differs from the global standard and the general understanding in Japan. A more detailed guideline will be given later.

Paper 3: The third paper will cover the environmental issues. Write a five-page essay that 1) outline the main arguments presented in the readings for week 8, 2) analyze how these arguments reflect the five different ethical approaches, 3) discuss how the situation presented in each article can be explained and analyzed differently under the ethical dilemmas of fighting for and exercising the particular aspect of human rights. A more detailed assignment sheet will be provided later.

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Three Comments on Colleagues' drafts (5% each).

You will read your colleagues' drafts and provide comments to help them improve their short papers. Based on your comments, they will revise the short paper. Your comments should be within a range of 250-500 words (1-2 pages).

You will also receive written feedback from colleagues and the instructor on your comments. Although your colleagues' feedback will not have any impacts on a grade, it will help you figure out which part of your comments actually help your classmates improve the quality of the short paper. Schedules and the rubric will be distributed later.

Class Discussion (25%).

This is a discussion-based online class. Students are required to actively participate in class discussions. We will discuss topics through Lulima discussion board, and one of your colleague will lead the discussion each chosen week. You should submit three posts at least, an initial post early in the week and two subsequent responses to the posts of other learners at timely intervals throughout the duration of the session. Posts and responses should be thorough and thoughtful. Just posting an "I agree" or "Good ideas" will not be considered adequate. Posts should be within a range of 75-150 words. A post that does not meet the minimum word count of 75, will not count toward your grade. Rubric for evaluating class discussion will be distributed later.

**Readings**

All readings will be available in electronic form. (Check the resource section on Lulima.) Students are expected to keep up with each week's readings. Recommended readings are not mandatory. They are provided just in case students want to read more.

**Academic Integrity**

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will result in an "F" for the course. If you borrow words, ideas, thoughts, etc. from someone, you must give them credit. Purchasing papers online and turning in work written for another course without the instructor's permission is also unacceptable. All such matters will be referred to the department chair. UHM website on academic dishonesty and related issues is available at:

<The University of Hawaii Student Conduct Code>  
[http://studentaffairs.manoa.hawaii.edu/policies/conduct\\_code](http://studentaffairs.manoa.hawaii.edu/policies/conduct_code)

<The University of Hawaii at Manoa Campus Policies>  
<http://www.catalog.hawaii.edu/about-uh/campus-policies1.htm>

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**Grading Scale**

97-100% = A+

94-96% = A

90-93% = A-

87-89% = B+

84-86% = B

80-83% = B-

77-79% = C+

74-76% = C

70-73% = C-

67-69% = D+

64-66% = D

**Kokua Program**

If you need reasonable accommodations because of the impact of a disability, please contact the Kokua Program at Room 013 of the Queen Lili'uokalani Center for Student Services, Tel: 808 956 7511, 808 956 7612, E-mail: kokua@hawaii.edu. You can also speak with me privately to discuss your specific needs. I will be happy to work with you and the Kokua Program to meet your access needs related to your documented disability. (<http://www.hawaii.edu/kokua/>)

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## **Course Schedule**

### **Week 1 Introduction: Universality and Particularity**

#### **Required Readings**

Burgess, Chris. 2010 (March 1). "The 'Illusion' of Homogeneous Japan and National Character: Discourse as a Tool to Transcend the 'Myth' vs. 'Reality' Binary," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 9-1-10.

Available online at: <http://japanfocus.org/-chrisburgess/3310#sthash.oTzObtbY.dpuf>

Velasquez et al. "Thinking Ethically: A Framework for Moral Decision Making".

Available online at: <https://www.scu.edu/ethics/ethics-resources/ethical-decision-making/thinking-ethically/>

### **Week 2 Employment**

#### **Required Readings**

Turner, Christena. 2014. "Becoming Unforgettable: Leveraging Law for Labor in Struggles for Employment Security," In Patricia Steinhoff (eds.). *Going to Court to Change Japan: Social Movements and the Law in Contemporary Japan*. Center for Japanese Studies, The University of Michigan. Chapter 4.

#### **Recommended Readings**

Rebeck, Marcus. 2011. "Gender Inequality in the Workplace in Japan" In Sato, Y and J. Imai (eds.). *Japan's New Inequality: Intersection of Employment Reforms and Welfare Arrangements*. Trans Pacific Press. Chapter 4.

Whitelaw, Gavin. 2014. "Shelf Lives and the Labors of Loss: Food, Livelihoods, and Japan's Convenience Stores" In Satsuki Kawano, Glenda S. Roberts, and Susan Orpett Long (eds.) *Capturing Contemporary Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

\*\*\* Scheduling class discussion and choosing discussion leader due on June 16 (Friday).

### **Week 3 Gender and Family**

#### **Required Readings**

North, Scott (2009). "Negotiating What's 'Natural': Persistent Domestic Gender Role Inequality in Japan," *Social Science Japan Journal* 12(1):23-44.

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### Video Clips

Gender, Demography and the Problems of Japan's Economy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQncjUKLgEk>

The Gender Gap in Japan

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EqhDI7bfBw0>

### Recommended Readings

Allison, Anne (1999). "Japanese Mothers and Obentos: The Lunch-box as Ideological State Apparatus," *Anthropological Quarterly* 64(4): 195-208.

Kawano, Satsuki. 2014. "“Who will care for me when I am dead?” Ancestors, homeless spirits, and new afterlives in low-fertility Japan,' *Contemporary Japan* 26(1).

Available online at: [http://www.degruyter.com/view/j/cj\\_cj.2014.26.issue-1\\_20140226101600/cj-2014-0003/cj-2014-0003.xml?format=INT](http://www.degruyter.com/view/j/cj_cj.2014.26.issue-1_20140226101600/cj-2014-0003/cj-2014-0003.xml?format=INT)

Yamada, Kazuyo (2009). "Past and Present Constraints on Labor Movements for Gender Equality in Japan," *Social Science Japan Journal* 12(2):195-209.

## Week 4 **Welfare and Poverty**

### Required Readings

Gill, Tom. 2012. 'Failed Manhood on the Streets of Urban Japan: The Meanings of Self-Reliance for Homeless Men,' *The Asia-Pacific Journal* Vol 10, Issue 1 No 2.

Available online at: <http://www.japanfocus.org/-Tom-Gill/3671>

### Video Clips

Single Mothers Lead Japan's Poor Population

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=87C9MyDwA9I>

Tokyo City Series: Homeless in Tokyo

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Moiq6Wrp8>

### Recommended Readings

Aoki, Osamu and Deborah McDowell Aoki (2005). "Invisible Poverty in Japan: Case Studies

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and Realities of Single Mothers,” *Journal of Poverty* 9(1):1-21.

Iwata, Masami. 2010. ‘New landscape of homelessness in Japan: The role of NPOs and landscape of the problem.’ *City, Culture and Society* 2010. vol 1. 127-134.

Obinger, Julia. 2009. ‘Working on the Margins: Japan's Precariat and Working Poor.’ *Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies*.

Available online at: <http://www.japanesestudies.org.uk/discussionpapers/2009/Obinger.html>

\*\*\*1<sup>st</sup> Short Paper due on June 30 (Friday).

## Week 5 **Disability**

### Required Readings

Nakamura Karen. 2014. “No Voice in the Courtroom: Deaf Legal Cases in the 1960s,” In Patricia Steinhoff (eds.). *Going to Court to Change Japan: Social Movements and the Law in Contemporary Japan*. Center for Japanese Studies, The University of Michigan. Chapter 6.

### Video Clips

Japan’s “Disability Stigma” in Spotlight

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cS8fSDa\\_syM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cS8fSDa_syM)

### Recommended Readings

Hayashi, R and Okuhira, M. 2001. ‘The Disability Rights Movement in Japan: Past, present and future,’ *Disability & Society*. 16(6): 855-869.

Stevens, Carolyn. 2007. ‘Living with Disability in Urban Japan,’ *Japanese Studies* 27(3): 263-278.

Stibbe, Arran. 2004. ‘Disability, Gender and Power in Japanese Television Drama’ *Japan Forum* 16(1): 21-36.

## Week 6 **Minorities and Ethnicity**

### Required Readings

Shin, Hwaji. 2010. “Colonial Legacy of Ethno-racial Inequality in Japan,” *Theoretical Sociology* 39:327-342.

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### Video Clips

“People don’t believe I am Japanese” says Miss Japan-BBC News

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-5sHglFbO8>

101 East: Japan’s Ainu

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iA7BILX-q4I>

Hafu: The Mixed-Race Experience in Japan (Movie)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6j\\_wQQZY-OE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6j_wQQZY-OE)

### Recommended Readings

Cleveland, Kyle. 2014. ‘Hiding in Plain Sight: Minority Issues in Japan’ In Kingston, Jeff (ed.) *Critical Issues in Contemporary Japan*. Routledge.

Kim, Bumsoo. 2008. “Bringing Class Back In: The Changing Basis of Inequality and the Korean Minority in Japan,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 31(5):871-898.

McLelland, Mark, Katsuhiko Suganuma, and James Welker (eds.). 2007. *Queer Voices from Japan: First Person Narratives from Japan's Sexual Minorities*. Lexington Books. Chapter 1 & 2.

Ryang, Sonia (ed.). 2013. *Koreans in Japan: Critical Voices from the Margin*. London and New York: Routledge. Chapter 1 and 2.

Suzuki, David and Keibo Oiwa. 1999. “Shared Blood, Different Futures,” in *The Other Japan: Voices Beyond the Mainstream*. Fulcrum Publishing. Chapter 6 (pp.125-158)

Takenaka, Ayumi. 2010. “How Ethnic Minorities Experience Social Mobility in Japan: An Ethnographic Study of Peruvian Migrants,” in Ishida, Hiroshi and David H. Slater (eds.). *Social Class in Contemporary Japan: Structures, Sorting and Strategies*. London and New York: Routledge.

## Week 7 **Forced Migration**

### Required Readings

Flowers, Petrice. 2008. ‘Failure to Protect Refugees? Domestic Institutions, International Organizations, and civil society in Japan,’ *The Journal of Japanese Studies* Vol. 34 (2).

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### Video Clips

Japan became first Asian country to resettle refugees

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCbU\\_vbAN84](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCbU_vbAN84)

Why does Japan accept so few refugees- BBC News

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cbfHr\\_soYrs&t=81s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cbfHr_soYrs&t=81s)

### Recommended Readings

Otsuki, N. and Hatano, K. 2009. 'Japanese Perceptions of Trafficking in Persons: An Analysis of the 'Demand' for Sexual Services and Policies for Dealing with Trafficking Survivors', *Social Science Japan Journal*, 12(1): 45-70.

\*\*\*2<sup>nd</sup> Short Paper due on July 21 (Friday).

## Week 8 **Environmental Issues and Disasters**

### Required Readings

DeCosse, David. 2017. 'Magokoro' meets Caritas: Catholic relief efforts in the Fukushima nuclear disaster zone,' *National Catholic Reporter*. Available online at:

<https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/magokoro-meets-caritas-catholic-relief-efforts-fukushima-nuclear-disaster-zone>

Freiner, N. 2013. Mobilizing Mothers: The Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Catastrophe and Environmental Activism in Japan. *ASIA Network Exchange*, Vol.21 (1), pp. 1-15.

### Video Clips

The Radioactive Forest of Fukushima (Documentary 2017)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3FFM8SC-bmk>

Mass Japanese Anti-Nuclear Rally in Tokyo

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kPPJrL8ayzs>

Anti-Nuclear Sentiment Grows in Japan

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6JMU-ITomKw>

### Recommended Readings

Dewit, A., Iida, T., and Kaneko, M. (2012). Fukushima and the Political Economy of Power

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Policy in Japan (Chapter 9, pp.156-171). In Kingston, J. (Ed.). (2012). *Natural Disaster and Nuclear Crisis in Japan: Response and Recovery after Japan's 3/11*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Slater, David, Nishimura, Keiko and Love Kindstrand. 2012. Social Media, Information and Political Activism in Japan's 3.11 Crisis. *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Vol 10, Issue 24, No 1

## Week 9    **Social Movements and Protest**

### Required Readings

Avenall, Simon. 2009. 'Civil Society and the New Civic Movements in Contemporary Japan: Convergence, Collaboration and Transformation' *The Journal of Japanese Studies* Vol. 35 (2): 247-283.

### Recommended Readings

Cassegård, Carl. 2008. 'From Withdrawal to Resistance. The Rhetoric of Exit in Yoshimoto Takaaki and Karatani Kojin,' *Japan Focus*.

Available online at: <http://www.japanfocus.org/-Carl-Cassegard/2684>

Hasegawa, Koichi, Chika Shinohara, and Jeffrey Broadbent (2007). "The Effect of 'Social Expectation' on the Development of Civil Society in Japan." *Journal of Civil Society* 3(2): 179-203.

Morioka Rika. 2013. 'Mother Courage: Women as Activists between a Passive Populace and a Paralyzed Government.' In Slater, David, T. Gill and B. Steger (eds.). *Japan Copes with Calamity Ethnographies of the Earthquake, Tsunami and Nuclear Disasters of March 2011*.

Tsutsui, Kiyoteru and Hwa-Ji Shin (2008). "Global Norms, Local Activism, and Social Movement Outcomes: Global Human Rights and Resident Koreans in Japan." *Social Problems* 55(3): 391-418.

## Week 10    **Review Session**

\*\*\*3<sup>rd</sup> Short Paper due on August 11(Friday).