Japanese Society in Global Perspective
SYD 4451

Instructor:
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Associate Professor
FIU Global and Sociocultural Studies, Asian Studies
mmarr@fiu.edu; TEL (305) 348-4004 (but email is best)

Office Hours and Location:
Thursday 11:00 AM- 1:00 PM, SIPA 323
(email for other appointments)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides a sociological introduction to contemporary Japan from a global perspective. We focus primarily on the post-bubble era (1990-present) and emphasize issues that are prominent in Japanese society today, but also broadly cover the social foundations of post-World War II development. We explore pressing questions facing Japanese citizens, communities, governments, and scholars. Instead of studying Japan as an isolated and homogeneous island nation, we examine its position in broader global society. We take a transnational and/or comparative perspective, especially in relation to American society, if not always in readings then in lectures and discussion. We explore the following broad questions important to understanding contemporary Japanese society. What is and is not unique about Japanese society and culture? What social structures supported the period of rapid economic growth? What does the metaphor of the ‘economic miracle’ obscure about postwar Japanese society? To what extent are inequality and poverty growing in Japan? How are gender relations being transformed in Japan? To what extent is Japan becoming more multicultural? What are the experiences of immigrant communities in Japan? How is ‘deviance’ socially constructed in Japan? How are communities and social movement organizations addressing social problems in Japan? What is the nature of the recent emphasis on ‘cool Japan’ and ‘soft power’ as means to ensure and expand the country’s global stature? How have all of these issues been affected by the 3/11 triple disasters?
LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Gain in-depth, empirically-based knowledge of social issues and dynamics in contemporary Japan.
- Be able to critique “essentializing” descriptions of Japanese and other cultures and societies.
- Understand how processes of globalization are affecting contemporary Japan.
- Understand Japan’s position and role in global society.
- Be able to reflect on how Japan’s response to social problems related to globalization can shed light on experiences of other advanced capitalist countries.

GLOBAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

This is a Discipline-specific Global Learning course that counts towards your FIU Global Learning graduation requirement.

- Global awareness: Students will be able to demonstrate understanding of how processes of economic, demographic, and cultural globalization interact with social institutions and conditions in contemporary Japan.
  o Assessment: Student-led discussions will be assessed using a global learning awareness matrix to identify the extent to which the interrelatedness of multilevel causes of social issues in Japan are discussed.
- Global perspective: Students will be able to analyze how global and local social contexts interact to generate social problems in contemporary Japan.
  o Assessment: Individual term papers will be examined to assess the extent to which they adjudicate between different theoretical perspectives on a social issue. A global learning perspective rubric will be applied to these assignments.
- Global engagement: Students will be able to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of possible solutions to social problems related to globalization in contemporary Japan.
  o Assessment: Individual term papers will also be assessed according to the extent to which potential solutions to social problems are explored in the paper.

REQUIRED TEXT


Additional mandatory readings providing varying perspectives on weekly topics are included in the weekly schedule below and will be available on-line.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING:

Participation

Attendance at each class meeting from start to finish is required. I will be taking attendance either at the beginning of lecture and/or at the end of class. Attendance does not simply mean
showing up, but showing up prepared. Thus, you are to do all assigned readings (lecture and
discussion) prior to class. You should also be prepared to participate in discussions in class
and/or to ask and answer questions about the material. Attendance will be worth one half of your
participation grade. Students participating in University-sanctioned events (athletes, debaters,
musicians, etc.) must inform me in advance of any event that will conflict with class time and
make up work they miss. Documentation must also be submitted before the event.

You will be required to lead (possibly with a partner, depending upon enrollment) one of the
approximately 30-minute class discussions based on one of the “discussion readings”
(indicated by DR below). At the beginning of the course, you will sign up for the session for
which you will be responsible by emailing me your preference. Sessions will be assigned on a
first-emailed, first-served basis. You must email me your preference by midnight Monday,
September 1. I will post the schedule on Canvas and you will be responsible for remembering
when you are assigned.

When leading discussion, you will need to come up with questions about or issues in the
readings that will stimulate ideas, discussion, and debate among your peers regarding causes and
solutions for important social problems. Your discussion should connect the social issue in Japan
that is the focus of the reading with processes of globalization. You can be creative with this but
remember, this is a discussion, not a presentation. One option is to have the group discuss how
the social phenomenon in Japan in the reading is similar or different in the US or another
country. Some summary and clarification of the material is good, but the real trick is to stimulate
discussion, something not as easy as it may seem. You can consult me about how to do this in
class, during office hours, or via email and, of course, I will be there to help keep things going.
As the difficulty in stimulating discussion will vary according to the readings and the moods of
classmates on any particular day, you will be evaluated more for effort than the actual discussion.
Leadership of discussion will be worth one half of your participation grade.

Reading Quizzes

Throughout the semester, there will be at least six unannounced quizzes on any reading, but also
covering previous lecture materials. The purpose of these quizzes is to ensure that you are
keeping up with and understanding the readings and lectures. The quizzes will not require you to
memorize minute details from the readings, but will be focused on what the readings discuss
about how processes of economic, demographic, and cultural globalization interact with social
institutions in contemporary Japan. These will include about five simple, multiple choice or
true/false questions. You will not have an opportunity to make up these quizzes. You will be able
to drop your lowest grade on these quizzes.

I reserve the right to have pop quizzes on any reading, so stay on top of them!

Term Paper and Assignments:

The term paper will be a social science literature review paper developed around a topic of your
interest. Your paper will be focused on Japan, but will address a social issue of global import (for
example, immigration, gender, inequality, etc.). You will use at least 5 scholarly sources to
develop a theoretically organized review of major research on a specific, sociological research question. Your paper is to be around 2,000 to 3,000 words, not including references. There will be the following assignments (dates are below in the class schedule) that will guide you through completion of the paper. Some assignments will be done in class, but most will involve submitting material via Canvas. Late assignments will not be accepted.

a) film response  
b) library exercise  
c) sociological topic and question  
d) literature review references 1st draft (peer review)  
e) literature review references 2nd draft  
f) theoretical perspectives  
g) evidence/support  
h) literature review 1st draft (peer review)  
i) 2nd draft (to be submitted on-line)

I will provide a more complete explanation of the paper and these assignments early in the course.

Presentation

All students will be giving a brief presentation (10 to 15 minutes) on their term paper. You can use presentation software (Powerpoint, Keynote, etc.) and other visual aids. I will go over some ways to make effective presentations in class.

Grading

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Term Paper</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Quizzes</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper Presentation</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term Paper Assignments</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100</td>
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LATE WORK/INCOMPLETE

Late work/incompletes without legitimate and documented excuses will not be allowed.

CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

DO NOT EVEN THINK ABOUT IT!

Cheating and plagiarism will be sought out and eliminated at its root with full force. Please consult the section on “Academic Misconduct” in the annual Student Handbook for definitions of both. I will be submitting all papers to Turnitin.com to identify cases of plagiarism (direct copying of text from books, on-line resources, etc. without proper citation, submitting papers
from other courses). In all cases of cheating and plagiarism, the severest of penalties allowed by university policy (up to and including expulsion) may be pursued.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**IMPORTANT!!! PLEASE READ CAREFULLY!**

Readings marked (LR) are those on which I will base my in-class lectures. I will not repeat what is covered in these readings, but highlight certain points and spend most of the time elaborating on central ideas with other materials. These will generally be covered on Tuesdays. Readings marked (DR) are those that we will base our classroom discussion around (those that students will lead) and will generally be covered on Thursdays. (GR) refers to readings that the graduate students are assigned, which will generally be covered on Thursdays. Those marked (RR) are not assigned but might be good references for your course project if you are writing on that particular topic.

**Week 1 (Aug. 27, 29): Introduction to the Course**

In-class film screening

**Term paper assignment A, Film response**

**Week 2 (Sept. 2, 4): Nihonjinron-- (The Myth of) Japanese Uniqueness**


**Week 3 (Sept. 10, 12): Library Exercise (term paper assignment B) Meet in GL 280 on Thursday**


Distribute term paper assignment

**Week 4 (Sept. 17, 19): Work, the Miracle, and the Underbelly**


Week 5 (Sept. 24, 26): Education, the Burst of the Bubble, and Growing Instability in Japan


Term paper assignment C, “Sociological Topic & Question”

(GR) Allison, Anne (2013). Precarious Japan. Chapters 6-7


Week 6 (Oct. 1, 3): Gender, Work, and Family Part 1


Term paper assignment D, “Literature Review References 1st Draft”


Week 7 (Oct. 8, 10): Gender, Work, and Family Part 2

NO LECTURE READING

Term paper assignment E, “Literature Review References 2nd Draft”


Week 8 (Oct. 15, 17): Poverty and Welfare in Japan


Week 9 (Oct. 22, 24): Ethnicity and Status in Japan


Term paper assignment F, “Theoretical Perspectives”


Week 10 (Oct. 29, 31): Migration to and from Japan

NO LECTURE READING


Week 11 (Nov. 5, 7): Crime and Deviance in Japan


Term paper assignment G, “Evidence/Support”


Week 12 (Nov. 12, 14): Social Movements


Week 13 (Nov. 19, 21): Cool Japan


In class assignment H, “Literature Review 1st Draft”

(GR) TBD


Week 14 (Nov. 26): More Cool Japan


In class assignment I, “Literature Review 2nd Draft”


Week 15 (Nov. 27, 29)


Finals Week (date TBA): Student Presentations
Term paper due (date TBA)
Global Learning Course
Assessment Matrix

Faculty Name:
Course: SYD 4451, ASN 3931 Japanese Society in Global Perspective
Academic Unit: Global & Sociocultural Studies, Asian Studies  
Degree Program: B.A. Sociology, B.A. Asian Studies  
Semester Assessed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Global Learning Student Learning Outcome Addressed</th>
<th>Assessment Method</th>
<th>Assessment Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Global Awareness**: Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the interrelatedness of local, global, international, and intercultural issues, trends, and systems. | Assessment Activity/Artifact:  
Student-led discussion of assigned reading.  
Evaluation Process:  
Demonstration of interrelatedness in student-led discussion (using GL awareness rubric, see attached rubric and syllabus).  
Minimum Criteria for Success:  
Student-led discussion links an issue in Japanese society with processes of globalization (2 or above on the GL rubric awareness rubric).  
Sample: All students will be assessed. | |

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| Use of Results for Improving Student Learning | |
|---------------------------------------------| |
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Assessment Matrix

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<td><strong>Global Perspective:</strong> Students will be able to conduct a multi-perspective analysis of local, global, international, and intercultural problems.</td>
<td>Assessment Activity/Artifact: Literature review paper organized around a sociological research question that explores how global and local social contexts interact to generate specific social problems in Japan. Evaluation Process: The extent to which the papers adjudicate between different theoretical perspectives, including those that are global and local in orientation, in addressing their chosen research question. (using the GL perspective rubric)</td>
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<td><strong>Global Engagement:</strong> Students will be able to demonstrate willingness to engage in local, global, international, and intercultural problem solving.</td>
<td>Assessment Activity/artifact: Literature review paper organized around a sociological research question that explores how global and local social contexts interact to shape specific social problems in Japan. Evaluation Process: The extent to which they identified and explored possible solutions to the social problem that was the focus of their paper.</td>
<td>Minimum Criteria for Success: A grade of “C” on the assignment. Sample: All students will be assessed.</td>
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**Course Learning Outcome**  
Students will be able to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of possible solutions to social problems related to globalization in contemporary Japan.

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Japanese Society in Global Perspective
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Degree Program: B.A. Sociology, B.A. Asian Studies
Semester Assessed: [Semester]

May 18, 2021

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