

# Culture, Power and Belonging in Japan

## Anthropological Perspectives on the Making of Minorities and Majorities

### Section 1

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#### 【Course Outline / Description】

This course focuses on the shifting conditions of cultural minority and marginalized groups in Japan, in particular: the Ainu, Okinawans, those of Buraku “outcaste” heritage, ethnic Koreans tracing their heritage from the colonial era, Nikkei “return” migrants, people with “mixed roots” (*haafu*) and the growing Chinese, Vietnamese and South Asian communities and other “newcomer” foreigners.

The unifying theme of the course is “belonging,” referring to the ideas and practices that structure social inclusion and exclusion. Belonging encompasses both formal membership rights in a polity (often referred to as “citizenship”), as well as aspects of social acceptance and recognition in other institutions, both formal and informal, such as neighborhoods, schools and the media. Based on the argument that boundaries of inclusion may also produce their own exclusions, we will also investigate the construction of the “majority,” that is, the boundaries of national belonging and mainstream norms.

The broad themes to be addressed include: “culture,” “tradition” and formation of national identity; the role of the State, capital and colonialism in the creation of national, ethnic and caste boundaries; the symbolic processes by which groups are stigmatized and marked as subordinate “others”; administrative and legal technologies involved in the construction and regulation of social boundaries; the diverse actions and responses on the part of marginalized status groups to gain recognition, inclusion and justice; the creative use of “culture,” traditional and popular, in identity movements; and the changing Japanese social context (e.g., globalization, post-9/11 security concerns, increasing social inequalities, below-replacement fertility rates, effects of the pandemic) and recent shifts in beliefs, practices and experiences of belonging.

Osaka and the Kansai region provide a rich landscape for encountering and learning from a variety of minority communities. Opportunities will be made in the course for experiencing aspects of Japan's cultural diversity such as language, music, and cuisine, including, to the extent possible, in an online format. And we will take full advantage of comparative opportunities to reflect on our own experiences of belonging and ethnic identity in and outside of Japan.

### Section 2

#### 【Course Objectives/Goals/Learning Outcomes】

In this course, students should (1) develop an understanding of historical and social processes that shape conditions and experiences of belonging in Japan; (2) increase their understanding of the historical formation and current situation of minority groups in Japan such as the Ainu, Burakumin, Okinawans, Koreans and “newcomer” foreigners; and (3) develop conceptual tools necessary for understanding the interrelationships of culture, power and belonging in Japan and elsewhere in the modern world. Along the way, students are also expected to (4) develop critical thinking skills through close reading and discussion of written and audio-visual materials, discussion and debate, and (5) develop skills of expression and

argumentation in written form, in oral form through group presentation, and in class discussion.

### Section 3

#### 【Class Schedule/Class Environment, Literature and Materials】

#### Schedule

Please note, even-numbered sessions (“2, 4, 6,“ etc.) are scheduled as asynchronous, or “on-demand” sessions. They will generally involve reading, film viewing or other assignments done as homework at the student’s convenience. Occasionally, live lecture may be held at the scheduled time of those sessions for those able to attend on an optional basis. Unless otherwise stated, recordings of Zoom class sessions will be made available to class members.

- Session 1

Introduction to the course

#### **Culture, power and community in modernity**

- Session 2

1. Anderson, Benedict, “Introduction,” from *Imagined Communities*
2. Calhoun, Craig, “Introduction,” from *Nationalism*

- Session 3

3. Tai, Eika, “Rethinking Culture, National Culture, and Japanese Culture”

- Session 4

4. Morris-Suzuki, Tessa, “Japan,” from *Reinventing Japan*

- Session 5

4. Morris-Suzuki, Tessa, “Japan,” from *Reinventing Japan* (cont'd)
5. Fujitani, Takashi, “Inventing, Forgetting, Remembering”

#### **Ainu: From settler colonialism to indigenous identity**

- Session 6

9. Hughes, Lotte, “Overview,”

FILM: *Ainu: The Way Forward* (*Shin-kyōsei e no michi: Nihon no senju minzoku*.Hokkaidō Ainu Association, producer. 2000)

- Session 7

10. Siddle, Richard, “Ainu: Indigenous People of Japan”

- Session 8

12. Siddle, Richard, “An epoch-making event? The 1997 Ainu Cultural Promotion Act and Its Impact”

- Session 9

Yamamura, T. (2014), “Heritage Tourism and Indigenous Tourism,” in Okada, M.

and Kato, H., *Indigenous Heritage and Tourism: Theories and Practices on Utilizing the Ainu Heritage*. Sapporo: Hokkaido University Center for Ainu and Indigenous Studies, pp. 39-47.

14. Onishi, Norimitsu, "Nibutani Journal: Recognition for a People Who Faded as Japan Grew"
15. Foster, Malcom, "Ainu Stepping Out of Social Stigma"

• Session 10

lewallen, ann-elise (2017). "Ainu Women and Indigenous Modernity in Settler Colonial Japan." *The Asia-Pacific Journal/Japan Focus* 15 (18), 2.  
<http://apjif.org/2017/18/lewallen.html>

**Burakumin: Stigmatization, segregation and the struggle for integration**

• Session 11

16. Neary, Ian, "Burakumin in Contemporary Japan"

• Session 12

Bondy, Christopher (2015), "Lessons of Silence: Buraku Issues in School" (Ch. 4), from *Voice, Silence, and Self: Negotiations of Buraku Identity in Contemporary Japan*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, pp. 55-85.

• Session 13

MIDTERM EXAM

**Okinawa: Incorporation at the margins**

• Session 14

19. Rabson, Steve, "Assimilation Policy in Okinawa"

• Session 15

20. Rabson, Steve, "Memories of Okinawa: Life and Times in the Greater Osaka Diaspora"

• Session 16

22. Ishihara, Masaie, "Memories of War and Okinawa"  
(*Opt.*: 21. Ota, Masahide, "Re-examining the History of the Battle of Okinawa")

• Session 17

25. Gillan, Matt, "Imagining Okinawa: Japanese Pop Musicians and Okinawan Music"

**Koreans in Japan: Between assimilation and heritage identity**

• Session 18

26. Kang, Hildi, "Becoming Japanese"

• Session 19

27. Weiner, Michael and David Chapman, “Zainichi Koreans in History and Memory”

• Session 20

Ryang, Sonia (2016). “The Rise and Fall of Chongryun—From Chōsenjin to Zainichi and Beyond.” *The Asia-Pacific Journal/Japan Focus* 14 (15), 11. <http://apjff.org/2016/15/Ryang.html> [BB]

FILM: *Dear Pyongyang* (YANG Yonghi, 2005, 107 min.)

• Session 21

28. Hester, Jeffrey, “Kids between Nations”

• Session 22

Penney, Matthew (2013). “Racists Go Home!”, ‘Go Crawl Back to the Net!’ – Anti-Racism Protestors Confront the Zaitokukai.” *Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus Newsletter* (No. 16, 22 April 2013). <http://apjff.org/Matthew-Penney/4758/article.html>

FILM: *GO* (YUKISADA Isao, Dir., 2001)

• Session 23

31. Hester, Jeffrey, “Datsu Zainichi-ron: An Emerging Discourse on Belonging among Ethnic Koreans in Japan”

**“Newcomer” foreigners in Japan's present and future**

• Session 24

32. Roberts, Glenda, “Immigration Policy: Framework and Challenges”

FILM: *Sour Strawberries* (Tilman König and Daniel Kremers, Dirs., 2009)

• Session 25

Tsuda, Takeyuki (2006). “When Minorities Migrate: The Racialization of Japanese Brazilians in Brazil and Japan, in *Ethnic Identity: Problems and Prospects for the Twenty-first Century*, 4th ed, L. Romanucci-Ross, G. DeVos and T. Tsuda, eds. New York: Altamira Press, pp. 208-232.

36. Masters, Coco, “Japan to Immigrants: Thanks, But You can Go Home Now”

• Session 26

Murphy-Shigematsu, Stephen (2008). “‘The Invisible Man’ and Other Narratives of Living in the Borderlands of Race and Nation,” in *Transcultural Japan: At the Borderlands of Race, Gender, and Identity*, D.B. Willis and S. Murphy-Shigematsu, eds. London: Routledge, pp. 282-304.

FILM: *Hafu: The Mixed Race Experience in Japan* (Nishikura Megumi and Takaki Rara, Dirs., 2013)

• Session 27

Osanami Törngren, S. and Sato, Y. (2019). “Beyond being either-or: Identification of multiracial and multiethnic Japanese”

- Session 28

46. Kudo, Masako, "Becoming the Other in One's Own Homeland? The Processes of Self-construction among Japanese Muslim Women"

- Session 29

Kawakami, Y. (2007), "Local Mosques and the Lives of Muslims in Japan."

*Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*.

Asia-Pacific Journal (2014. 29). "Police Surveillance of Muslims and Human Rights in Japan." *Asia-Pacific Journal* 12 (39). [http://www.japanfocus.org/-Asia\\_Pacific\\_Journal-Feature/4190](http://www.japanfocus.org/-Asia_Pacific_Journal-Feature/4190)

- Session 30

"Othering"

Summation and review

### **Final exams week**

FINAL EXAMINATION (TBA)

### **【Textbooks/Reading Materials】**

Readings and other course materials will be available on the course Blackboard website.

### **Section 4**

#### **【Learning Assessments/Grading Rubric】**

Students will be evaluated on the basis of (1) in-class performance, including participation in discussion, preparation of readings and other assignments (15%); (2) group reading presentation/discussion (15%); (3) a mid-term and a final in-class exam (20% x 2 = 40%); and (4) a midterm or final take-home essay exam (30%).