

Gender and Sexuality in Japan

Norms, Practice and Selves in Motion

Section 1

Instructor/Title	Jeffry T. Hester, Ph.D.
Office/Building	3329
Office Hours	TBA., and by appointment
Contacts (E-mail)	jfhester@kansai.ac.jp

【Course Outline / Description】

In this course, we will explore beliefs and practices in Japan related to gender and sexuality, and how they shape the lives of people in Japan. Students will gain the conceptual, historical and cultural background for understanding long-term tendencies and dynamic changes regarding gender and sexuality within the context of Japanese society as well as the dynamics giving form to contemporary struggles and debates.

In exploring such gender-related phenomena, we will discuss the meanings underpinning contested ideas of femininity and masculinity, gender roles and the gendered division of labor in Japan, and issues of sexuality, reproduction, and the body. A comparative, cross-cultural perspective will be employed throughout the course, and students will be asked to reflect on their own culturally specific, gendered perspectives and positions.

Topics to be covered include: (1) the symbolic construction of gender through language, religion and popular culture images, including investigation of discourses around intersex issues; (2) the historical background to currently dominant gender roles in Japan; (3) socialization of gender roles; (4) gender roles, demographic crisis and the politics of reproduction; (5) family, work, and the gendered division of labor; (6) challenges to dominant gender ideology and practices through feminist activism; (7) changing values and behavior at the intersection of sexuality and gender, including conjugal relations, commercialized worlds of sex, and the commodification of emotion and the body; (8) sexual violence and recent movements to both end gender-based violence and to revise rape law and judicial practice to better reflect the harms of and responses to sexual assault; and (9) in the context of an ongoing "LGBT boom," claims for greater inclusion of lesbian, gay and transgender people in Japan, and the dynamically shifting and contested discourses, identity work and institutional practices set forth, including struggles for marriage equality, easier access to legal recognition of gender identity, and broader protections of human rights.

Section 2

【Course Objectives/Goals/Learning Outcomes】

In this course, we will explore gender as cultural belief, as a social structuring mechanism and as a source of social inequality Japan, as well as issues concerning the social construction of sexuality. Students will be expected to (1) develop a critical approach to the understanding of gender- and sexuality-related phenomena; (2) acquire a deeper appreciation of the institutions and beliefs surrounding gender and sexuality in Japan, of how gender and sexuality interact with other spheres of life, and how they shape the perspectives and life course trajectories of people in Japan; and (3) through engagement with issues of gender and sexuality, critically engage with broader issues of cultural relativism, "human nature," power and social justice. Furthermore, students will (4) develop critical thinking skills through close reading and discussion of written and audio-visual materials, and (5) develop skills of expression and argumentation in both written and oral form, through writing critical papers and class discussion and debate.

Section 3

【Class Schedule/Class Environment, Literature and Materials】

Schedule

- Session 1

Introduction to the course

Gender: Concepts & conflicts / Cultural relativism and the representation of others

- Session 2

Handout

Fausto-Sterling, A., “Of spirals and layers”

- Session 3

White, Merry, “The Virtue of Japanese Mothers: Cultural Definitions ...”

Symbolic constructions

- Session 4

Miyamoto, “Takarazuka Revue: Its Star System and Fans' Support”

Takahara, Kanako, “Fans make troupe phenomenon it is”

FILM: *Dream Girls* (Kim Longinotto and Jano Williams, 1993, 50 min.)

- Session 5

Okano, Haruko, “Women’s Image and Place in Japanese Buddhism”

Segawa, Kiyoko, “Menstrual Taboos Imposed upon Women”

Language as gendered behavior and repository of sedimented gender beliefs

- Session 6

Endo, Orié, “Aspects of Sexism in Language”

- Session 7

Okamoto, Shigeko, “Ideology in Linguistic Practice and Analysis: Gender and Politeness in Japanese Revisited”

Historicizing gender

- Session 8

Ochiai, Emiko, “Ch. 1: Have Women Always Been Housewives?” (pp. 9-21); “The Taisho-period *Okusan*” (pp. 31-35)

Yamada, Masahiro, “The Housewife: A Dying Breed?”

Gender socialization

- Session 9

Cave, P., “Learning Gender”

Kameda, Atsuko, “Sexism and gender stereotyping in schools”

Masculinity and femininity at work

• Session 10

Steel, G., “Women’s work at home and in the workplace”

• Session 11

Ogasawara, Yuko, “Chapter 3: Gossip”

• Session 12

Mathews, Gordon, “Can a ‘Real Man’ Live for his Family?”

(*Opt.*: Taga, Futoshi, “Rethinking Japanese Masculinities”

Wakamori, Taro, “Initiation Rites and Young Men’s Associations”

Rohlen, Thomas, “Creating the Uedagin Man”

Roberson, James, “Japanese Working-class Masculinities”)

• Session 13

(cont’d)

MIDTERM EXAM

• Session 14

Mackie, Vera, “Liberation”

FILM: *Looking for Fumiko* (Nanako Kurihara, 1993, 57 min.)

Divisions of labor: Marriage, domesticity and work-life balance

• Session 15

Edwards, Walter, Chapters 5, 6 from *Modern Japan through its Weddings*

WEDDING VIDEO

• Session 16

Nakano, Lynne, and M. Wagatsuma, “Mothers and their Unmarried Daughters

FILM: *Good Wife of Tokyo* (Claire Hunt and Kim Longinotto, 1992)

• Session 17

Holloway, Susan D., “Husbands: Crucial Partners or Peripheral Strangers?”

• Session 18

Ishii-Kuntz, Masako, “Balancing Fatherhood and Work”

Ōta, Mutsumi, “Dad Takes Child-care Leave”

(*Opt.*: Bennhold, Katrin, “In Sweden, Men Can Have It All”)

• Session 19

Nakano, L. Y. “Working and Waiting for an ‘Appropriate Person’”

• Session 20

Boling, Patricia, “Demography, Culture, and Policy: Understanding Japan’s Low Fertility”

Gendering sexuality

- Session 21

Coleman, Samuel, "Ch. 7: Sexuality"

Ashino, Yuriko, "Long Wait for Birth Control Pills"

- Session 22

Takeyama, Akiko, "Commodified Romance in a Tokyo Host Club"

Onishi, Norimitsu, "It's 3:30 A.M. The Off-Duty Hostesses Relax.
With Hosts."

FILM: *The Great Happiness Space* (Jake Clennell, 2006)

- Session 23

Faier, L., "Filipina migrants in rural Japan and their professions of love"

Beyond the heteronormative: Minority gender and sexual identities

- Session 24

McLelland, Mark, "Is there a Japanese 'gay identity'?"

Summerhawk, B., "Japan's First Homosexual Discrimination Suit"

- Session 25

Yuen, Shu Min, "Unqueer queers: Drinking parties and negotiations of cultural citizenship by female-to-male trans people in Japan"

Japan Times, (a) "Sex change recognition law enacted" (b) "Transsexuals' SOS answered"

FILM: *Shinjuku Boys* (Kim Longinotto and Jano Williams, 1995)

- Session 26

Yuen, S.M., "Unqueer queers: Drinking parties and the negotiations of cultural citizenship by female-to-male trans people in Japan"

- Session 27

(a) Hirano, Keiji, "Transsexual assembly member on rights crusade;" (b) Hirano, Keiji, "Rikkyo lecturer to examine gender identity disorder issues"

American Psychiatric Association, "Gender Identity Disorder" (excerpt)

Oe, C., Torai, M., Kamikawa, A. and Fujimura-Fanselow, K., "Dialogue: Three Activists on Gender and Sexuality"

- Session 28

Kirara, "A Lesbian in Hokkaido"

FILM: *Plica-chan* (AMAMIYA Sae and UCHIDA Yoshi, 2006)

- Session 29

Sugiura, Ikuko, "Increasing Lesbian Visibility"

Kamano, Saori and Diana Khor, "Defining Lesbian Partnerships"

- Session 30
(Cont'd)
Summation and review

Final exam 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 productive participation, preparation of readings and other assignments (15%);
- (2) a brief gender/sexuality reflection essay (5%);
- (3) a midterm and a final in-class exam (20% x 2 = 40%); and
- (4) a thematic essay (40%) *or* two reading analysis papers (20% x 2 = 40%).

Section 5

【Additional Information】

A guest speaker may participate in our section addressing issues of legal, medical and social issues facing transgender people in Japan or some other course-related topic. Furthermore, a field trip designed to enable students to experience aspects of course-related themes is planned.