

Contemporary Japan in the Gender Matrix (ASP)

Section 1

Instructor 時限	Isabel Fassbender
Office/Building	1417
Office Hours	

【Course Outline / Description】

This course discusses and analyses gender issues in contemporary Japanese society and culture. After outlining and discussing fundamental theories of gender and society, we will explore a wide range of topics focusing on how gendered social structures, such as family, work, reproduction, political and economic participation, etc., are interconnected and historically constructed in Japanese society. The construction and function of gendered norms as the basis of the modern Japanese nation-state in negotiation with lived diverse realities will be the leitmotiv that follows us throughout the semester.

The class takes an interactive approach, and students are expected to participate actively. To be able to do so, assigned texts have to be carefully read before class. As for class structure, short text presentations in pre-assigned groups will be followed by discussions/group works and a lecture on each topic. Feedback papers will help to check understanding and identify issues or the need for further discussion. Students are invited to contribute to the continuous revision of the course syllabus with their ideas and suggestions throughout the semester.

Section 2

【Course Objectives/Goals/Learning Outcomes】

Students will improve their ability to analyze and discuss gender as an indispensable layer of analysis in social, cultural, and economic phenomena and link theory with lived experiences.

This course aims to provide students with the theoretical tools, analytical abilities, and knowledge to understand gender as a constantly underlying factor in all aspects of society and apply them to the specific circumstances and frameworks of contemporary Japan. While trying to understand norms and societal limits, we will also take care not to reproduce stereotypes of Japan by shedding light on how lived realities are not necessarily moving along the lines of normative and institutional restrictions.

Section 3

【Class Schedule/Class Environment, Literature and Materials】

- ※Texts will be provided online.
- ※Mandatory readings will be assigned.
- ※Contents are subject to change and/or revision.

Course introduction

Session 1.1 Course Introduction

Assignments, self-introduction of members, determination of presentation schedule and basic rules/terms

Gender in Theory

Session 1.2 Introduction to Gender Theory

Connell, R. W., & Pearse, R. (2021). The question of gender. In *Gender: In World Perspective*. John Wiley & Sons.

Roy, W. G. (2001). Gender. In *Making Societies: The Historical Construction of our World*. Pine Forge Press.

Session 2.1 Group Work on Gender Key Concepts

Pilcher, J., & Whelehan, I. (2004). *50 key concepts in gender studies*. SAGE.

Session 2.2 Interlude on Academic Methods

Writing and Presentation Basics

Institutional, Economic and Political Frameworks of Gender in Japan

Session 3.1 Masculinity and Nation-Building

Frühstück, Sabine (2022). Building the nation and modern manhood. In *Gender and Sexuality in Modern Japan* (pp. 19-46). Cambridge University Press.

Dasgupta, Romit (2012). Introduction: salarymen in the 'Lost Decade.' In *Re-reading the Salaryman in Japan: Crafting Masculinities* (pp. 1-22). Routledge.

Session 3.2 Gender Discourses in Japan

Lambert, P. (2021). Gender equality in Japan. In H. Takeda & M. Williams (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Japan* (pp. 348-360). Routledge.

2024 FALL Semester

Session 4.1 ***The Koseki***

Chapman, David. (2019). Gender and the Koseki. In J. Coates, L. Fraser, & M. Pendleton (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture*. Routledge.

The “Japanese Family” and Work

Session 4.2 ***The “Japanese Family”***

Ezawa, Aya. (2020). Family, inequality, and the work-family balance in contemporary Japan. In J. Coates, L. Fraser, & M. Pendleton (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture* (pp. 106-114). Routledge.

Session 5.1 ***Families in Popular Culture***

Dorama-Activity: Representation of Family in Japanese TV-Series

- Dales, L. & Taga, F. (2021). Femininity and masculinity. In H. Takeda & M. Williams (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Japan* (pp. 361-368). Routledge.

Session 5.2 ***Work and Gender***

Macnaughtan, Helen (2020). Gender and the workplace. In J. Coates, L. Fraser, & M. Pendleton (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture* (pp. 106-114). Routledge.

Session 6.1 ***Work and Fatherhood***

Goldstein-Gidoni, Ofra (2020). ‘Working fathers’ in Japan: Leading a change in gender relations?. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 27(3), pp. 362-378.

Session 6.2 ***Gender in Film***

The representation of fatherhood in film

WATCH 『そして、父になる』 Like Father, Like Son (2013)

Gender and Social Inequality

Session 7.1 ***Precarity and Gender***

Ezawa, A. (2016). Becoming a single mother. In *Single Mothers in Contemporary Japan: Motherhood, Class, and Reproductive Practice*. Lexington Books.

Cook, E. (2016). Adulthood as action: Changing meanings of adulthood for male part-time workers in contemporary Japan. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 44(3), 317-337.

Session 7.2 ***Ethnicity and Gender***

Hof, Helena & Liu-Farrer, Gracia (2020). Gender, labour and migration in Japan. In J. Coates, L. Fraser, & M. Pendleton (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture* (pp. 189-198). Routledge.

2024 FALL Semester

Session 8.1 Midterm (ca. 70 min.) + Review Session

Write an overview of the class contents so far in ca. 400-500 words.

Details TBA

Gender and Culture

Session 8.2 Gender and Language

Gümüşay, K. (2022). *Speaking and being: How language binds and frees us*. Profile Books.

Session 9.1 Interview Activity and Presentation

Inoue, M. (2020). Gender and language. In J. Coates, L. Fraser, & M. Pendleton (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture* (pp. 40-49). Routledge.

*TAKARAZUKA FIELD TRIP

The Interview activity might be skipped for an introduction to the Takarazuka Review.

Sexuality and Power in Contemporary Japan

Session 9.2 Sex Work

Frühstück, Sabine (2022). The politics of sexual labor. In *Gender and Sexuality in Modern Japan* (pp. 121-140). Cambridge University Press.

Koch, G. (2020). *Healing labor: Japanese sex work in the gendered economy*. Stanford University Press.

Stanley, A. (2012). *Selling women: Prostitution, markets, and the household in early modern Japan*. University of California Press.

Session 10.1 Representations of Sexuality

Hiromi, T. (2022). Gender and sexualization in urban Japan: Reflections in the media. In D. U. Joshi, H. Hiromi, & C. Perpoonwiwat (Eds.), *Gendered Cityscapes: Perspectives on Identity and Equity in Urban Asia* (pp. 93-111). Rawat Publications.

Session 10.2 Sexual Violence

Watch: Japan's Secret Shame (2018) or 主戦場 (2018)

Session 11.1 Sex Education

Fu, H. (2011). The bumpy road to socialise nature: Sex education in Japan. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 13(8), 903-915. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691058.2011.587894>

LGBTQ+ in Japan

Session 11.2 Historical Overview

Frühstück, Sabine (2022). Queer identities and activism. In *Gender and Sexuality in Modern Japan* (pp. 141-165). Cambridge University Press.

McLelland, M. (2011). Japan's queer cultures. In V. Bestor, T. C. Bestor, & A. Yamagata (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Japanese Culture and Society*. Taylor & Francis.

Session 12.1 Contemporary Issues 1

Wallace, J. (2020). Lesbians and queer women in Japan. In J. Coates, L. Fraser, & M. Pendleton (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture* (pp. 219-228). Routledge.

Session 12.2 Contemporary Issues 2

Dale, S.P.F. (2020). Transgender, non-binary genders, and intersex in Japan. In J. Coates, L. Fraser, & M. Pendleton (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture* (pp. 60-68). Routledge. (Guest Speaker Session?)

*GUESTSPEAKER (?) TBA

Feminisms in Japan

Session 13.1 Historical Overview

Kano, A. (2020). Debates in Japanese feminism. In J. Coates, L. Fraser, & M. Pendleton (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture*. Routledge.

Session 13.2 Contemporary Feminisms: Two Key Figures

Dalton, E. & Norma, C. (2022). Voices from the contemporary Japanese feminist movement. Palgrave Macmillan.

Dales, L. (2009). Feminism and Erotica@the Love Piece Club. In *Feminist Movements in Contemporary Japan*. Routledge.

McLelland, M. (2018). Art as activism in Japan: The case of a good-for-nothing kid and her pussy. In G. Meikle (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Media and Activism* (pp. 162-170). Routledge.

Final Group Project

Session 14.1 In-Class Preparation

“As an international group of young advisors to the Japanese government, you were asked to support the government in its policy-making process with your expert knowledge and highly acclaimed forward-thinking approaches to gender issues.” (focus groups: Political

2024 FALL Semester

participation, gender in the workplace, families and equality, LGBTQ+ rights, reproductive rights, gender education, gender and violence)

※Students are invited to make suggestions for additional focus groups.

Session 14.2 Presentations 1

Session 15.1 Presentations 2

Wrap-Up

Session 15.2 Connecting the Dots

※ Course contents are subject to further change or revision, as needed, to best realize the educational goals of the course.

【Textbooks/Reading Materials】

Mandatory and additional texts will be provided online.

Section 4

【Learning Assessments/Grading Rubric】

Midterm 25%

Final Presentation 25%

Weekly Feedback Papers, Text Presentation and Participation 50%

Section 5

【Additional Information】

Classroom policies

1. Please come to class prepared and on time.
2. You are required to actively take part in discussions and group projects.
3. Please help create a safe, friendly and respectful classroom for all participants.
4. Plagiarism will not be accepted and will result in final grade F.

※ A fieldtrip to see a show at the Takarazuka Theater in Hyogo prefecture is planned for this course. In addition, I try to include at least one guest speaker session. Details TBA.