Culture, Power and Belonging in Japan
Anthropological Perspectives on the Making of Minorities and Majorities

Section 1
Instructor/Title | Jeffry T. Hester, Ph.D.

【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, and the growing Chinese 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) and recent shifts in conceptualizations 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. And we will take full advantage of comparative opportunities to reflect on our own experiences of 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

- Class 1
  Introduction to the course

Culture, power and community in modernity

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

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

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

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

Ainu: From settler colonialism to indigenous identity

- Class 6

- Class 7

- Class 8

- Class 9
  15. Foster, Malcom, “Ainu Stepping Out of Social Stigma”

- Class 10
Burakumin: Stigmatization, segregation and the struggle for integration

• Class 11

• Class 12

• Class 13
  MIDTERM QUIZ

Okinawa: Incorporation at the margins

• Class 14

• Class 15

• Class 16
  22. Ishihara, Masaie, “Memories of War and Okinawa”

• Class 17
  (Opt.: 24. Roberson, James, “Uchinaa Pop: Place and Identity...”)

Koreans in Japan: Between assimilation and heritage identity

• Class 18

• Class 19
  27. Weiner, Michael and David Chapman, “Zainichi Koreans in History and Memory”

• Class 20
  Ryang, Sonia (2016). “The Rise and Fall of Chongryun–From Chōsenjin to Zainichi”
2019 Spring Semester

and Beyond.” *The Asia-Pacific Journal/Japan Focus* 14 (15), 11.
http://apjjf.org/2016/15/Ryang.html [BB]

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

- Class 21

- Class 22

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

- Class 23

“Newcomer” foreigners in Japan's present and future

- Class 24

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

- Class 25

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

- Class 26
  43. Faier, Lieba, “Filipina Migrants in Rural Japan and Their Professions of Love”

- Class 27


- Class 28
  46. Kudo, Masako, “Becoming the Other in One’s Own Homeland? The Processes of Self-construction among Japanese Muslim Women”

- Class 29


Class 30
(Cont’d)

Summation and review

**COURSE EVALUATION**

**Final exams week**

**FINAL IN-CLASS EXAMINATION (TBA)**

**Textbooks/Reading Materials**
Readings will be available on the course Blackboard.

**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 (10%); (2) group reading presentation/discussion (15%); (3) a mid-term and a final in-class exam (20% x 2 = 40%); (4) a midterm or final take-home essay exam (30%); and (5) a brief reflection essay concerning experience with social boundaries in Japan (5%).

**Section 5**

**[Additional Information]**
There are two field trips planned for the course to enhance first-hand learning regarding minoritized groups in the Osaka area.