

## Course Syllabus

With  
*Language Table in English*  
Every Thursday @ SALC  
12:10-12:50

# SOCIOLOGY OF JAPANESE DAILY LIFE TODAY

The *Japan in Today's World* program (JTW)  
@ Kyushu University

## I. COURSE INFORMATION:

Course Name: Sociology of Japanese Daily Life Today  
Semester & Year: Spring-Summer 2018  
Credits Earned: 2 Credit Hours\*  
Prerequisite: None  
Class Meeting Place: Room 2104, Center Zone 2 (Ito Campus)  
Class Meeting Time: Thursday, Period 2 (10:30—12:00)

\*Only JTW students (those enrolled in the JTW program fulltime) may aim to earn 3 credit hours if permitted by the instructor and if agreeing to complete additional work. Ask the instructor for more details.

## II. INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:

Instructor Name: Masa Higo, Ph.D.  
Office Location: Room W1-D-402, West Zone 1 (Ito Campus)  
Office Phone: 092-802-4380  
E-mail: [higo.masateru.644@m.kyushu-u.ac.jp](mailto:higo.masateru.644@m.kyushu-u.ac.jp)

## III. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course overviews daily social lives of people in contemporary Japanese society. Main subjects covered in this course include, but are not limited to, individuals' experiences of and perspectives on social stratification (class and inequalities), gender issues, race and ethnic relations, young-old social relations, education, popular culture, sports, and the family. The main goal of this course is to introduce to students contemporary Japanese society and culture from a sociological perspective, which focuses on how broad social structures and institutions shape and reshape individuals' perceptions and behaviors both in the course of their daily lives and over the whole of their lifetimes.

**Students in this course will achieve the course goal stated above partly through regular participation in *Language Table in English*, a weekly student-centered activity.** See below:

### ***What Is 'Language Table in English'? –***

'Language Table in English' is a weekly student-centered activity, which is scheduled to be held twelve times over the course of the semester, **beginning in April 12 (WEEK 2) – except for May 1 (WEEK 5) – and ending in July 5 (WEEK 14).** Each activity runs every Thursday from 12:10 PM to 12:50 PM, immediately following the weekly class meeting, **at The Self-Access Learning Center (SALC).** SALC is located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the Center Zone 1 at Ito Campus. This activity aims to facilitate face-to-face interactions with local Japanese students at Kyushu University using English as a medium of communication. Typically, students participate in this activity while enjoying lunch that they buy at a convenience store on campus.

Through this activity, students in this course will engage in informal discussions with the Japanese participants based on a set of discussion questions prepared by the instructor. This way students will gain knowledge of the way in which the Japanese participants experience their daily social lives as related to some of the main course subjects. This course will help students obtain basic knowledge of Japanese social life today not only through standard lectures and reading materials but also from their regular, direct interactions with Japanese students.

#### IV. LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

---

Upon completion of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following three sets of learning objectives:

**(1) UNDERSTAND main characteristics of contemporary Japanese society and culture:**

Students will be familiar with:

- Various individuals' daily experiences of some selected areas of social life in contemporary Japan; and
- Various individuals' perspectives on, opinions of, and attitudes towards some selected areas of social life in contemporary Japan.

**(2) ACQUIRE knowledge of basic structural characteristics of contemporary Japanese society:**

Students will be familiar with:

- Main social structures and institutions that shape individuals' daily social lives in contemporary Japan; and
- Major trends and shifts in social structures and institutions that reshape individuals' daily social lives in contemporary Japan.

**(3) GAIN comprehensive understanding of the uniqueness of contemporary Japanese society and culture:**

Students will be familiar with:

- Main characteristics of contemporary Japanese society as experienced by individuals in their daily social lives; and
- In what ways Japanese society and culture are different from and similar to students' home countries in terms of individuals' experiences of daily social life.

#### V. COURSE MATERIALS:

---

In order to achieve the three sets of learning objectives listed above, this course provides the following two sets of materials:

**(1) LECTURES WITH POWERPOINT SLIDES:**

The primary learning material for this course is a set of standard lectures. Each lecture is delivered with a set of PowerPoint presentation slides that will be projected in the classroom.

- Over the course of this semester, students are required to take notes on all major information delivered with the PowerPoint lecture slides in each class.
- The note-taking practice not only effectively facilitates students' meaningful understanding of class subjects but is also essential for successfully completing each Take-Home Review Assignment, one of the main course requirements as explained below.

**(2) REQUIRED READING MATERIALS:**

For this course, students are not required to purchase any textbooks. Instead, the instructor has carefully selected 13 articles (a combination of online articles, blogs, published scholarly research articles, and newspaper articles) as the reading materials that students are required to read over the course of the semester.

- The instructor will hand out the articles in class as scheduled in the course syllabus.
- Students are required to complete reading each article during assigned periods of time as scheduled in this course syllabus.

## VI. TEXTBOOK:

---

Refer to V. COURSE MATERIALS (above). This course does not require that students purchase any textbooks. Instead, students are required to receive and read 13 articles that the instructor will provide in class as scheduled in the course syllabus.

## VII. COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

---

This course requires that each student complete all of the following three sets of activities:

### (1) CLASS ATTENDANCE:

Over the course of this semester, this course will have 15 class meetings, all of which each student is required to attend.

- Each student will earn 5 points for each class attendance; over the course of the semester a student may earn up to 75 points towards his or her grade in the course.

### (2) CLASS PARTICIPATION:

This course requires that each student not only attend all the class meetings but also actively participate in all class activities and discussions.

- Each student may earn up to 75 points for his or her excellent class participation throughout the semester.
- At the end of the semester the instructor will assess and grade the level of each student's overall class participation based on the following criteria: *very active* = 75; *active* = 55; *moderately active* = 45; *mostly inactive* = 25; and *completely inactive* = 0.

### (3) REVIEW ESSAY (X 3):

Over the course of this semester, students are required to complete three Review Essays as take-home assignments.

- Over the course of the semester, the instructor will provide students with three Review Essay assignments. Students are required to complete all the three assignments and to turn in each by the due date indicated in this course syllabus.
- Each Review Essay will ask students to demonstrate and exercise the basic knowledge that they are expected to gain regarding the subjects from lectures, the relevant reading materials, in-class, and participations in the Language Table in English activities.
- The instructor will email students each Review Essay a week at the latest before the due date (as scheduled in this course syllabus).
- Students are required to type their essays (NOT handwrite them) and to submit them in an electronic copy (via email). It is also required that students save electronic copies of all essays in case the instructor accidentally misplaces them.
- Each Review Essay is worth 50 points. By completing all 3 essays, a student may earn 150 points at maximum.

## VIII. GRADING SYSTEM & POLICIES:

---

As outlined above, each student earns points by completing the following activities:

1.	Class Attendance:	5 points each	x	15 times	=	75 points max
2.	Class Participation:	75 points	x	Overall	=	75 points max
3.	Review Essay:	50 points each	x	3 times	=	150 points max
				Total:	=	300 points max

Grading standards in this course are as follows:

Points in total		In percentage		Significance		Letter Grade
270 – 300 points	=	90 – 100%	=	Excellent	→	A
240 – 269 points	=	80 – 89%	=	Good	→	B
210 – 239 points	=	70 – 79%	=	Satisfactory	→	C
180 – 209 points	=	60 – 69%	=	Pass	→	D
0 – 179 points	=	0 – 59%	=	Fail	→	F

## IX. EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS:

Each student is responsible for:

- Being well prepared for each class by closely reading beforehand all the assigned articles specified in the syllabus.
- Being aware of all dates, deadlines, and assignments and taking their own responsibility to adhere to them.
- Refraining from personal chatting and use of cellular phones (including Blackberry, iPhone, and the like) during class.
- Contributing to the collective learning experience by not disrupting the classroom in any way – what you do affects other students and you have an obligation to act in a manner conducive to learning.
- Actively engaging in class discussion. Engaging in class discussion includes responding to my questions, asking me questions, and responding to other students' comments. It also means listening while others are talking.
- Respecting the diversity of the classroom composition – there will be differences of opinions, of language, of values, of appearance, and/or discussion styles. You have a right to speak your mind, and an obligation to listen to others.
- Practicing academic integrity – academic dishonesty includes cheating on exams, stealing copies of exams, copying someone else's work and calling it your own, making up citations, plagiarism, etc. Plagiarism is using someone else's words or ideas and passing them off as your own, for example, copying a chunk of text from a website and pasting it, uncited, into your Review Essay. You are expected to complete assignments in your own words (although, of course, you may have someone else proofread your writing to help you find errors in your spelling, grammar, the logic of your arguments, etc.): Plagiarism is prohibited.

## X. CLASS & ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE:

### WEEK 1: April 5 (Thursday)

Class Topic:

***Welcome to 'Sociology of Japanese Daily Life Today' – Course Introduction***

### **SECTION 1: THE ROLE OF MAIN SOCIOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS IN JAPANESE SOCIAL LIFE TODAY**

### WEEK 2: April 12 (Thursday)

Class Topic:

***Age & Seniority – Younger-Older Social Relations in Contemporary Japan***

Activity:

**Language Table in English #1** (participation optional)

### WEEK 3: April 19 (Thursday)

Class Topic:

***Sex & Gender – Gender Inequalities & Gender Roles in Japan Today***

Activity:

**Language Table in English #2** (participation optional)

WEEK 4: April 26 (Thursday)

Class Topic: ***Race & Ethnicity – Diversity in Japan in an Era of Transnational Migrations***  
 Activity: **Language Table in English #3** (participation optional)  
 Assignment: **Review Essay #1** provided this day, due WEEK 6 (May 10).

WEEK 5: May 1 (Monday)

Class Topic: ***Social Stratification – Class, Status & Inequalities in Japan Today***  
 Activity: **No Language Table in English**

**SECTION 2: JAPANESE SOCIAL LIFE TODAY UNDER CHANGING MAJOR SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS**WEEK 6: May 10 (Thursday)

Class Topic: ***Intimate Relationships – Transforming Love & Intimacy in Japan Today***  
 Activity: **Language Table in English #4** (participation optional)

WEEK 7: May 17 (Thursday)

Class Topic: ***Family Life – Shifting Family Relations in an Era of Declining Childbirth***  
 Activity: **Language Table in English #5** (participation optional)

WEEK 8: May 24 (Thursday)

Class Topic: ***Faith & Religiosity – Beliefs and Spirituality in Japanese Social Life Today***  
 Activity: **Language Table in English #6** (participation optional)  
 Assignment: **Review Essay #2** provided this day, due WEEK 10 (June 7).

WEEK 9: May 31 (Thursday)

Class Topic: ***Education & School – Changing Education Systems in Japan Today***  
 Activity: **Language Table in English #7** (participation optional)

**SECTION 3: THE IMPACT OF MAJOR SOCIAL INSTITUTION ON JAPANESE SOCIAL LIFE TODAY**WEEK 10: June 7 (Thursday)

Class Topic: ***Pop-Culture – Anime, Manga, and Pop-Music in Japanese Social Life Today, Part 1***  
 Activity: **Language Table in English #8** (participation optional)

WEEK 11: June 14 (Thursday)

Class Topic: ***Pop-Culture – Anime, Manga, and Pop-Music in Japanese Social Life Today, Part 2***  
 Activity: **Language Table in English #9** (participation optional)

WEEK 12: June 21 (Thursday)

Class Topic: ***Mass Media – Japanese Attitudes towards the Role of Mass Media Today***  
 Activity: **Language Table in English #10** (participation optional)  
 Assignment: **Review Essay #3** (provided this day, due July 19).

WEEK 13: June 28 (Thursday)

Class Topic: ***Sports in Society – The Role of Sport Activities in Japanese Social Life Today***  
 Activity: **Language Table in English #11** (participation optional)

WEEK 14: July 5 (Thursday)

Class Topic: ***Social Networking – Friendships & Groupings in Japanese Social Life Today***  
 Activity: **Language Table in English #12** (participation optional)

WEEK 15: July 19 (Thursday)

Class Topic: ***Closing Discussions: Understanding Japanese Social Life Today***

---

End of Syllabus.