

## Course Syllabus

# AGING & THE LIFE COURSE IN JAPAN

## A SOCIOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION



### I. COURSE INFORMATION:

Course Name:	Aging & the Life Course in Japan: A Sociological Introduction
Semester & Year:	Fall-Winter, 2018-19
Credits Earned:	2 Credit Hours*
Prerequisite:	None (open for all students at Kyushu University)
Class Meeting Place:	Room 1209, Center Zone 1 (Ito Campus)
Class Meeting Time:	Wednesday, 1:00—2:30 PM (Period 3)

Notes: Only JTW students (those enrolled in the Japan in Today's World program) may ask for a special arrangement to work toward earning 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:	Dr. Masa HIGO, Professor, International Student Center
Office Location:	Room D-402, West Zone 1 (Ito Campus)
Office Hours:	By appointment
Office Phone:	092-802-4380
E-mail:	<a href="mailto:higo.masateru.644@m.kyushu-u.ac.jp">higo.masateru.644@m.kyushu-u.ac.jp</a>

### III. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This is an introductory course on the *sociology of aging & the life* with a special focus on the case of contemporary Japan. This course overviews the ways in which broader social structures and cultural institutions of contemporary Japan shape and reshape individuals' experiences of growing older, of life-stage transitions, and of intergenerational relations both in day-to-day social lives and from a life course perspective.

In this course, students learn, from a sociological perspective, major convergences and divergences within Japanese society and culture as well as main characteristics that distinguish this particular country from the rest of the world in the context of population aging today and in the future.

### IV. LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

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

**(1) BE FAMILIAR WITH basic knowledge of the sociology of aging & the life course:**

Students will be familiar with:

- ☞ Some enduring themes and major arguments that characterize the literature of the sociology of aging & the life course; and
- ☞ Some foundational concepts, theories, and perspectives widely used in the field of the sociology of aging & the life course.

**(2) ANALYZE contemporary Japanese society and culture from a perspective of sociology of aging & the life course:**

Students will gain basic understanding of:

- ☞ The ways in which contemporary Japanese society and culture shape and divide individuals' experiences of growing older, of life-stage transitions, and of intergenerational relations.
- ☞ The ways in which population aging in Japan has in recent years been transforming individuals' experiences of growing older, of life-stage transitions, and of intergenerational relations.

**(3) UNDERSTAND main uniqueness and characteristics of aging & the life course in contemporary Japan as a region of the world from a cross-national/cultural comparative perspective:**

Students will be able to gain a preliminary understanding of:

- ☞ In what ways contemporary Japanese society and culture are different from some other countries around the world in terms of individual aging and/or population (societal) aging; and/or
- ☞ In what ways students' home countries differ from in Japan in terms of individual aging and/or population (societal) aging.

## V. COURSE MATERIALS:

In order to achieve the three sets of learning objectives listed above, this course provides the following three 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 through the PowerPoint lecture slides in each class.
- ✓ The note-taking practice not only effectively facilitates students' meaningful understanding of class topics but is also essential for successfully completing each Review Essay 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 16 articles (a combination of published scholarly research articles and newspaper articles) as the reading materials that students are required to read over the course of this semester.

- ✓ The instructor will hand out the articles in class as scheduled in the course syllabus.
- ✓ The instructor will provide students with hard copies of each article every week (a week prior to the tie by which students are required to complete reading).

**(3) IN-CLASS ACTIVITY WORKSHEETS:**

This course uses *In-Class Activity Worksheet* as a way to facilitate students' in-class discussion activities (e.g., small group discussions) as an important learning activity of this course. This worksheet lists several open-ended questions relevant to the main topic of the class and provide some space for each question in which to handwrite the answer.

- ✓ The instructor will handout this worksheet to each student only during some selected class meetings.
- ✓ Students will be required to first answer all the questions by themselves during the class meeting,

and then they will be asked to exchange their answers with their discussion partners and/or all the rest of the class.

- ✓ All students will be strongly encouraged to utilize the in-class discussion opportunities for their active class participation.

## 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 16 articles. The instructor will provide students with hard copies of each of the 16 article every week (a week prior to the tie by which students are required to complete reading).

## VII. COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

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

### (1) CLASS ATTENDANCE:

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.
- ✓ Class attendance will comprise 30.0% of the final course grade.

### (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.

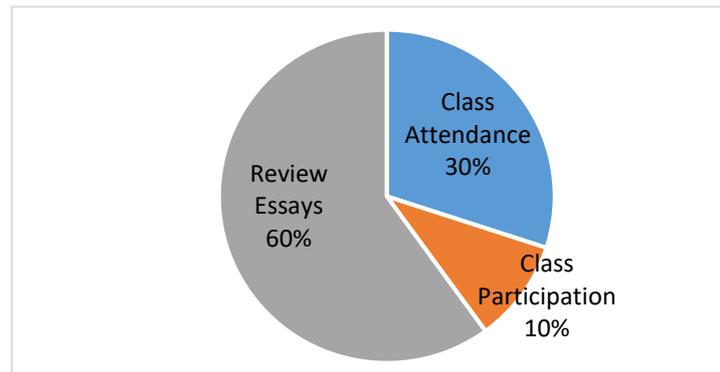
- ✓ Each student may earn up to 25 points for his or her excellent class participation throughout the semester.
- ✓ At the end of the semester the instructor will comprehensively assess and grade the level of each student's overall class participation based on the following criteria: 25=excellent; 20=good; 15=moderate, 10=minimum, and 0=no participation.
- ✓ Class participation will comprise 10.0% of the final course grade.

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

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

- ✓ Each Review Essay assignment will consist of a few short essay questions (the number of questions may vary) and will ask students to demonstrate and exercise the basic knowledge that they are expected to gain regarding the subjects from lectures as well as the relevant reading materials.
- ✓ Each Review Essay assignment will be emailed to students as scheduled in this course syllabus. Students are required to type their essays on a form that the instructor will provide as part of the homework materials.
- ✓ Each student is required to submit his/her Review Essay assignments via email to the instructor ([higo.masateru.644@m.kyushu-u.ac.jp](mailto:higo.masateru.644@m.kyushu-u.ac.jp)). It is also required that students save electronic copies of all essays in case the instructor accidentally misplaces them.
- ✓ Each Review Essay assignment is worth 50 points. By successfully completing all three sets of assignments, a student may earn 150 points at maximum.
- ✓ Review Essay (x 3) will comprise 60.0% of the final course grade.

Weighted Grade in Percentage – Course Requirements



### 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:	25 points	x	Overall	=	25 points max
3.	Review Essay:	50 points each	x	3 times	=	150 points max
					Total:	= 250 points max

Grading standards in this course are as follows:

Points in total	In percentage	Letter Grade
225 – 250 points	= 90 – 100%	→ A
200 – 224 points	= 80 – 89%	→ B
175 – 199 points	= 70 – 79%	→ C
150 – 174 points	= 60 – 69%	→ D
0 – 144 points	= 0 – 59%	→ F

### IX. EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS:

Each student is responsible for:

- ✓ Being well prepared for each class by closely reading beforehand all the assigned materials 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 assignments. 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:

**Notes:** Throughout the semester, the course schedule will remain subject to change. Changes may be necessary depending on availability of some course materials, such as video programs.

### SECTION ONE : INTRODUCTION & SOCIOLOGICAL CONCEPTS AND PERSPECTIVES

Class Meeting 1 – October 3, 2018 (Wednesday)

Class Topic: ***Welcome to Aging & the Life Course in Japan—Course & Class Introduction***

Class Meeting 2 – October 17, 2018 (Wednesday)

Class Topic: ***Sociological Concepts, Part 1 – Age Norms & Social Control***

Class Meeting 3 – October 24, 2018 (Wednesday)

Class Topic: ***Sociological Concepts, Part 2 – Social Construction of the Life Course***

Assignment: Review Essay #1 (the instructor will provide the relevant materials via email.)

### SECTION TWO: AGING, GENERATIONS & THE LIFECOURSE IN JAPAN

Class Meeting 4 – October 31, 2018 (Wednesday)

Class Topic: ***The Sempai-Kōhai Relationships – Seniority in Daily Social Life***

**Due: Review Essay #1 (students turn in the assignment to the instructor.)**

Class Meeting 5 – November 7, 2018 (Wednesday)

Class Topic: ***Aging, Work & the Life Course – The Institution of Lifetime Employment***

Class Meeting 6 – November 14, 2018 (Wednesday)

Class Topic: ***Younger vs. Older – Generation Gaps & Intergenerational Conflicts***

Class Meeting 7 – November 21, 2018 (Wednesday)

Class Topic: ***Fear or Honor? – Cultural Attitudes toward Aging and Old-Age***

Class Meeting 8 – November 28, 2018 (Wednesday)

Class Topic: ***Women’s Experience of Aging in Society – Gender & Ageism***

Assignment: Review Essay #2 (the instructor will provide the relevant materials via email.)

### SECTION THREE: POPULATION AGING – THE PRESENT AND FUTURE OF JAPAN

Class Meeting 9 – December 5, 2018 (Wednesday)

Class Topic: ***Population Aging – An Overview of the Graying Globe***

**Due: Review Essay #2 (students turn in the assignment to the instructor.)**

Class Meeting 10 – December 12, 2018 (Wednesday)

Class Topic: ***Population Aging – Japan as the ‘Hyper-Aged’ Society***

Class Meeting 11 – December 19, 2018 (Wednesday)

Class Topic: ***Who Will Take Care of Our Parents? – Elderly Care & Global Care Drain***

----- Winter Break (December 26, 2018 – January 6, 2019) -----

