

Ethnicity, Minority & Diversity in Japan



Survey of the Socio-Cultural & Demographic Diversities in Japan in Today's World

Course Syllabus

I. COURSE INFORMATION:

Course Name: Ethnicity, Minority and Diversity in Japan
Semester & Year: Spring-Summer 2019
Credits Earned: 2 Credit Hours*
Prerequisite: None
Class Meeting Place: JTW Special Classroom (Ito Campus, Center Zone 5, Classroom 5105)
Class Meeting Time: Wednesday, Period 3 (13:00—14:30)

*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.
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III. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course introduces students to demographic diversity in contemporary Japanese society through a sociological overview of some selected social, cultural, and ethnic minority groups. Japan has long been known – not only by non-Japanese but also by Japanese citizens themselves – as primarily an ethnically and culturally ‘homogeneous society’ due partly to a lack of visible diversity in people’s daily social lives. Japan has, however, historically hosted and socially constructed diverse social groups based on their racial, ethnic, national, and cultural backgrounds, which are considered by the majority of the society as distinctive. This course aims to help students not only to be aware of but also to be familiar with such diversity in Japanese society in today’s world.

In this course, students will first learn basic concepts and theories that are important to understanding the dynamics of majority-minority relations and the effects of demographic diversity in society from a sociological perspective. Then, students will focus on each of the selected ethnic groups and minority populations in Japan today and examine the ways in which these ethnic and minority groups experience various forms of assimilation, exclusion, and marginality, as well as privileges, in relation to the majority groups in Japan today.

Overall, students will deepen their knowledge of Japan in today’s world by understanding the ways in which contemporary Japanese society conditions the lives of ethnic groups and minority populations and manages demographic diversity in its seemingly ‘homogeneous’ social and cultural landscape.

IV. LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

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

(1) BE FAMILIAR WITH basic sociological frameworks of majority-minority relations in society:

Students will be familiar with:

- ▶ Some foundational concepts, constructs, and theories widely used in the literature of sociology of majority-minority relations; and
- ▶ Some major sociological perspectives and arguments that are relevant to understanding ethnicity, minority, and diversity in contemporary Japanese society.

(2) UNDERSTAND diversity in ethnic and minority groups in contemporary Japanese society from a sociological perspective:

Students will gain a basic understanding of:

- ▶ Assimilation, exclusion, marginality and privileges that some selected ethnic and minority groups in contemporary Japanese society experience;
- ▶ The ways in which Japanese society as a whole (e.g., ethnic, social, and cultural majorities) structures (e.g., integrates, suppresses, and/or conditions) the daily lives of some selected ethnic and minority groups today.

(3) ANALYZE uniqueness of contemporary Japanese society and culture through the lens of majority-minority relations:

Students will be able to analyze:

- ▶ In what ways Japanese society and culture are different from some other countries around the world in terms of majority-minority relations.
- ▶ In what ways Japanese society and culture are different from and similar to students' home countries in terms of majority-minority relations.

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 in 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 16-18 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 19 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.
- ▶ Class attendance will comprise 25% 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 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.
- ▶ Class participation will comprise 25% of the final course grade.

(3) REVIEW ESSAY (X 3):

Over the course of this semester, students are required to complete three Review Essays.

- ▶ Each Review Essay will be assigned as a homework/take-home assignment (as opposed to an exam or test during a class meeting).
- ▶ 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, and/or in-class discussions.
- ▶ Review Essay assignments will consist of two short essay questions and may also include some multiple-choice questions for students to answer.
- ▶ The instructor will email students each Review Essay a week 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 4 essays, a student may earn 200 points at maximum.
- ▶ Review Essays (X 3) will comprise 50% of the final course grade.

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 |
|------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| 300 – 270 points | = 90 – 100% | = Excellent | → A |
| 269 – 240 points | = 80 – 89% | = Good | → B |
| 239 – 210 points | = 70 – 79% | = Satisfactory | → C |
| 209 – 180 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, TOPIC & ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE:

Note: Topics and due dates are tentative and will remain subject to change.

WEEK 1: April 3 (Wed) ***Welcome to 'Ethnicity, Minority & Diversity in Japan' – Course Introduction***

SECTION 1: SOCIOLOGICAL CONCEPTS & THEORIES – MAJORITY-MINORITY RELATIONS IN SOCIETY

WEEK 2: April 10 (Wed) ***Stereotyping in Social Life: How We View Others and Minorities***

WEEK 3: April 17 (Wed) ***Socio-Historical Patterns of Majority-Minority Relations, Part 1***

WEEK 4: April 24 (Wed) ***Socio-Historical Patterns of Majority-Minority Relations, Part 2***

WEEK 5: May 8 (Wed) *Nihonjinron Today – The Discourse of Japanese-ness in Contemporary Society*
Homework Assignment: [Review Essay #1 \(Due Next Class – WEEK 6: May 15\)](#)

SECTION 2: MARGINALITY & EXCLUSION – DOMESTIC MINORITIES IN CONTEMPORARY JAPANESE SOCIETY

WEEK 6: May 15 (Wed) *Gaijin: Exclusion and Privileges of ‘Outsider Within Japan’*

WEEK 7: May 22 (Wed) *Japanese Returnee Children: Assimilation or Multiculturalism?*

WEEK 8: May 29 (Wed) *‘Half’ Japanese: Amalgamation in a ‘Mono-Racial’ Society?, Part 1*

WEEK 9: June 5 (Wed) *‘Half’ Japanese: Amalgamation in a ‘Mono-Racial’ Society?, Part 2*

WEEK 10: June 12 (Wed) *LGBT in Japan – Japanese Cultural Attitudes toward Sexual Minorities*
Homework Assignment: [Review Essay #2 \(Due Next Class – WEEK 11: June 19\)](#)

SECTION 3: ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN CONTEMPORARY JAPANESE SOCIETY – TODAY & FUTURE

WEEK 11: June 19 (Wed) *The Burakumin – Domestic Segregation of a Minority Population in Japan*

WEEK 12: June 26 (Wed) *The Ainu People – Assimilation of the Indigenous People in Northern Japan, Part 1*

WEEK 13: July 3 (Wed) *The Ainu People – Assimilation of the Indigenous People in Northern Japan, Part 2*

WEEK 14: July 10 (Wed) *Brazilian Japanese: Returnees to the Homeland of Their Ancestry*
Homework Assignment: [Review Essay #3 – June 22, Monday\)](#)

WEEK 15: July 17 (Wed) *Closing Discussions: The Future of Diversity in Japanese Society*

End of Syllabus