Japanese Society and Culture
IAS 317, Thursday 14:00-16:45
International Studies Hall 216

Instructor: Ji Hee JUNG
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Office Hour: TBA and by appointment

**This syllabus is subject to change with advance notice, based on the needs of the class**

Course Description:
This course introduces students to contemporary Japanese society and culture. The major topics to be discussed in class include cultural nationalism, ethnic minorities, gender, education and social mobility, the mass society, globalization, neo-liberal social engineering in the post-bubble era, and the life after the myth of living in a ‘secure society’ collapsed. We will consider these issues not as isolated events of contemporary Japan but as the products of its interactions with neighboring countries and world powers in the rapidly globalizing world. This course will also pay special attention to how the ordinary people experienced the social and cultural transformations while acknowledging the diversity in their experiences according to gender, ethnicity, and social class.

Course Objectives:
▪ Learn the major problems and issues of Japanese culture and society and understand how they have been studied
▪ Critically engage with recent scholarly development on the given topics
▪ Enhance cultural sensitivity and go beyond one’s own stereotypes

Prerequisites:
The course has no prerequisite. Instead, we will briefly cover the historical transformation of contemporary Japan from the end of the Asia Pacific War to the present in Part I. Knowledge of the Japanese language is not required to enroll in the course.

Course Requirements and Assignments:
Session Leading and Participation 20%
Weekly Responses (1-2 pgs) 20%
Midterm Paper (4-5 pgs) 20%
Final Paper (12-15 pgs) 40%

▪ Lead one or more sessions. The discussion leader does not have to submit a response paper on the week that s/he leads class discussion. Instead, s/he should present a brief summary of the reading that highlights main arguments, themes, and issues, and generate questions to facilitate class discussion. Every participant should also come prepared to pose at least two questions for each class meeting.
• 1-2 page (double-spaced) commentary on each week's reading, to be handed in at the end of each class.
3. A 4-5 page (double-spaced) paper critiquing the reading from the first seven weeks. Due in Week 8. A paper guide will be distributed in class.
• The final paper on a topic tailored to your particular interest. The topic may draw on the course reading but you will be expected to read additional sources beyond those on the required list. A paper proposal with tentative bibliography is due in week 14. The paper is due Friday of finals week. A paper guide will be distributed in class.
• Required readings will be distributed in class or through Blackboard.

Recommended Reading for Background Information:

Academic Honesty:
All work submitted for academic evaluation must be the student's own. Any violations including cheating and plagiarism will be treated as serious offenses. Plagiarized assignments will receive an automatic zero and may result in a failing grade for the course.

Class Communication:
• Most announcements will be made in class. But occasionally I may circulate announcements through email or Blackboard. You are responsible for checking your Korea University email and Blackboard regularly.
• You can also contact me by email. I will try to reply to your email ASAP, generally within 24 hours (except on weekends).

Schedule of Topics and Readings:

Week 1 Introduction and Organizational Meeting

Part I

Week 2 Postwar Re-configuration: Reinventing Japan under the US Occupation


Week 3 Economic Growth and Its Social Costs


Week 4 The End of Postwar and Resurrected Memories


Week 5 Neo-liberal Social Reconstruction and Economic Recession


Part II

Week 6 “Uniquely Japanese”: Cultural Nationalism


Week 7 The Myth of Homogeneous Nation and Ethnic Minorities


Week 8 Midterm Week

Midterm Paper Due

Week 9 Globalization, Multi-culturalism, and Xenophobic Exclusionism


Week 10 Grass-roots Pacifism and ‘Democratic’ Citizens


Week 11 Mass Society and Mass-mediated Representations


**Week 12 Women and Gender**


**Week 13 Education, Inequality, and Social Mobility**


**Week 14 Final Paper Proposal Presentation**

**Week 15 ‘Collapse of Secure Society’ and Precarious Life**


**Week 16 Final Exam Week**

Final Paper Due on Dec.18 Friday