First Year Seminar B: Issues in Contemporary Japanese Society

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<th>Registration code</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tr>
<th>Course Category</th>
<th>Classroom</th>
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<tr>
<td>Basic GE, 1Y Seminar</td>
<td>A11</td>
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<th>Term(Semester)/Day/Period</th>
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<td>II (1st year 2nd semester) / Thu / 2 (10:30〜12:00)</td>
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Instructor

**Course Category**

- Basic GE, 1Y Seminar

**Classroom**

A11

**Term(Semester)/Day/Period**

II (1st year 2nd semester) / Thu / 2 (10:30〜12:00)

**Instructor**

HOPSON Nathan Edwin

**Contact**

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Phone: 052-789-4831
E-mail: n.hopson@lit.nagoya-u.ac.jp

**Target Schools (Programs)**

Le(J) • La(S) • Ec(S)

**Course Aims**

This course provides a thematic introduction to issues in contemporary Japanese society. It is intended as a foundation both for a deeper understanding of modern Japan and for critical thinking and writing.

**Course Prerequisites**

None

**Course Content**

We will examine conceptions and misconceptions about Japanese society in the postwar period. The focus is on issues in the post-bubble (contemporary) period, but in comparison with the changes in Japanese society that preceded it (roughly 1945-1990).

**Schedule (subject to change)**

- **“Japan”**
  1. Stereotyping Japan – The perils of national character
  2. The national projects of “affluence” and “identity” – “Growthism” and “Nihonjinron”
  3. The social formation of postwar society – Work, family, schooling
- **Work and gender**
  4. The “salaryman” – The standard by which “problems” are defined
  5. “Office Ladies” – Divided and conquered
  6. Family matters – Home is where Japan is
- **Young Japanese**
  7. The new singles – Parasites or pragmatists?
  8. The “credential society” – Educational meritocracy vs. tracks, layers, and disparities
- **Aging and death**
  10. New seniors in an aging society – “Old” or “Silver?”
  11. Death, dying, and funerals – Tradition, McDonaldization, liberation
- **Pop culture**
  12. Leisure and consumption – Takarazuka and Hello Kitty

In addition to reading, there will be video assignments.

All materials will be provided by the instructor. There is no need to purchase a textbook.
Course Evaluation Methods

- Class participation: 25%
- Weekly reading responses: 25%
- Discussion leader (one time): 25%
- Final paper or project: 25%

Participation
Show up and be an engaged and positive participant in discussions.

Discussion Leader
Either individually or as a team of 2~3, all students will lead discussion once during the term. We will meet in advance and I will help you prepare to lead discussion.

Final Paper
The final paper will be a “Then and Now” comparison of an issue of interest to you from the readings. You will find at least one additional source to compare with the class readings and write a 5~10pg paper analyzing changes in one limited aspect of Japanese society as demonstrated by your sources. This is not a research paper; the requirement of an additional source is primarily to help familiarize you with the resources available through the NU library system.

Project
Alternatively, use your creativity and non-writing talents to address the same “Then/Now” question in a poster, work of art, video, song, presentation, software application, etc. You will need my preapproval, but I highly encourage you to consider this avenue.

Notice for Students
In principle, grades will be assigned as follows:

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>0-59</td>
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(Subject to revision)

Textbook
None

Reference Book
None