Whatcom Community College
IDS150: Japanese Culture and Society

Instructor: Dr. Setsuko Buckley
Office: LDC 128
Phone: 360-383-3722
Office Hours: Wednesdays 10:30 – 11:20 am

Course Goals/Objectives:

By the completion of this course students will be able to:
1) demonstrate a basic understanding of the concepts of modernity, collective identity, and individuality;
2) critically analyze “identity” in early modern and modern Japan, including the issues on changing Japanese culture and society in the transformation of Japanese history;
3) demonstrate a broad understanding of modern Japanese culture and society;
4) expand an understanding of gender roles in Japan from a historical point of view;
5) examine post-modernity in the visual culture in Japan, comparing to pre-modern and modern Japan.

Course Content:

This introductory course examines historical and socio-cultural changes in pre-modern, modern, and post-modern Japan. A focus is “identity”, the meaning of culture, and social norms in the transformation of Japanese history. Students are expected to be able to increase their understanding of Japanese identity, culture, and their knowledge of social norms in pre-modern, modern, and post-modern Japan.

Textbooks:


*** Weekly readings are listed in the course schedule.

Suggested Readings:


Required Evaluation Methods:

Students’ cognitive learning (thinking and knowing) will be evaluated by class participation, tests, and term papers. Students’ affective learning (relating and communicating) will be evaluated by attendance, class participation, timely completion of all the assignments.

Grading Procedures:

1) Attendance 10%
2) Class participation 15%
3) Three tests 45%
4) Two Term papers 30%

Total: 100%

1) For class attendance, roll will be taken in each session. Students will receive credit if they attend more than 70% of all the sessions.

2) Class participation will be evaluated on a weekly basis. Evaluation will be on a 1-10 scale as follows: Excellent = 10 through pass= 5, Unsatisfactory is below 5.

3) The degree of understanding of readings and classroom discussions will be evaluated based on three tests.

Test I (15%): Week 1 – 3 readings and discussions
Test II (15%): Week 4 – 7 readings and discussions
Test III (15%): Week 8 – 11 readings and discussions

4) There are two assignments.

Assignment #1: Reading Review (10%)

Review the reading textbooks and suggested readings during Weeks 1 – 5. The review should answer the questions: 1) “What are the distinctive characteristics of the Japanese culture and society?”; and 2) “How did the geographical and historical foundations influence the Japanese culture and society?”

The paper is 5 – 7 pages long, typewritten, double-spaced plus bibliography. Use the APA style.

Assignment #2: Critique (20%)

The paper will address a selected topic related to Japanese culture and society. It will integrate course reading materials and lecture topics. The paper is 8 – 10 pages long, typewritten, double-spaced. Use the APA style.

Content, logic, and organization of both papers will be evaluated. Please indicate the reference to passages you may quote. The paper need not refer to secondary sources. However, students have found course readings helpful in illustrating their points. Always indicate references to secondary sources if you use them.
Criteria of Assignments

**Content:** includes clear definition of topic, identification and analysis of topic, description of significant features of topic, and clear identification of key information resources.

**Organization & Format:** logical sequence, general-to-specific organization plan, clear, attractive document layout, and bibliography.

**Critical Thinking Ability:** define purpose & topic of assignment, identifies key assumptions & questions, describes key logical relationships, and identifies key information resources.

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**Total:** 10 20

**Grades:**

- **A** 94% or above
- **B+** 84% or above
- **B** 79% or above
- **C+** 69% or above
- **C** 64% or above
- **D** 50% or above
- **F** below 50%

An “I” (Incomplete) grade is appropriate for a student who has, for good reason, been delayed in completing the required work but successfully do so without additional instruction.
Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction and Overview: Theoretical framework of modernity

- The Concept of modernity
- Collective identity
- The differences of the concepts of pre-modern, modern, and post-modern Japan

Readings:


Week 2: Theoretical framework of Individuality

- Japanese psychological traits
- Collectivism vs. Individualism
- Individualism vs. Individuality

Readings:

Reischauer, pp.125-139 (The Group: The Self and the Others)
pp.140-158 (Social Control: Relativism and Hierarchy)
pp.159-174 (The Individual: Psychological Traits)

Week 3: Overview of “Identity” in pre-modern and modern Japan

Readings:

Reischauer, pp.3-120 (Source of Japanese Identity: Geographical and Historical Foundation of Japan) – skimming


Test I (Weeks 1-3 material)
Week 4: Issues on changing Japanese culture and society
Ancient Japan to feudal Japan (up to the end of Edo era)

- Political, economic, and socio-cultural changes
- Religion and culture
- Tokugawa Japan – isolation and the end of isolation
- Western intrusion

Readings:

Reischauer, pp.3-120 (Source of Japanese Identity: Geographical and Historical Foundation of Japan) – skimming continued
Meyer, pp.19-70 (Traditional Japan: Prehistory to 1185)
   pp.71-136 (Feudal Japan 1185-1868)

Week 5: Issues on changing Japanese culture and society, continued
Meiji to Showa (1868 – 1989)

- Meiji Restoration
- Meiji politics
- Economic and social changes
- Foreign relations among East Asia
- Imperial Japan
- World War II
- Occupied Japan
- Reform and recovery
- Peace treaty settlement

Readings:

Meyer, pp.137-218 (Modern Japan 1868-1945)
   pp.219-304 (Postwar Japan 1945 to present)

Week 6: Overview of modern Japanese culture and society

- Politics
- Economy
- Society

Readings:

Kingston, pp.101-123 (Contemporary Politics)
   pp.23-38 (The Lost Decade)
   pp.39-65 (Defusing the Demographic Time Bomb)
   pp.84-100 (Job at Risk)

Term paper #1 due
Week 7: Modern Japanese culture and society, continued
- Education
- Religion
- Language and communication style

Readings:
Reischauer, pp.186-202 (Education)
pp.203-215 (Religion)
pp.381-394 (Language and Communication Style)

Test II (Weeks 4-7 material)

Week 8: Overview of gender roles in Japan
- Family and women’s role
- Families at risk

Readings:
Reischauer, pp.175-185 (Family and Women’s Role)
Kingston, pp.66-83 (Families at Risk)

Week 9: Specific gender issues in contemporary Japan
- Sexuality
- Gender-based inequality in economy and employment
- Marriage and divorce
- Household management
- Childbirth and childcare
- Old age
- Education
- Language
- New feminist movements

Readings:
Week 10: Post-modern in the visual culture in Japan

- Pop culture
- The definition of the visual culture
- Anime and manga in contemporary Japan

Readings:

Reischauer, E.O., pp.216-227 (Mass Culture)
<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=118425363&sid=1&clientId=1971&RQT=309&VName=PQD>

Week 11: Comparison with pre-modern and modern in the visual culture in Japan

- Historical perspective of the visual culture
- Haikai and Haiku picture
- Kibyoshi in the Edo era

Readings:


Test III: (Weeks 8 – 11 material)

Week 12: Prospects

- Review of the highlights of the themes
- Cover remaining issues
- Additional discussions on post-modern Japan
- Sharing of the highlights of term paper #2

Reading:

Kingston, pp.255-260 (Prospects)

Term paper #2 due