**Sociocultural Divisions in Contemporary Japan**

**Fall 2021 Thursday 10:00AM-12:50 PM**

**Online Class (Temporary)**

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**Class Description and Objectives**

This seminar aims to understand social, economic, and cultural divisions in contemporary Japan. It will start with covering the three main dimensions in the divisions: inequality in class, generation, and region. This may lead students to understand structural transformations and constraints in Japan since the 1990s. Then, this class will take a close look at how structural inequality is play out in the lived world by addressing the two subjects: precarity in employment and predicaments among minorities. On the one hand, we will attempt to examine what difficulties youth, women, and migrant workers face in non-regular and unstable employment. On the other hand, we will strive to explore how minorities such as homeless women, LGBTQ+, Koreans in Japan, and Burakumin are discriminated and go through discriminations.

**Reading Materials**

The class materials include book chapters and articles. Most of them will be electronically provided on the ETL, <http://etl.snu.ac.kr/>.

**Course Requirements and Grading**

This seminar will be conducted as discussion as well as lecture and student presentation. Therefore, every member in this seminar including me MUST read ALL articles in each week and be prepared to actively participate in discussion.

To facilitate your engagement with the readings and your participation in class, we have one or two student presenters every week. Everyone should play the presenter role once in the seminar. You are also required to add discussion question(s) about the readings on the ETL by 6 PM on Wednesday every week. Then I highly recommend you should read questions other classmates raised in advance.

Grades will be given by evaluating individual response papers, presentations, participation in class discussion and attendance overall as well as final take-home exams.

**Class Format**

Class format includes brief lecture, student presentation(s), and intensive discussion.

First, I will give a lecture on the readings and give you a chance to ask some quick and simple questions on my lecture before fully discussing all relevant issues on the readings. It may take about 50 minutes to complete this lecture and question session.

Second, after taking a short break, two students will make a summary on one or two readings assigned in each week. It may take about 10 minutes for you to make the presentation.

Third, we will proceed to intensive discussion based on the questions you raised on the ETL. Of course, you are welcomed to raise new and additional questions during our discussion. The intensive discussion does not mean that you should speak up as much as you can. Instead, listening to others’ argument carefully and adding your opinion to that can be a way of participating in class discussion. It is important to respect other classmates to promote a helpful discussion during the seminar.

**Class Schedule**

\*Reading materials are subject to change.

1st week September 2 Introduction

2nd week September 9 Inequality

Sandel, Michael J. 2020. The Tyranny of Merit: What’s become of the common good?. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux. (Part)

I. Three Dimensions of Inequality in Contemporary Japan

3rd week September 16 Class: Divided Society Model

Chiavacci, David. 2008. “From class struggle to general middle-class society to divided society: Societal models of inequality in postwar Japan.” *Social Science Japan Journ*al 11(1): 5-27.

Blind, Georg D, and Stefania Lottanti von Mandach. 2015. “Decades not lost, but won: increased employment, higher wages, and more equal opportunities in the Japanese labour market.” *Social Science Japan Journal* 18(1): 63-88.

Hommerich, Carola. 2017. “The gap as threat: Status anxiety in the ‘middle’.” *Social Inequality in Post-Growth Japan*. Routledge. Pp. 37-53.

Sato, Toshiki. 2001. “Is Japan a ‘classless’ society?” *Japan Quarterly* 48(2): 25-30.

4th week September 23 Korean Thanksgiving Holliday (Make-up class in 16th week)

5th week September 30 Youth: Lost Generations

Toivonen, Tuukka and Yuki Imoto. 2012. “Making Sense of Youth Problem.” *A Sociology of Japanese Youth. Routledge*. Pp.1-29.

Genda, Yuji. 2003. “Who really lost jobs in Japan? Youth employment in an aging Japanese society.” *Labor markets and firm benefit policies in Japan and the United States*. University of Chicago Press. Pp. 103-134.

Hori, Yukie. 2014. “Japan’s “Lost Generation” Today: From a Survey on 30s’ Working Styles in Tokyo.” *Japan Labor Review* 11(4): 104-117.

Furuichi, Noritoshi. 2014. “Fragile Happiness in Japan: How the young think about their insular life.” *East Asia Forum Quarterly* (April-June): 21-24.

6th week October 7Region: Vanishing Local Community

Song, Jiyeoun. 2015. Japan's Regional Inequality in Hard Times. Pacific Focus 30(1). 126–149.

Okubo, Mika, Abrar Juhar Mohammed & Makoto Inoue. 2015. “Out-migrants and Local Institutions: Case Study of a Depopulated Mountain Village in Japan.” *Asian Culture and History* 8(1): 1-9.

Kramer, Sven. 2021. “Defending the Local: Resident Activism against Municipal Mergers in Postwar Rural Japan.”  Sonja Ganseforth and Hanno Jentzsch eds. *Rethinking Locality in Japan*. Routledge.

Manzenreiter, Wolfram and Barbara Holthus. 2021. “The Meaning of Place for Selfhood and Well-being in Rural Japan.” Sonja Ganseforth and Hanno Jentzsch eds. *Rethinking Locality in Japan*. Routledge.

II. Precarity in Labor and Employment

7th week October 14 Freeters

Kosugi, Reiko. 2008. “The Failure to Make a ‘Smooth’ Transition.” Escape from work: Freelancing Youth and the Challenge to Corporate Japan. Trans Pacific Press. Pp. 76-148.

Imai, Jun. 2018. “Struggling men in emasculated life-courses: non-regular employment among young men.” *Being Young in Super-Aging Japan*. Routledge. Pp. 100-117.

Masuda, Jin. 2015. “Finding Hope in the Life of Young Part‐timers.” *International Journal of Japanese Sociology* 24(1): 106-118.

Smith, Colin S. 2018. “The precarious and the transitional: labor casualization and youth in post-bubble Japan.” *Children’s Geographies* 16(1): 80-91.

8th week October 21 Dispatched Workers

Fu, Huiyan. 2012. “Haken” “Working as a haken in a triangular employment relationship” “Haken in the gap-widening society” “The search for meaningful work” *An Emerging Non-regular labor Forces in Japan*. Routledge. Pp. 17-56, 77-119.

9th week October 28 Women and Labor

Lukács, Gabriella. 2020. *Invisibility by Design: Women and Labor in Japan’s Digital Economy*. Duke University Press. (Part)

10th week November 4 Migrant Care Workers

Ogawa, Reiko. 2012. “Globalization of care and the context of reception of Southeast Asian care workers in Japan.” *Japanese Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 49(4): 570-593.

Lan, Pei-Chia. 2018. “Bridging ethnic differences for cultural intimacy: Production of migrant care workers in Japan.” *Critical Sociology* 44(7-8): 1029-1043.

Faier, Lieba. 2007. “Filipina Migrants in Rural Japan and Their Professions of Love.” *American Ethnologist* 34(1): 148-162.

Lopez, Mario. 2012. “Reconstituting the affective labour of Filipinos as care workers in Japan.” *Global Networks* 12(2): 252-268.

III. Minorities

11th week November 11 Migrant Activism

Shindo, Reiko. 2019. *Belonging in Transition: Solidarity and Migrant Activism in Japan*. Bristol University Press. (Part)

12th week November 18 The Homeless and Governmentality

Gill, Tom. 2012. “Failed manhood on the streets of urban Japan: The meanings of self-reliance for homeless men.” *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 10(1): 1-21.

Kim, Jieun. 2016. “Necrosociality: isolated death and unclaimed cremains in Japan.” *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*. 22(4): 843-863.

Kim, Jieun. 2018. “The other city: alternative infrastructures of care for the underclass in Japan.” *Asian Anthropology*. 17(1): 1-23.

Novak, David. 2019. “The Arts of Gentrification: Creativity, Cultural Policy, and Public Space in Kamagasaki.” *City & Society* 31(1): 94-118.

13th week November 25 Homeless Women

Maruyama, Satomi. 2019. “Who are the homeless women?” “The world of women who sleep rough” “Continuing and ending rough sleeping” “The process of change” “Resisting the spell of the autonomous subject” *Living on the Streets in Japan: Homeless Women Break their Silence*. Trans Pacific Press. Pp. 25-67, 131-216.

14th week December 2 Sexual Minorities

McLelland, Mark. 2015. “Japan’s queer cultures.” In *Routledge Handbook of Japanese Culture and Society.* pp. 140-149.

Roberson, James. 2003. “Japanese Working-Class Masculinities: Marginalized Complicity.” In *Men and Masculinities in Contemporary Japan*. pp.126-143.

Nakamura, Karen and Hisako Matsuo. 2003. “Female Masculinity and Fantasy Spaces: Transcending Genders in the Takarazuka Theatre and Japanese Popular Culture.” In *Men and Masculinities in Contemporary Japan.* pp. 59-76.

McLelland, Mark. 2005. “Salarymen doing queer: Gay men and the heterosexual public sphere.” In *Genders, Transgenders, and Sexualities in Japan*. pp. 96-110.

15th week December 9 Koreans in Japan

Robillard-Martel, Xavier, and Christopher Laurent. 2020. “From colonization to Zaitokukai: the legacy of racial oppression in the lives of Koreans in Japan.” *Asian Ethnicity* 21(3): 393-412.

Higuchi, Naoto. 2016. “Dynamics of Occupational Status among Koreans in Japan: Analyzing Census Data between 1980 and 2010.” *Seoul Journal of Japanese Studies* 2: 1-25.

Ahn, Ji-Hyun, and Hyewon Park. 2019. “Dealing with Hate Speech: Voices from Young Koreans Living in Japan.” *Asian Journal of Social Science* 47(6): 677-700.

Demelius, Yoko. 2021. “Thinking through Community Spirit: Zainichi Koreans in Post-Korean Wave Japanese Communities.” *Japanese Studies* 41(1): 93-112.

Yamamoto, Hiroki. 2019. "Decolonial Possibilities of Transnationalism in Contemporary Zainichi Korean Art." *Situations: Cultural Studies in the Asian Context* 12(1): 107-128.

16th week December 16 Burakumin

Hankins, Joseph D. 2014. “Of Skins and Workers” “Ushimatsu Left for Texas” *Working skin: Making leather, making a multicultural Japan*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Pp. 31-90

Martin, Alex. 2019. “Embracing a buraku heritage: Examining changing attitudes toward a social minority” *the japan times*. <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2019/02/16/national/social-issues/embracing-buraku-heritage-examining-changing-attitudes-toward-social-minority/#.Xjt8dGgzaUk>