

**Sociology 357:**  
**Sociology of Japan**  
Spring 2012 Extension  
(Online 1/17/12 – 3/24/12)

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**Instructor:** Yoko I. Wang

**Class Meeting Time (online):** Online discussions (anytime Mon.-Fri.)

**Office Hours (online):** Via e-mail (anytime Mon.-Fri.)

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**Course Website:** <https://laulima.hawaii.edu/portal>

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**Course Description** (from the Course Catalog):

This course is about persistence and change in economy, policy, religion, education, family, and other institutions of modern Japan. (DS) *This is an online class* offered via Laulima. After registering for the course, students may access the class at <https://laulima.hawaii.edu>. Students are required to use their UH account (username@hawaii.edu) for the duration of the course. For additional information about online classes, see [www.hawaii.edu/dl](http://www.hawaii.edu/dl).

**Course Objectives:**

This course aims to cultivate students' individual and collective interests in Japanese society, and to lead them to become familiar with contested issues surrounding the society as well as with basic concepts for sociological analysis of the society. Students will become informed of social issues in Japan, be able to identify real-time research problems, and begin to learn how to conduct independent as well as collaborative research about the Japanese society. The course is largely organized into two parts: First, students will collaboratively survey relevant readings (i.e. studies on Japanese society from sociological and social scientific perspectives), discuss major (and minor) subjects in the field, share reading notes, and eventually develop their own understanding of the field under the instructor's guidance. Second, students will deal with contemporary social issues in Japan. Students will identify major and current social issues through reading newspapers, magazines, and the Internet news articles, find related academic sources, select research topics, and co-write (a) research paper(s). This process also involves trainings for library usage and citation exercise.

The course is designed to develop students' critical thinking and research skills. The midterm exam, and the final co-authored research paper(s) provide the opportunity to integrate and apply what are learned in the readings and the weekly discussions. Students should leave this course with a basic understanding of Japanese society that will help them make better sense of their encounters with Japan, and may offer some insight into American society through implied comparisons. Students also should leave this course with stronger research, writing, and analytical skills.

**About this ONLINE course:**

This is an online course and therefore it is *very* important to read the syllabus and other instructions *carefully* so that you know exactly what you need to do. An online course is similar to any traditional face-to-face course in some ways, yet different in others. You do not have to be on campus. You can work wherever and whenever you like. However, you still have to do all the readings, perhaps more intensively than in a face-to-face course because the instructor will not give "lecture" about readings. You must read the textbook and other materials thoroughly in order to be successful in class discussions and exams. It is not possible to pass this online course without actually participating in class discussions because all of your "participation" must be submitted in written forms.

### Textbooks/ Suggested Readings:

**\*\*Please do make use of the library, and purchase what you would like to own. Required readings are available for 2 hours loan at Sinclair Library [S] or online via Hawaii Voyager “ebrary” service [E].\*\***

The books listed below may be consulted to survey what has been written about the Japanese society from broad range of social scientific perspectives (listed alphabetically by the authors’ last names). Through skimming through these readings, students will gain general understanding of the field and be able to identify their specific topics of interests. Students will then collaboratively look for more relevant readings according to the class’s interests under the instructor’s guidance.

- Bestor, Victoria Lyon, Theodore C Bestor, and Akiko Yamagata, eds. 2011. *Routledge Handbook of Japanese Culture and Society*. London: Routledge. [E]
- Gordon, Andrew, ed. 1993. *Postwar Japan as History*. Berkeley: University of California Press. [S]
- Hendry, Joy. 2003. *Understanding Japanese Society*. London: Routledge. [S]
- Ishida, Hiroshi, and David Slater, eds. 2011. *Social Class in Contemporary Japan*. London: Routledge. [S]
- Mauer, Ross, and Hiroshuke Kawanishi. 2005. *A Sociology of Work in Japan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [S]
- Nakane, Chie. 1972. *Japanese Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press. [S]
- Weiner, Michael, ed. 2009. *Japan’s Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity*. London: Routledge. [S]
- The Sociology Writing Group. 2008. *A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers*. 6<sup>th</sup> edition. Worth Publishers. [Purchase recommended, but required parts are available on Laulima.]

### Course Requirements:

#### **IMPORTANT NOTES:**

***This is an online class and any excuse that your computer or the Internet did not work will not be accepted. Please make sure to have a back-up plan in case yours “acts up” in any way.***

#### *Discussion (45%)*

The instructor will post various discussion topics on the week’s readings by Friday night each week. Students will select one of the topics suggested by the instructor and post one short (one to two double-spaced pages) response essay on the topic by Tuesday night (11:59 PM) in the following week. On Wednesday and Thursday of the week, students will read everyone else’s essay and respond to at least two of their classmates’ postings—at least one of your responses should be addressed to a posting on a topic that is **different from yours**. In addition to the two responses, **students should also respond to those who commented on their postings**. Thus, students will make postings **three to five times per week**, including their own short response essay on a discussion topic, and two responses to other students’ postings. **Students can earn up to 5 points every week (5 x 9 = 45 points/percent of the final grade) for participation depending on the quality of their postings**. It is not considered participating in a discussion when you “just post” comments at the end of the week: your postings should be thoughtful, constructive, and on time. A discussion should be an interactive communication between the instructor and all students throughout the week dealing with the particular topic of the week.

*Twitter (0% officially, but you might find extra credit opportunities occasionally ☺)*

Follow the instructor @yokoiida and bring the course close to home! The instructor will share her regular

tweets on Japanese society (and personal notes) in both English and Japanese. If you like me to follow you back, do let me know so we can share our observations more frequently and easily. However, **please address all of your questions regarding the course to my UH email account [yokoiida@hawaii.edu](mailto:yokoiida@hawaii.edu).**

#### *Midterm Essay Examination (25%)*

There is one midterm essay examination that will test the students' understanding of the materials that are covered in the readings and discussions. The essay topics will be announced before the exam. The exam will be open for *two days* (Friday, Mar. 2nd 12:00AM through Saturday, Mar. 3rd 11:59 PM) via Laulima and is **worth 25 points/percent of the final grade.**

#### *Final Paper (30%)*

Students will work on their research paper project throughout the course period so that they can acquire practical experience of doing social research and writing a sociological paper. Students are required to complete (a) short research paper(s) (about 10, double-spaced pages) by the end of the course. More detailed guidelines for the final paper will be given as the course advances. **The final paper is worth 30 points/percent of the final grade.**

#### **Important Note on the Submission of Written Assignments:**

For accreditation purposes, University of Hawaii and the Sociology Department must evaluate the effectiveness of our courses and department. Therefore, all students must submit an e-copy of your written papers to the instructor whenever papers are due. **Papers should be saved in Microsoft Word-compatible formats that you can e-mail as attachments.** The writing assignments should be submitted with a file name that includes the course number (ex: 357), the semester (ex: F11, S12), the student's name, and if more than one assignment is submitted for a course, an indication of the name of the assignment (ex: Review2; Final Paper). For this class, therefore, an example of correct file name may be: **357S12YokoWangFinalPaper.doc**

#### **Departmental Statements:**

##### Kokua Program

*If you feel you need reasonable accommodations based on the impact of a disability, please contact the KOKUA Program, located in room 013 of the QLCSS or telephone 956-7511 or 956-7612; 2) speak with me privately to discuss your specific needs. I will be happy to work with you and the KOKUA Program to meet your access needs.*

##### Plagiarism

The following definition of plagiarism comes from the UH-Manoa Student Conduct Code:

*Plagiarism includes but is not limited to submitting, in fulfillment of an academic requirement, any work that has been copied in whole or in part from another individual's work without attributing that borrowed portion to the individual; neglecting to identify as a quotation another's idea and particular phrasing that was not assimilated into the student's language and style or paraphrasing a passage so that the reader is misled as to the source; submitting the same written or oral or artistic material in more than one course without obtaining authorization from the instructors involved; or "drylabbing," which includes obtaining and using experimental data and laboratory write-ups from other sections of a course or from previous terms. (University of Hawai'i at Manoa Student Conduct Code (1992), p. 6)*

It is ultimately each student's responsibility to learn about plagiarism and how to avoid it. Ignorance of the rules, saying "I forgot about that" or "I made a mistake" is not considered a valid excuse when it comes to plagiarism.

### **Course Schedule:**

(Subject to change. More specific instructions will be given as the course progresses.)

**Week 1 (1/17 - 1/20): Introduction**—Introduction to the course and assignments; getting access to the readings; discussion of writing and research.

Read *A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers*, Part I (ch. 1-4) and start familiarizing yourself with the ways to select a paper topic or to turn an area of interest into a sociology paper topic.

**Week 2 & 3 (1/23 – 2/3): Surveying the Field**—Start readings and get an overview of the field.

Skim through the following readings; Read thoroughly at least one chapter from each book and share reading notes with the class; discuss major subjects in the field:

- Bestor, Victoria Lyon, Theodore C Bestor, and Akiko Yamagata, eds. 2011. *Routledge Handbook of Japanese Culture and Society*. London: Routledge.
- Gordon, Andrew, ed. 1993. *Postwar Japan as History*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hendry, Joy. 2003. *Understanding Japanese Society*. London: Routledge.

**Week 4 (2/6 – 2/10): Focused Reading I “Social Structure”**

Read Nakane, *Japanese Society* and other readings students find\*; discuss social structure, including basic organizations and family life in Japan.

\*Students will find readings on current issues related to the week’s topic through searching newspapers, magazines, and the Internet news articles, and share them with the class by posting copies or links on Lulima.

**Week 5 (2/13 – 2/17): Focused Reading II “Social Class”**

Read Ishida and Slater, *Social Class in Contemporary Japan* and other readings students find; discuss social class, including education system in Japan.

**Week 6 (2/20 – 2/24): Focused Reading III “Work”**

Read Mouer and Nakanishi, *A Sociology of Work in Japan* and other readings students find; discuss work in Japan.

**Week 7 (2/27 – 3/2): Focused Reading IV “Multiculturalism”**

Read Weiner, *Japan’s Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity* and other readings students find; discuss minority issues in Japan.

**\*\* March 2 - 3: Midterm Exam \*\***

**Week 8 & 9 (3/5 – 3/16): Students’ Selected Topics**

Propose topics for final papers and suggest readings for the class; read the selected reading(s) and discuss the reading(s) and decide on paper topics; citation exercise.

**Week 10 (3/18 - 3/24): Final Paper**

Work on final papers.

**\*\* March 24: Final Paper Due \*\***