

# ***SOC 357: Sociology of Japan***

Spring 2015: January 26 - May 15, 2015, 3 Credits (online) WI

Course Instructor: Robin O'Day, Ph.D.

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## **1. General Course Description (From the Catalogue)**

“SOC 357 Sociology of Japan (3): Persistence and change in economy, policy, religion, education, family, and other institutions of modern Japan.”

## **2. Detailed Course Description**

Throughout the course students will be presented with sociological research that will enable them to deepen their understanding of contemporary Japanese culture and society. Working towards this goal, students will be presented with academic sources that use the basic paradigms of social scientific research. Through this method we will examine how cultural constructions and social relations structure everyday life in Japan. The course will survey a number of important dimensions necessary for coming to a greater appreciation of contemporary Japan. The first half of the course will cover topics that include families, neighborhoods, communities, education, minorities, and religion. In the second half of the course we will examine issues that include working practices, gender, leisure, consumption, politics and popular culture. The course is broadly designed to provide an overview of some of the major areas of social scientific research on Japan from the post-war period to the present. By the end of the course, students should have a working knowledge of the various ways a sociological perspective has been applied to deepen our understanding of contemporary Japanese culture and society.

## **3. Student Learning Objectives:**

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Work toward creating clear and effective written communication.
- Develop advanced writing skills through feedback and revisions.
- Demonstrate a critical understanding of how sociological research has been applied towards interpreting contemporary Japanese society.
- Recognize and evaluate pressing social issues facing Japanese society.
- Conduct independent research, based upon peer-reviewed academic sources, into an area of sociological significance facing Japan today.

#### 4. Required Texts:

- a. **UNDERSTANDING JAPANESE SOCIETY.** Joy Hendry, London & New York: Routledge Curzon. 2012.
- b. **CAPTURING CONTEMPORARY JAPAN: Differentiation and Uncertainty.** Edited by Satsuki Kawano, Glenda S. Roberts, Susan Orpett Long. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014.

#### 5. Writing Intensive Requirements:

This course fulfills the University of Hawaii's writing intensive focus requirements. The criteria are as follows:

- a. The class uses writing to promote the learning of class materials.
- b. The class provides interaction between the instructor and students while students do assigned writing.
- c. Written assignments contribute significantly to each student's class grade.
- d. The class requires students to do a substantial amount of writing – a minimum of 4,000 words, or about 16 pages.
- e. To allow for meaningful professor – student interaction on each student's writing, the class is restricted to 20 students.

#### 6. Course Format

This an online course offered through "Laulima: The Learning and Collaborative Server for the University of Hawaii Community. Since this is an online course, students are expected to have access to reliable computer equipment in order to participate in the course. Moreover, students are responsible to meet all scheduled deadlines and to regularly check the Laulima site for course updates. It is imperative that students understand that an online course requires students to manage their own time effectively in order to succeed in the course.

*\*Please contact the instructor if you are having difficulty meeting the course expectations. It is best to address problems early before they become insurmountable.*

#### 7. Requirements & Grading

Anticipated Grading Criteria	% of total grade
Weekly Reading Responses	30%
Paper Proposal	10%
Midterm Exam	25%
<u>Final Paper</u>	<u>35%</u>
Total	100%

**WEEKLY READING RESPONSES (30%):** Every week you will be required to respond to the assigned readings. Each week the instructor will post a series of questions on the Laulima site based upon that week’s reading assignment. Students will be expected to either:

- a) Respond to *ONE* question, by writing 250-words (approximately 1-page) and posting their response on the Laulima website by Sunday evening.

Or

- b) Comment on one of the other student’s responses, by writing 250-words (approximately 1-page), and posting their comment on the Laulima website by Sunday evening.

Or

- c) Respond to one question, and comment on one of the other student’s responses, and post their response and comment to the Laulima website by Sunday evening. The response and comment should be a minimum of 250-words in total.

This assignment will give you practice writing and thinking about the course material by asking you to reflect upon and respond to questions based upon the week’s assigned readings. The point of the assignment is for you to engage with the readings and interact with your classmates. Rather than providing a simple summary, you are expected to critically engage with the material. Be certain that your responses and comments indicate clear evidence that you have read and understood the material. The responses and/or comments should be approximately 1-page (250 words) in length. You are expected to post your finished responses and/or comments on the Laulima site by Sunday evening each week (no later than 11:59 pm) (see the calendar below). These weekly assignments will help you think through the readings, help you prepare for the midterm, inform your own research paper, and serve as the basis for dialogue with your classmates.

**EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR WEEKLY RESPONSES:**

<b>Points Awarded</b>	<b>Both Reading Responses, and Peer Comments should be at least 1-page (250 words) in length.</b>
<b>1.8 to 2</b>	A thoughtful, and well-articulated answer.
<b>1.4 to 1.75</b>	A decent answer, but with some shortcomings, such as in the expression of the idea, having grammatical errors, spelling errors, or being too short in length.
<b>0 to 1.39</b>	A problematic response that could be too short, fails to answer the question, be incorrect, be incomprehensible, be poorly written, or be unintelligible.
<b>0</b>	No response by the deadline
<b>-50%</b>	Responses posted after the weekly deadline will still receive credit, but you will receive a 50% late penalty.

**PAPER PROPOSAL (10%):** This course requires you to submit an independent research paper on a relevant social issue in contemporary Japan. You are free to select your own topic. Your paper topic could emerge out of something we cover in the course that you would like to research further. Conversely, your paper topic could be based on something that you are curious about in contemporary Japan. Either approach is completely appropriate, however you must get the instructor's approval for your paper topic *no later than the end of week five*. The instructor will review your proposal, give you detailed comments, and suggest directions for developing your paper. Your paper proposal should be approximately one page (250 words). You are also required to provide, in addition to the 1-page proposal, a bibliography of at least 3 academic references you plan to use in addition to the one page proposal. You must use the ASA style guide, or another academic citation style, to format your bibliography, and for citing your sources in your proposal.

**MIDTERM EXAM (25%):** The format of the final exam will include a series of short answer questions and a choice of essay questions. The questions will draw from the lectures and the readings. You will have 1.5 hours for the exam.

**FINAL PAPER (35%):** Students will submit a draft of their papers by the *end of week twelve*. The instructor will review your paper, give you detailed comments, and return the paper to you for further revision. You have the option to revise and resubmit your papers based on the comments you receive. You will have an additional week to make the revisions after your papers are returned. The final paper should be a minimum of six pages (1600 words).

#### **8. Plagiarism Policy (from UH Calendar):**

"Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, submitting, to satisfy an academic requirement, any document that has been copied in whole or in part from another individual's work without identifying that individual; neglecting to identify as a quotation a documented idea that has not been assimilated into the student's language and style; paraphrasing a passage so closely that the reader is misled as to the source; submitting the same written or oral material in more than one course without obtaining authorization from the instructors involved; and "dry-labbing," which includes obtaining and using experimental data from other students without the express consent of the instructor, utilizing experimental data and laboratory write-ups from other sections of the course or from previous terms, and fabricating data to fit the expected results."

#### **9. Kokua for Students with Disabilities:**

If you need accommodations because of the impact of a disability please contact me privately. I am happy to work with you and the KOKUA Program (Office for Students with Disabilities) to ensure reasonable accommodation in the course. KOKUA can be reached at (808) 956-7511 or (808) 956-7612 (voice/text) in room 013 of the Queen Lili'uokalani Center for Student Services.

**10. Final grades will be calculated on the percentage of points earned:**

97 -100%	A+	82-84	B	69-71	C-
93-96	A	79-81	B-	65-68	D+
89-92	A-	75-78	C+	62-64	D
85-88	B+	72-74	C	59-61	D-
				0-58	F

**11. Course Schedule** (Subject to Change)

**Week 1: Introduction (January 26-February 1)**

Hendry: "Introduction" (1-4) and Chapter 1: "Sources of Japanese Identity: historical and mythological foundation of Japan." (5-22)

Kawano, Roberts, Long: "Introduction: Differentiation and Uncertainty." (1-24)

*\*Weekly Reading Response #1 Due by Sunday Evening (11:59 pm)*

**Week 2: The Household (February 2-8)**

Hendry: Chapter 2: "The House and Family System." (23-40)

Roberts: "Work and Life in Challenging Times: A Kansai Family across the Generations" (25-59)

*\* Weekly Reading Response #2 Due by Sunday Evening (11:59 pm)*

**Week 3: Socialization (February 9-15)**

Hendry: Chapter 3: "Socialization and Classification." (41-56)

Long: "The Aging of the Japanese Family: Meaning of Grandchildren in Old Age (183-201)

*\* Weekly Reading Response #3 Due by Sunday Evening (11:59 pm)*

**Week 4: Community (February 16-22)**

Hendry: Chapter 4: "Community and Neighborhood" (57-73)

Kawano: "Recreating Connections: Nonprofit Organizations' Attempts to Foster Networking among Mothers of Preschoolers." (233-246)

*\* Weekly Reading Response #4 Due by Sunday Evening (11:59 pm)*

**Week 5: Education (February 23-March 1)**

Hendry: Chapter 5: "The Education System" (74-90)

Cave: "Education after the "Lost Decade(s)": Stability or Stagnation?" (271-300)

*\* Weekly Reading Response #5 Due by Sunday Evening (11:59 pm)*

*\*Your paper topic must be submitted for approval by Sunday (11:59 pm)*

**Week 6: Minorities (March 2-8)**

Hendry, Chapter 6: "Status, Hierarchy and Ethnic Diversity" (91-114)

Nakamura: "Barrier-Free Brothels: Sex Volunteers, Prostitutes, and People with Disabilities." (202-22)

*\* Weekly Reading Response #6 Due by Sunday Evening (11:59 pm)*

### **Week 7: Gender (March 9-15)**

Nakano: "Single Women in Marriage and Employment Markets in Japan." (163-182)

*\* Weekly Reading Response #7 Due by Sunday Evening (11:59 pm)*

### **Week 8: Religion (March 16-22)**

Hendry: Chapters 7: Religious Influences (115-133)

Kawano: "The Story of a Seventy-Three-Year-Old Woman Living Alone: Her Thoughts on Death Rites (316-338)

*\* Weekly Reading Response #8 Due by Sunday Evening (11:59 pm)*

### **Week 9: Spring Recess (March 23-29)**

### **Week 10: Ritual (March 30-April 5)**

Hendry: Chapter 8: Ritual and the Life Cycle (134-151).

Miller: "The Divination Arts in Girls Culture." (247-268)

*\* Weekly Reading Response #9 Due by Sunday Evening (11:59 pm)*

*\*Midterm Exam Must be Completed Online by Sunday Evening (11:59 pm)*

### **Week 10: Mainstream Work (April 6-12)**

Hendry, Chapter 9: "Opportunities for Working Life" (152-168)

Mathews, "Being a Man in Straitened Japan: The View from Twenty Years Later." (60-80)

*\* Weekly Reading Response #10 Due by Sunday Evening (11:59 pm)*

### **Week 11: Workplace Diversity (April 13-19)**

Whitelaw: "Shelf Lives and Labors of Loss: Food, Livelihoods, and Japan's Convenience Stores." (135-160)

Kurotani: "Working Women of the Bubble Generation." (83-104)

*\* Weekly Reading Response #11 Due by Sunday Evening (11:59 pm)*

### **Week 12: Consumption (April 20-26)**

Hendry, Chapter 10: "Arts, Entertainment and Leisure" (169-187)

Hotaka Roth: "Lightweight Cars and Women Drivers: The De/construction of Gender Metaphors in Recessionary Japan." (300-315)

*\* Weekly Reading Response #12 Due by Sunday Evening (11:59 pm)*

*\*First draft of your research paper is due by Sunday evening (11:59 pm)*

### **Week 13: Politics (April 27-May 3)**

Hendry: Chapter 11: "Government and the Craft of Politics" (188-206)

*\* Weekly Reading Response #13 Due by Sunday Evening (11:59 pm)*

**Week 14: Social Control and Resistance (May 4-May 10)**

Hendry: Chapter 12: "The Legal System and Social Control" (207-222)

Rossenberger: "Making an Ant's Forehead of a Difference: Organic Agriculture as and Alternative Lifestyle in Japan." (105-134)

*\* Weekly Reading Response #14 Due by Sunday Evening (11:59 pm)*

**Week 16: Conclusion (May 11-16)**

Hendry: Hendry: Conclusion (223-226)

*\* Weekly Reading Response #15 Due by Sunday Evening (11:59 pm)*

*\*Final draft of your research paper is due.*