Overview: This course is an introduction to the people, institutions, problems, and achievements of contemporary Japan. In the first part of the semester we will consider several perspectives for thinking about Japanese society and culture. After that, we will focus on selected social problems in Japan. Prerequisite: Students must have completed SOC 100 or a 200-level SOC course with a “C” grade or better.

Requirements: Attendance is required, as is informed participation in class activities. Students are expected to come to class on time, do the assigned readings, and discuss the readings orally and in writing. Here are some standard operating procedures: (1) the professor will call on students in class; (2) there will be occasional pop quizzes about the readings, and there will be some in-class and take-home writing assignments as well; (3) each student will do an oral presentation in class about a Japanese social problem; (4) in addition to the written texts, students will be required to watch some videos.

Readings: There are two required books. Other required readings will be made available in class, on Laulima, or on the Web.


Newspaper Requirement: To keep informed about current events in Japan, you should read at least one newspaper with significant coverage of the country. Many people like Los Angeles Times or New York Times. English-language resources in Japan include The Japan Times (www.japantimes.co.jp), the Asahi Shimbun (a somewhat progressive paper, similar to the New York Times, available at www.asahi.com/ajw), and Japan’s most popular newspaper, the right-leaning Yomiuri Shimbun, which publishes the Daily Yomiuri http://the-japan-news.com. There is also the Mainichi Shimbun’s English edition, at https://mainichi.jp/english/. In addition, you can set up a Google News page that flags articles on Japanese society. However you do it, you are expected to keep current on Japanese news by reading a Japanese newspaper at least three times a week. If a major story breaks, I reserve the right to add current events questions to quizzes and exams.

Japan Focus Journal: For an excellent collection of freely available scholarly articles about Japan and the Asia-Pacific region, including articles about current events and social problems in Japan, see www.japanfocus.org. In my view, this is an indispensable source of good information about Japan, often from a critical perspective.
**Grades:** Grades are based on how many points you earn: 90-100 points is an A, 80-89 B, 70-79 C, 60-69 D, and 59 or fewer is an F. There will be two exams, each worth 30 points (exam formats and expectations will be explained in class). Your in-class presentation is worth 20 points (this, too, will be explained in class). Attendance, participation, quizzes, and other assignments will be worth 20 points. Thus, in total there will be $30 + 30 + 20 + 20 = 100$ possible points.

**Student Learning Objectives:** Students will (1) increase their understanding of social institutions and social problems in Japan, and (2) improve their understanding of what is distinctive, ordinary, problematic, and praiseworthy about Japan and the United States. More broadly, students will: (3) develop the ability to think clearly and independently about Japanese society & culture.

**Plagiarism:** Our 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.” It is each student's responsibility to learn about plagiarism and how to avoid it. Ignorance of the rules or saying “I forgot” or “I made a mistake” are not valid excuses. NOTE: Plagiarism, or cheating of any other kind, will result in a 0 for that assignment and an F for the course.

**Students with Disabilities:** Anyone who needs an accommodation based on the impact of a disability is invited to contact me privately. NOTE: please contact me during the first week of the semester. I am willing to work with you and with the KOKUA Program (Office for Students with Disabilities) in order to ensure reasonable accommodations to your situation. KOKUA’s telephone: 808-956-7511 & 808-956-7612. The KOKUA office is Room 013 of the Lili‘uokalani Center for Student Services.
COURSE SCHEDULE for SOCIOLOGY 357 for FALL 2019

Week 1 – Does History Matter?

1. Ian Buruma (2003), *Inventing Japan* – Read Prologue “The Tokyo Olympics” + ch. 1 “The Black Ships” + ch. 2 “Civilization and Enlightenment” + ch. 3 “Ero Guro Nansensu” + ch. 4 “Ah, Our Manchuria” (pp.3-108)


4. **Video:** “Japan Under American Occupation” (2002, 50 mins, Sinclair DVD 8426), or watch at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AuPYzWnT1aA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AuPYzWnT1aA)

Week 2 – The Pacific War: Terrible but Useful?

5. Ian Buruma (2003), *Inventing Japan* - Read ch. 5 “War Against the West” + ch. 6 “Tokyo Boogie-Woogie” + ch. 7 “1955 and All That” + Epilogue “The End of the Postwar” (pp.109-177)


7. **Video** on American Views of Japan during the Pacific War - Sinclair Video 5233, “Know Your Enemy – Japan” (1945), 59 minutes, by the U.S. War Department, directed by Frank Capra, also available at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zBIfnPyK4rw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zBIfnPyK4rw)


Week 3 – Japan: Economy + Gender


11. Hirata & Warschauer (2014), ch.2 ”Grass-Eating Girly Men” (pp.59-87)


**Week 4 – Japan: Demography + International Relations**

13. Hirata & Warschauer (2014), ch.3 “Graying and Shrinking” (pp.88-125)


15. Hirata & Warschauer (2014), ch.4 “Getting Along with the Neighbors” (pp.126-163)


**Week 5 – Japan: 3/11 + Education**

17. Hirata & Warschauer (2014), ch.5 “Meltdown” (pp.164-201)


19. Hirata & Warschauer (2014), ch.6 “What We Learned at Lunch” (pp.202-239) + Conclusion “Shaking Up Japan” (pp.240-251)

20. Video, “Children Full of Life” (2004, 40 mins), on Mr. Toshiro Kanamori, a 4th grade elementary school teacher in Kanazawa prefecture, at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1tLB1IU-H0M

**Week 6 – Open (TBA)**

*Week 7 – Review & Exam 1 (30 points), details TBA…

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Part II: SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN JAPAN (weeks 8-15)

Week 8 – Shut-Ins, Suicide, & Mental Illness in Japan


Week 9 – Violence against Women in Japan, and Criminal Violence in the USA & Japan


30. Video, “Japan’s Secret Shame” (BBC documentary on the Ito Shiori & Yamaguchi Noriyuki rape case, 2018, 59 minutes). Note: this video is intermittently available at the following website, so please Google if necessary: https://vimeo.com/278105236


Week 10 – Criminal Justice in Japan


36. Paul Murphy, “Late in Life: Japan’s Elderly Behind Bars” (Japan Focus, October 1, 2016, pp.1-17), at https://apjjf.org/2016/19/Murphy.html

37. Video, “Sore demo Boku wa Yatte Inai” [“I Just Didn’t Do It”], directed by Suo Masayuki (2007, 144 minutes), at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8jsHQpAP0vM. Note: this film is based on Koizumi Tomoki’s book Kanojo wa Uso o Tsuite Iru (She is Lying, published by Bungei Shunju in 2006)

Week 11 – Organized Crime and Crime Reporting in Japan


39. Video 1: “Hard Lessons Learned from Tough People” (Jake Adelstein’s Ted Talk, 17 minutes, October 17, 2012), at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q5iKAqZ9yVU.


Week 12 – Capital Punishment in Japan


Week 13 – Miscarriages of Justice in Japan


Week 14 – Animals & Society in Japan


50. Video: “The Cove” (Sinclair DVD 9987, Lion’s Gate, 2009, 96 minutes), on dolphin hunting in Taiji, Wakayama Prefecture


Week 15 – The American Military in Okinawa, Hawaii, and the World


*Week 16 – Review & Exam 2 (30 points), details TBA…*
**Other Possible Topics on Social Problems in Japan**: inequality, homelessness, gender, minorities (burakumin, zainichi Koreans, Ainu, the disabled, LGBT, etc), media, military & Article 9, immigration, cheating and/or discrimination in sumo, smoking, alcohol abuse, entrance exams, corporate crime, corruption, “kidnap justice” (hitojichi shiho), clutter & the Marie Kondo phenomenon, etc…