Anthropology 191: Undergraduate Seminar: Challenging the Myth of “Homogeneous Japan”

Fall quarter of 2017
Mondays 2 – 4:50 PM
Haines 314

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This seminar is open to only 15 students through automatic enrollment. There is NO WAITLIST and NO PTE #s to allocate to students.

Please note that this is an extremely tentative course syllabus. I am aware that there is too much reading within the limited time. I may also have to use two weeks for students’ presentations, which will eliminate some clusters.

Course Outline

In comparison to the United States, Japan is believed to be a “homogeneous” nation, and most Japanese themselves believe it is. But what does “homogeneity” really mean? The dictionary definition of the word is “the quality or state of being all the same or all of the same kind.” But in what ways the Japanese are “all the same or all of the same kind”? 

The goal of this seminar, which I plan to conduct in the same way as I do conduct the graduate seminar, is to challenge this myth through the exploration of “heterogeneity” among the Japanese. We will therefore read book chapters and journal articles in SEVEN different clusters. They are:

On Buraku-min or “untouchables” in Japan
On African-Americans in Japan - with one film
On Konketsu-ji or the mixed-blood people in Japan
On ethnic Koreans in Japan
On the Okinawans in Japan
On the “new comers” to Japan


Due to the limited time given under the quarter system, this course will eliminate other possible clusters, such as the Ainu, the LGBT or the disabled people in Japan.
Requirements

In the format of a small seminar, it is crucial that you complete each weekly reading on time so you could fully participate in the class discussion. I will NOT lecture but participate in class as one participant of this seminar. Here’s the list of requirements. We will discuss the details in Week 1.

1. YOU MUST ATTEND THE SEMINAR FROM WEEK 1 TO WEEK 10. THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT REQUIREMENT. If you miss more than two seminars from week 2 (with or without reasons), you must drop this course.
2. Complete each weekly reading on time to fully participate in class discussion.
3. From Week 4, every week (from week 4 to 9) a group of 2 or 3 students will play the role of moderators in class discussion. Each weekly team is expected (but not required) to bring some extra curricula sources from Internet, newspaper articles, films, TV programs and so forth relevant to the weekly topic.
4. Every student (except for the weekly moderators) is REQUIRED to send his or her questions about the weekly reading to the moderators by 10 AM of the day of the seminar.
5. Final Requirement (to be discussed in Week 1 seminar)

Class Reading and Discussion Schedule (tentative)

Non-marked reference: chapters of the textbook
Marked *: will scan them and upload them on our class website on time
Marked E: electronically available from UCLA library

Week 1 (October 2): Business

Week 2 (October 9): Introduction to the Key Questions of this Seminar (Moderator: Tamanoi)

READ:

Michael Weiner (2009) “Self and Other in Imperial Japan” in Japan’s Minorities.


*Yasuko Takezawa (2011) “Introduction” and Chapter 1 to Racial Representations in Asia, edited by Yasuko Takezawa.

Week 3 (October 16): Are “Women” the Minorities in Japan? (Moderator: Tamanoi)
Film: The Dream Girl

READ:

Week 4 (October 23): Buraku-min: The Invisible Race

READ:


*June A. Gordon (2008) Chapters 1, 2 and 3 of Japan’s Outcaste Youth Education for Liberation.

Week 5 (October 30): African-Americans in Japan


READ:


Week 6 (November 6): What does “MIXED” mean in the “Mixed Races”?

READ:


(I will most probably replace Sellek with the following reading.)

Koshiro, Yukiko (1999) Excerpts (Introduction) from *Trans-Pacific Racisms: And the U.S. Occupation of Japan*

**Week 7 (November 13): Ethnic Koreans in Japan**

READ:


**Week 8 (November 20): Okinawans outside and in Japan**


**Week 9 (November 27): The Newcomers to Japan**

READ:


**Week 10 (December 4): Students’ Presentations and the Potluck Party**