

Gender in Japanese Culture

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Course objectives

This course introduces students to the workings of gender roles and images in Japanese culture and society from ancient times to the present day. We will begin with a general introduction to key terms: the notions of gender and the body, gender relations, power, performance, cultural re/presentation, sexuality and eroticism. Then we will address various gender issues in Japan from a historical and cultural perspective, focusing on the complexity of gender images and functions in Japanese history, exploring in particular the role of women in the cultural processes. We will also make references to similar gender topics in Western and other Asian societies.

Students should gain a comprehensive overview of Japanese culture and society and deepen their understanding of the intricate workings of gender.

A supplementary goal is to increase students' exposure to Japanese language by integrating specific expressions and vocabulary related to gender studies and presenting the main points of the discussion in academic Japanese at the end of each class. Students are welcome to expand their independent reading to include Japanese-language source materials, and will be supported in class to share this research with classmates.

Format

Class meetings will include lectures, student-led discussions, performance and film showings, and several field trips, utilizing the many resources that Kyoto has to offer.

Requirements and grading policy1. Reading assignments

Students are expected to complete reading assignments on time to prepare for classes.

Interested students can supplement these readings with optional Japanese-language source materials in consultation with the lecturer.

2. Attendance

Attendance counts for 10% of the course grade. Regular attendance at all scheduled class meetings and fieldtrips is mandatory.

3. Class participation

Active student involvement in discussions and other planned activities is essential to the success of this course. Students will be graded on two types of class participation:

- (a) Oral comments and questions during class discussions and fieldtrips count for 15% of the course grade.
- (b) A PowerPoint presentation of their Research Project during the final week of classes counts for 15 % of the course grade. A copy of the PowerPoint document must be submitted to the lecturer electronically on the date of the in-class presentation.

4. Writing assignments

- (a) *Response papers*: In some weeks students will be required to prepare a response paper on the week's reading or field trip. These papers will count for 15% of the course grade.
- (b) *Midterm paper*: Students will prepare a paper of 5 pages on a topic based on the assigned readings and fieldtrips. This paper will count for 15% of the course grade.
- (c) *Research Paper*: students are required to do additional research on a topic related to gender in Japanese culture and society, present the results of their Research Project at end of the semester, and write a 10-pages essay. These papers will count for 30% of the course grade.

Class schedule (the list of reading and visual materials will be updated)

1

INTRODUCTION

Core topics of the class will be introduced: gender studies, women's studies, masculinity studies, queer studies – their development in Japan; the notions of gender and the body, gender relations, power, performance, cultural re/presentation, sexuality, eroticism.

Reading:

- Judith Butler, "Preface." *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York and London: Routledge, 1999 (1990): vii – xxxiii.
- Fiona Carson, "Feminism and the Body." In Sarah Gamble (ed.). *The Routledge Companion to Feminism and Postfeminism*. London: Routledge, 2001: 117-128.
- Romit Dasgupta and Mark McLelland, "Introduction." *Genders, Transgenders, and Sexualities in Japan*. London: Routledge, 2005: 1-15.

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GENDER IN JAPANESE MYTHOLOGY

Overview of Japanese mythology from a gender perspective: Izanagi and Izanami, Amaterasu Ōmikami, her brother Susanō-no Mikoto as anti-hero, the myth of the Heavenly Rock Cave (Ama-no Iwato), the deity Ame-no Uzume.

Film: "Amaterasu" (2010), video: "Ama-no Iwato," male-only *kagura* performance.

Reading:

Excerpts from *Kojiki*, transl. by Donald Philippi. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2015.

Excerpts from *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697*, transl. by William Aston. London: Japan Society of London, 1896 (available online)

3

GENDER AND SHINTO

Shinto rituals from a gender perspective, the roles of men/women over history and at present, the early shamaness and present-day *miko*. Comparison of Japanese and Okinawan shrine maidens: *miko* and *tsukasa*. Female and male body in Shinto.

Video: rituals of Okinawan *tsukasa*, *miko* dances, *Shinto* priests' rituals.

Possible field trip to observe a Shinto ritual in Kyoto.

Reading:

Yusa Michiko, "Women in Shinto: Images Remembered." In Arvind Sharma (ed.), *Religion and Women*. Albany, N.Y., 1994: 93–119.

Kawahashi Noriko, "Review Article: Religion, Gender, and Okinawan Studies." *Asian Folklore Studies* 59, 2000: 301–311.

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GENDER IN EARLY JAPANESE HISTORY

Gender and power in legendary images of early emperors, queen Himiko, empress Jingu.

Reading:

Excerpts from *Kojiki*, transl. by Donald Philippi, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2015.

Excerpts from *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697*, transl. by William Aston, London: Japan Society of London, 1896 (available online)

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STRUCTURES OF GENDER IN THE NARA AND HEIAN PERIODS

Institutionalization of gender, division of female and male roles in society, Heian period women, women in literature, gender representation in art, early ideals of femininity in Japanese culture.

Possible field trip to sites related to Murasaki Shikibu, eg. *Rozanji* temple, her tomb (both within walking distance from KCJS), or a museum trip.

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JAPANESE MASCULINITIES

Classical ideals of masculinity in Japanese culture, Heian period aristocrats, samurai masculinity, the male body in martial arts, ninja.

Possible field trip to Imperial Palace and Nijo Castle to observe modern representations of the classical male archetypal figures of aristocrats and samurai.

Readings:

R. W. Connell and James Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept," *Gender and Society* 19: 6, Dec., 2005: 829-59.

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GENDER AND BUDDHISM

Buddhist priests, nuns, gender images in Buddhist paintings and sculpture.

Reading:

Faure, Bernard, *The Power of Denial: Buddhism, Purity, and Gender*. Princeton, N.J., 2003.

Kawahashi Noriko, "Feminist Buddhism as Praxis: Women in Traditional Buddhism." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 30, nos. 3-4 (2003): 291-313.

Kawahashi Noriko, "Gender Issues in Japanese Religions." In Paul L. Swanson and Clark Chilson (eds.), *Nanzan Guide to Japanese Religions*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006: 323-35.

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MEDIEVAL WOMEN

Samurai wives, women warriors, female performers (shirabyōshi, goze, etc.).

Screening of the Noh Play "Tomoe."

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GENDER IN TRADITIONAL PERFORMING ARTS I

Professional male actors; exclusion of women from official performance space; bugaku, kusemai, sarugaku, noh, kyogen, kabuki and bunraku; women in the early formation of noh and kabuki.

Screening of visual materials – bugaku, kyogen, kabuki and the onnagata body.

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GENDER IN TRADITIONAL PERFORMING ARTS II

Female versions of the all-male performing arts and popular male characters. Female performance in "chamber" spaces (courtesans and geisha).

Screening of excerpts from the kabuki plays *Shibaraku* and *Onna Shibaraku* "The Female Shibaraku."

Possible field trip to Gion corner to observe maiko performance.

Reading:

Isaka Maki (Morinaga), "The Gender of *Onnagata* as the Imitating Imitated: Its Historicity, Performativity, and Involvement in the Circulation of Femininity." In *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique*, 10.2, Fall 2002: 245-284.

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GENDER IN THE EDO PERIOD

Neo-Confucian teachings and manuals on ideal gender behavior and relations, gender fluidity in popular culture, representations of gender in woodblock prints.

Reading:

Leupp, G. P, *Male Colours: the Construction of Homosexuality in Tokugawa Japan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

Mostow, Joshua, "The Gender of Wakashu and the Grammar of Desire in Late 17th Century Edo." In Joshua Mostow, Norman Bryson and Maribeth Graybill (eds.). *Gender and Power in the Japanese Visual Field*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003: 49-70.

Nishiyama, Matsunosuke. *Edo Culture: Daily Life and Diversions in Urban Japan, 1600-1868*. Gerald Groemer (trans. and ed.). Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997.

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TRANSFORMATION OF GENDER DISCOURSE IN THE MODERN PERIOD

Gender discourse in the Meiji period and early 20th century. "Good wives and wise mothers," modern girls, gender representation in cinema.

Reading:

Koyama Shizuko, *The Educational Ideal of "Good Wife, Wise Mother" in Modern Japan*. Leiden: Brill, 2013.

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GENDER IN CONTEMPORARY JAPAN

Maintenance of gender norms in the stereotypical images of salaryman and housewife, construction and preservation of traditional ideals of femininity and masculinity, changing perceptions of gender in depictions of women in TV drama, cross-dressing and gender-bending in popular culture.

Possible field trip to observe *taishū engeki* in Osaka or Takatsuki.

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PowerPoint presentations of Student Research Projects.