FAMILIES AND WORK IN POST-WAR JAPAN

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Course Description:
This course surveys outstanding examples of English language social science research on Japan to introduce the story of post-World War II transformations of Japanese social life. Most of the readings are ethnographic studies, which we will interrogate in order to discover interactions between the interdependent realms of work and families. The texts are presented chronologically, allowing us to gauge change and continuity, and point out the historical underpinnings of the social division of labor. The primary aim of the course is to gain insight into various durable cultural strategies that organize contemporary Japanese social action, noting how they were inflected, first by rapid industrialization and economic growth, and more recently by relative economic stasis. The texts highlight the roles of class, gender, and regional variation in work and family life, and reflect on how social psychology shapes work-family conflicts.

Required Texts:

Students should purchase the five texts above. Other required journal articles and book chapters will be distributed in class.

Recommended Texts:


COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Presentations
The class is a reading intensive, seminar-style inquiry, in which we try to think together in a sustained way about the postwar history and current conditions of work and family life in Japan. Informative and well-written examples of recent research have been selected and the labor will be divided for maximum productivity. Four or five students will present each week on portions of the reading and lead the discussion. Expect to be responsible for a chapter-length section each time you present. Presenters should critically analyze the reading, identifying key passages and using them as a basis for discussion. The aim is interrogation the texts. Each presenter will submit a concise discussion paper (500-words, maximum) on the day of the presentation. Focused comparison with the contemporary work-family reality you observe around you is welcome.

1 These are tentative plans. We will adjust as needed based on the number of participants and other contingencies.
Commentaries
Students not presenting in a particular week will prepare a 300-400 word commentary on the reading to be used as the basis for their participation in the discussion. The commentaries should make reference to specific passages from the reading. Commentaries need not be submitted if one is presenting or tasked with summarizing the discussion of the previous week.

Weekly Discussion Summaries
One or more students will be assigned to take notes on the discussion and produce a summary to be distributed to all members prior to the start of class the following week. Students preparing the notes are not tasked with presentations or commentaries.

Final Paper
Write a research paper analyzing one or more cultural strategies for organizing work and family life in Japan that is of interest to you. Papers should make some use of the course readings and draw on our discussions. These research essays should be 12-15 pages, double-spaced. A paper proposal is due early in the semester. The first draft Additional information about the papers will be distributed in class.

Evaluation
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Schedule: (Assignments are due on the days they are scheduled)
Sept. 9: Introduction: 20th Century Japan’s Industrial Transformation
Film: *The Japanese Version.*

Sept. 16: The Suburban Salaryman Household as Postwar Family Paradigm
Reading: Rohlen, *For Harmony and Strength.*
  Introduction (1-12)
  Concluding Remarks (255-270)
  Dormitories and Apartments (212-234)
  Marriage and the Family (235-254).
Recommended reading: Vogel, *Japan’s New Middle Class.*

Sept. 23: No class. (national holiday)

Sept. 30: Cultural Patterns of Corporate Centered Society
Reading: Rohlen, *For Harmony and Strength.*
The Basic form of the Company (13-33)
Songs, Ceremonies, and the Uedagin Ideology (34-61)
Entrance, Departure, and “Lifelong Commitment” (63-92)
The Office Group (93-120)
A Friend at Court (121-134).
Recommended Reading: Cole, *Japanese Blue Collar*.

Oct. 7: Corporate Structures
Reading: Rohlen, *For Harmony and Strength*.
Getting Ahead (135-155)
Who Gets What, When (156-175)
The Bank’s Union (176-191).

Oct. 14: Transformation of Rural Family Life
Reading: Bernstein, *Haruko’s World*.
Introduction and Arrival (xi-12)
Haruko Takes Charge (13-24)
Entering the Community (25-40)
Haruko and Shoichi (43-58)
Haruko’s Work (71-90).

Oct. 21: Gender and Rural Social Organization
Reading: Bernstein, *Haruko’s World*.
Conflict, and Home and School (91-112)
Social Life and Organization (128-140)
Sex and Drinking (141-156)
Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow; Departure (157-176).
**N.B. Paper topic statements due**

Oct. 28: Family Rituals: Funerals
Film: お葬式 (Itami Juzo)

Nov. 4: *No class. (KCJS fall break: Oct. 31~Nov. 8)*

Nov. 11: Blue-Collar Families
Reading: Roberts, *Staying on the Line*.
Introduction (1-18)
Azumi’s Good Wives and Wise Mothers (19-42)
The Daily Challenge: Cope or Quit? (43-55)
Time Off (74-86)
Social Life (105-120).
Recommended reading: Roberson, Japanese Working Class Lives

Nov. 18: Women and Work
Reading: Roberts, Staying on the Line.
Juggling Home and Work (153-176).
Ogasawara, Office Ladies and Salaried Men.
Introduction (1-16)
The Japanese Labor Market and Office Ladies (17-43)
Why Office Ladies Do Not Organize (44-69).
Film: “Indirect Sexual Discrimination in Japanese Workplaces.” Working Women’s Network. (20 minutes)
N.B. Paper Drafts Due.

Nov. 25: Gender Power in the Workplace
Reading: Ogasawara, Office Ladies and Salaried Men.
Gossip (70-97)
Popularity Poll (98-113)
Acts of Resistance (114-138)
Men Curry Favor with Women (139-154)
Conclusion (155-175)
Recommended reading: Lebra, Japanese Women
N.B. Paper drafts returned.

Reading: Borovoy, The Too-Good Wife.
Preface and Introduction: Lukewarm Dirty Water (1-41)
Alcohol and Codependency (42-66)
Motherhood, Nurturance & Total Care in Postwar National Ideology (67-85)
A Success Story (86-114)

Dec. 9: Work-Life Balance
Reading Borovoy, The Too-Good Wife
The Inescapable Discourse of Motherhood (137-160)
Conclusion: The Home as Feminist Dilemma (161-176)
December 16: Making Families in an Era of Employment Instability

Reading:


Recommended reading: White, Perfectly Japanese

N.B. Final papers due