Outside the Mainstream
— Minority Experiences in Japan —

KCJS
Spring 2017

James L. McClain
TTh 1:10–2:40

When Japan ratified the United Nations’ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 1979, its representative reported, “The right of any person to enjoy his own culture, to profess and practice his religion or to use his own language is ensured under Japanese law. However, minorities of the kind mentioned in the Covenant do not exist in Japan.”

Nothing could have been further from the truth. At the turn of the new millennium, Japan is — and for a long time, has been — home to immigrants from abroad, indigenous populations that have been forced to accept Japanese citizenship, outcast communities of Japanese ethnicity, and otherwise ordinary persons who have elected to live outside the mainstream and challenge its core values. This course offers an historical analysis that examines how these minority communities came into existence, struggled to maintain distinctive lifestyles in what is often self-defined as one of the world’s most homogenous societies, and influenced the flow of Japanese history.

In addition to expanding our specific knowledge of minority experiences, this course embraces the following overarching goals:

- To deepen our understanding about the complex interrelationships between political, economic, and cultural transformations;
- To broaden exposure to diverse methods of assessing the past, with an emphasis on historical analysis but including multiple other disciplines;
- To foster a sophisticated interpretation of historical and other primary sources;
- To promote unbiased, thoughtful critiques of scholarly interpretations;
- To hone writing skills through a variety of essay assignments, with the aim of refining our ability to engage with complex causal analysis and to articulate arguments that integrate supporting evidence and analytical commentary;
- To sharpen oral communication skills by providing opportunities to articulate our views in a public forum, listen to the perceptions and insights of others, and use the intellectual exchange to refine and expand our knowledge of the Japanese past;
- To learn how to view the world from perspectives other than our own.
TOPICS AND READINGS

Our multi-faceted exploration concerning changing ideas about who is a “minority,” the manifestations of prejudice, the lived experiences of persons outside the mainstream, and the impact of minorities upon the course of Japanese history will unfold over three distinct chronological divisions: the pre-1868 era, the century of modernizing efforts from the mid-nineteenth century until 1945, and the contemporary decades. You are expected to read and to think about the assignments according to the following schedule. In advance of each meeting (or set of related meetings), I will distribute handouts listing readings, topics for consideration, a chronology, and a guide to important persons, institutions, and events.

THE DEEP ROOTS OF PREJUDICE
(1600 ~ early 1800s)

The opening segment of the course will seek to discover the roots of discriminatory attitudes and practices in the early modern period (roughly 1600-1800). In particular, we will examine (a) Japanese interactions with their Korean and Ainu neighbors, (b) the lifeways of ethnic minorities on the home islands, and (c) the activities of urban street gangs and romanticized outlaws. Those wishing additional background may consult standard narratives such as Brett L. Walker, A Concise History of Japan, chs. 5-8 (pp. 83-142) or James L. McClain, Japan: A Modern History, chs. 1-3 (pp. 5-112).

January 10: Beginnings

Welcome
Course content and expectations
Key themes for the early-modern era, 1603-1868
Reading:

January 12: The “Civilized” on Japan’s periphery (presentation with Q&A)

Topics:
The long history of cultural cross-pollination between the peninsula and the islands
Hideyoshi invades Korea
The Tokugawa “settlement”

Readings:

January 17: The “Barbarian” on Japan’s periphery (presentation with Q&A)

Topics:
- The Ainu homeland
- Japan’s emerging northern interests
- Disease and dehumanization

Readings:
- Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Re-Inventing Japan*, pp. 9-20 only of the chapter entitled “Japan.”

January 19: Outcasts and outlaws (presentation and discussion)

Discussion topics:
- Ethnic minorities on the home islands
- Urban street gangs and romanticized outlaws

Readings:

MODERNITY AND MINORITIES (mid-1800s ~ mid-1900s)

For the second portion of the course we will turn our attention to the era beginning in 1868, when the Meiji oligarchs boldly resolved to propel Japan into the ranks of the world’s “modern” nations. In the context of the times, that ambitious, decades-long effort included initiatives to (•) inculcate a parliamentary democracy anchored in an absolute monarchy, (•) promote national wealth through industrialization and “guided capitalism,”
(*) engage in imperialist expansion as a means of achieving Great Power status and promoting national security, and (*) nurture the emergence of a homogeneous middle-class society that would both benefit from and enthusiastically support the government’s nation-building efforts. Extended discussion of these issues can be found in Brett L. Walker, *A Concise History of Japan*, chs. 9-13 (pp. 159-260) and James L. McClain, *Japan: A Modern History*, chs. 4-14 (pp. 113-555).

—— January 24: Expanding borders, incorporating “virgin land” (presentation with Q&A)

Topics:
Key themes, 1868-1945
The Ainu homeland becomes Japan’s Hokkaidō

Readings:
Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Re-Inventing Japan*, pp. 20-34 only of the chapter entitled “Japan.”
“The Hokkaidō Former Natives Protection Act” (Law No. 27), March 1899; in Richard M. Siddle, *Race, Resistance and the Ainu of Japan*, pp. 194-96.

—— January 26: Expanding borders, incorporating “our earlier self” (presentation and discussion)

Topic:
The Ryukyū Islands become Okinawa Prefecture
Imperialism, national security, or “enlightened development”?

Readings:

—— January 31: Expanding borders, incorporating Koreans (presentation with Q&A)

Topics:
Colonizing Korea
The forced and voluntary natures of the Great Korean Migration

Readings:

February 2: Koreans in Japan (discussion)

Topics:
Workers and families
Gendered perspectives

Readings:

February 7: Taishō radicalism: The quest for dignity and justice (presentation with Q&A)

Topics:
New middle-class values and hegemony
Political women and the radical left

Readings:

February 9: Bad boys, naughty girls, and criminal women (presentation and discussion)

Topics:
The urban poor and juvenile delinquents
“Degenerate” schoolgirls
Abe Sada and the crime of the century

Readings:
(Film) *In the Realm of the Senses* (愛のコリーダ); directed by the renown Ōshima Nagisa, this is a graphic depiction of “the crime of the century” and the events leading up to it.
February 14: Minorities confront discrimination (presentation and discussion)

Topics:
- Shared values
- Internal divisions

Readings:
- “The Song the Owl God Himself Sang” (tr. from Ainu into Japanese by Chiri Yukie; tr. into English and introduced by Kyoko Selden), Japan Focus (January 2009), pp. 1-19.
- Jeffrey Paul Bayliss, On the Margins of Empire, ch. 6 (“Minorities in a Time of National Crisis: Burakumin and Koreans during Mobilization and War”), pp. 266-98 (although pp. 298-324 are highly recommended).

February 16: Retrospectives, Preludes (discussion)

The final leg of the course examines how the changing postwar environment — the devastation of war; the prosperity generated by the “economic miracle”; the ascendancy of the “new middle class”; and a commitment to the ideals of international peace as set against the realities of the Cold War — impacted the lives of traditional minorities and brought to the fore still others who either were compelled or choose to live outside the mainstream. These themes are elaborated in Brett L. Walker, A Concise History of Japan, chs. 14-53 (pp. 261-304) and James L. McClain, Japan: A Modern History, chs. 15-17 (pp. 517-63).

February 21: Geopolitics, the new Korean Diaspora, and life on the margins (presentation with Q&A)

Discussion topics:
- Former “Japanese nationals” become unwelcomed “aliens”
- The hardships and joys of being Korean in defeated Japan

Readings:

February 23: “Repatriation”: The Final Solution (discussion and film analysis)

Topic:
Dirty secrets
Wanted by no one, scorned by all

Readings:

Dear Pyongyang (dvd), directed by Yang Yonghi.

February 28 and March 2: No class (KCJS Spring Vacation)

March 7: Outsiders still — Ainu, Okinawan… (presentation and discussion)

Topics:
Ainu liberation movements
Okinawans “at home” on the islands and “abroad” in the Osaka diaspora

Readings:
“New Law concerning the Ainu People” (Draft), adopted at the General Assembly of the Utari Kyōkai; May 27, 1984; in Richard M. Siddle, Race, Resistance and the Ainu of Japan, pp. 196-200.

March 9: …and Burakumin identities (discussion)
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Topic:
*Burakumin* and the drive for assimilation

Readings:

March 14: The Zainichi generation, and beyond… (discussion)

Topic:
Coping and adjusting

Readings:
John Lie, *Zainichi (Koreans in Japan): Diasporic Nationalism and Postcolonial Identity*, the chapters entitled “Silence” (pp. 1-31) and “Cunning” (pp. 66-96).

March 16: Foreign workers and immigration policy (discussion)

Topics:
What are some of the effects of economic migrants on Japanese society? How are they viewed, and why is that so?
How should Japan respond to its demographic crisis?

Readings:

March 21: Returnees (discussion)

Topic:
How and why have Brazilian-Japanese created two homelands: Japan and Brazil?
Are there parallels with Zainichi and the conception of North Korea?
How are the experiences of Nikkeijin and Zainichi similar as economic migrants?
How are they different?
What are the parallels and differences between the Brazil and Okinanwan “diasporas” within Japan?

Readings:
Keiko Yamanaka, “I will go home, but when?”, ch. 6, pp. 120-52, in Mike Douglas and Glenda S. Roberts, eds., Japan and Global Migration.

March 23: The Young — NEETs and Freeters (discussion)

Topics:
Economic stagnation and the new “lost generation”

Readings:
Mary C. Brinton, Lost in Transition: Youth, Work, and Instability in Postindustrial Japan, Preface (pp. xi-xvii), Ch. 1 (“The Lost Generation”), pp. 1 -33, and Ch. 6 (“Narratives of the New Mobility”), pp. 148-65.

March 28: The Young — Misbehaving (discussion)
Discussion topics:
- Sports stars and pop idols
- Juvenile crime
- Teenage prostitutes
- Ethnicity and dissident behavior

Readings:
Sonia Ryang, Love in Modern Japan, ch. 4 (“Body and Soul”), pp. 95-125.

March 30: The middle-class homeless (discussion)

Topic:
- Day laborers and the homeless

Readings:
Mapping the Future, Nishinari (未来世紀; 西成; Mirai seiki, Nishinari), a documentary directed by Tanaka Yukio and Yamada Tetsuo.

April 4: Observational profolio reports

April 6: Observational profolio reports

April 11: What does the future hold?
さよなら

Discussion topics:
- The relationship of past to present
- The nation-state — a convenient target?
- Where does the myth of homogeneity come from? Why does it live on?
Readings:

April 13: Reflections
さよなら

ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

In pursuit of the objectives enumerated at the beginning of this syllabus, *Outside the Mainstream* incorporates the following assignments and modes of assessment. Additional details about each undertaking will be provided on separate handouts at the appropriate time.

Q&A segments: As specified on the syllabus and class handouts, multiple class meetings combine a presentation with a question and answer segment. During the Q&A, students are expected to demonstrate engagement with the assigned readings and films by (●) asking pertinent questions designed to clarify complicated points and open up our understanding of that day’s topic and (●) volunteering responses to the queries posed by others.

Discussion segments: During other meetings, time is set aside for conversations about specified issues (which will be announced in advance). Everyone should be prepared to participate fully in these discussions. In addition, each student will have an opportunity to co-lead a discussion.

Essay assignments: All students will complete a scholarly essay for each of the three major chronological divisions of the course. The three assignments include: (1) a critical review of the scholarly literature; (2) a critique of a film; and (3) a historical essay. Specific prompts for each assignment will be distributed in advance, and the responses should be three-four pages in length.
Observational portfolio: The purpose of this exercise is to permit students an opportunity to use Kyoto and the Kansai area as a vehicle to explore a particular issue in depth and to share their findings with the entire class. By way of example, topics might include expanded research on a social group included in the syllabus, the study of a non-mainstream group not covered in this course (ethnic Chinese in Japan), a critical comparison of different types of coverage of minorities (i.e., scholarly literature and the popular press; a blog about minority issues), a report on an organization (such as Chongryon) or institution (The Yanagihara Bank), or a critique of a particular incident. Students are welcome to work together in pairs or small groups, but each individual will submit his/her own final written report. The portfolio will consist of:

• An initial two-page précis of the proposed observation (due January 26);
• An individual meeting with Professor McClain to discuss the undertaking (February 7-11);
• A written update of partial findings, to be distributed to the entire class for comments (due by March 15);
• An oral report to the class (April 4 and 6);
• A final summation (approximately written 7-8 pages with visual supplements as appropriate) of the key findings (due April 12).

Merit consideration: Students who demonstrate acquisition of knowledge and mastery of the material beyond the norm and/or steadily improve their performance over the semester will receive extra consideration that amounts to a maximum of 5 percent of the course grade.

Course grade:

The final course grade will be calculated as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of contributions to Q&amp;A sessions</td>
<td>10 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of contributions to discussions</td>
<td>30 percent</td>
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<td>Historical essay</td>
<td>10 percent</td>
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<td>Film critique</td>
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<td>Critical review</td>
<td>10 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Observation portfolio</td>
<td>25 percent</td>
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<td>Merit consideration</td>
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Academic Code:

Students in this course are expected to adhere to the norms expressed in the Participation Agreement concerning the quality and originality of their work. If anyone has not yet done so, s/he should consult that document.

Accommodations:

Anyone who believes that s/he has a disability that requires accommodation should contact the appropriate official at his/her home institution or Columbia’s Disability
Services (disability@columbia.edu; 212-854-2388). Students who have an Accommodation Letter issued by the home institution or Columbia’s Disability Services should contact the course instructor to discuss specific arrangements.