

Migration and minorities in contemporary Japan

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Objectives

Japan has been perceived as a negative case in terms of allowing immigration among the highly developed countries for a long time, which oftentimes went hand-in-hand with perception of Japan as a mono-ethnic, mono-cultural society. While Japan and its political elites are still clearly opposing open door immigration policy especially towards low-skilled migrants there have been a number of significant changes in past three decades that led to increasing numbers of foreign nationals living in Japan and opening further possibilities to legally enter and settle in Japan.

This course will provide students with a better understanding of the contemporary migration and fallacy of the mono-ethnic Japan perception. It will address the issues related to historical minorities, pre-war migration to Japan and a detailed overview of the contemporary migration patterns and the integration of migrants into the fabrics of the Japanese society since 1990s. Furthermore, the course aims to deepen students' understanding of the Japanese society through looking at its minorities and movement of people in recent years. We will address issues related to pre-pandemic boom in inbound tourism or Japan's out-migration as well. This should provide us with further and more complex understanding of contemporary meanings of Japan for people who choose it as their destination and those who leave it behind in search for better lives.

Content and organization

The course will start with an overview of the history and social position of the major historical minorities in the Japanese society, such as *burakumin* and *Zainichi* (or Korean residents). Discussions of a struggle for recognition and inclusion of these minorities in the structures of the Japanese society should serve us as a basis for understanding some of the issues concerning the present-day minorities in Japan.

The second (core) part of the course will be dedicated to discussions of contemporary migration that have emerged since the late 1980s in various forms – ranging from the 'ethnic' migration of *Nikkei* Brazilians, through 'Asian brides' or women entertainers from the Philippines to high-skilled workers, international students or low-skilled workers disguised in various forms. Exploring these different patterns will lead us to important issues related to migration such as integration or the notion of multi-cultural coexistence (*tabunka kyōsei*), meanings of (national) belonging, the myth of Japanese ethno-

cultural homogeneity, racism and xenophobia as well as it will provide us with an opportunity to address broader topics such as demographic changes and a shrinking labor force, social inequalities, or globalization, its meanings and manifestations in the contemporary Japan.

The final part of the course will consist of discussions of inbound tourism to Japan and emigration patterns from Japan. An analysis of the underlying factors of these movements will further provide us with an opportunity to explore continuities (such as the persistence of gender inequalities) and changes (such as individualization) within Japanese society.

Format

Regular classes will consist of short lectures and student-led discussion based on reading assignments. Part of the classes will be dedicated to other activities; two to three field trips, and a film screening with discussion.

Class requirements and grading

Attendance and class participation:

Active participation and regular attendance of class meetings and field trips is required for completing the course. Students are required to come prepared for classes and active participation in class and discussion are an essential part of the course. Unexcused absences will lower your final grade.

Critical reading summary:

Each class will consist of a lecture that will be followed by a summary and analysis of the reading assignment and student-led discussion. All students are required to complete readings before the class. One student (or group) will present a short summary and analysis of the reading with critical comments and prepare questions for discussion.

Short essays:

There will be two short essay assignments regarding two of the additional activities (film screening and field trips). Essays will be about 1000 words long.

Final presentation:

During the course, students will be divided into small groups that will prepare presentations on topics of their interest and related to migration and minorities in Japan (e.g., case studies on minorities, small surveys or analysis of observations made during their stay in Japan). Each presentation will be 15-20 minutes long and will be followed by a short discussion. All presentations will be presented during

weeks 12 and 13.

Final paper:

Students are required to submit a final paper (no shorter than 1500 words and no longer than 2000 words) on a topic of their interest that is related to minorities, migration, or integration. Papers should utilize concepts, ideas and data discussed during the classes or in other relevant sources. Final papers can also build on material and ideas used for group presentations, yet papers will be submitted individually and should reflect comments from discussion after the presentations.

Evaluation:

1. Attendance and class participation	15%
2. Reading summaries	15%
3. Short essays	15%
4. Presentation	25%
5. Paper	30%

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is defined as misrepresenting the work of others (whether published or not) as your own. It may be inadvertent or intentional. Any facts, statistics, quotations, or paraphrasing of any information that is not common knowledge, should be cited. Plagiarism and cheating are not allowed and if revealed, the final grade will automatically be an F.

Late assignment submission: Failing to submit class assignment (short essays, final paper) or missing your turn in presentation without prior consultation and eligible cause will lower your grade by one letter (e.g., from A to B).

Accommodating Students with Disabilities: If you are a student with a disability and have a DS-certified 'Accommodation Letter' please see the KCJS resident director to confirm your accommodation needs. If you believe that you have a disability that requires accommodation, you can contact your home school's Disability Services or Columbia's Disability Services at disability@columbia.edu. The Office of Global Programs (OGP) can also assist you to connect with Columbia's Disability Services.

Fieldtrips:

The exact dates and destinations will be decided during the course. Destinations will include some of the following places: Kobe (Japanese Overseas Migration Museum and others), Utoro Peace Memorial

Museum (Uji), Buraku fieldtrip in Kyoto, Gion (Kyoto).

Study materials/readings:

Reserve copies of the books listed in the syllabi will be available in the KCJS office. Copies of other readings (journal articles, etc.) will be made available in pdf format by the professor.