



SYD 4451

Japanese Society in Global Perspective

Section: U01

Hybrid/Certified

Fall Term 2025

Course Meeting Information

Meeting Time: 2:00PM - 3:15PM, Thursdays

Professor Information

Matthew David Marr, Ph.D.

Roles: Primary Instructor

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Phone: (305) 348-4004

Office Hours: Thursday 11 AM-1 PM

Office Location: SIPA 323 or Zoom (Meeting ID 601 880 4611)

Department or Academic Unit: SIPA

Course Prerequisites

Course prerequisites, if any, are listed below.

Course Description and Purpose

This hybrid global learning course provides a sociological introduction to contemporary Japan from a global perspective. Instead of studying Japan as an isolated and homogeneous island nation, we examine its position in broader global society. The course combines reading and discussing social science literature like ethnographies analyzing social life in Japan, engaging online content and activity, and in-depth research on a student's social topic of choice. We explore pressing questions facing Japanese citizens, communities, governments, and scholars. How do we approach questions about uniqueness of Japanese society and culture? In what ways are inequality, precarity, and poverty growing in Japan? How are gender relations being transformed in Japan? How is Japanese society being impacted by demographic changes like aging and immigration? What are the experiences of immigrant communities in Japan? How is 'deviance' socially constructed and controlled in Japan? How are communities and social movement organizations addressing social problems in Japan? What is the nature of the emphasis on 'cool Japan' and 'soft power' as means to ensure and expand the country's global economy and stature? How have all of these issues been affected by the 3/11 triple disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic? This course will leave students with a strong understanding of Japanese society to bring to careers in Japan or in Japan-related fields, as well as a strong foundation for graduate research on Japanese society. Also, by exploring Japanese society, students will gain a deeper understanding of the societies in which they live, informing their careers in diverse fields and their broader lives.

Textbook and Course Materials

An Introduction to Japanese Society

Required/Recommended: Required

Authors: Yoshio Sugimoto

Publisher: Cambridge University Press

Publication Date: November 12, 2020

Copyright Date: N/A

ISBN 10: n/a

ISBN 13: 978-1108624329

EBK INTRODUCTION TO JAPANESE SOCIETY

Required/Recommended: Required

Authors: SUGIMOTO

Publisher: VST

ISBN 13: 8220135269475

EBK INTRODUCTION TO JAPANESE SOCIETY

Required/Recommended: Required

Authors: SUGIMOTO

Publisher: VST

ISBN 13: 9781108624664

INTRODUCTION TO JAPANESE SOCIETY

Required/Recommended: Required

Authors: SUGIMOTO

Publisher: CAMB

ISBN 13: 9781108724746

Panther Book Pack

The Panther Book Pack rental program provides your required print and digital course materials at a flat rate of \$20 per undergraduate credit hour. When you registered for your classes this session, you were notified via email of the required course materials that are included in the Panther Book Pack.

Make sure to review the pricing for all materials across your classes this semester and compare the cost to the Panther Book Pack flat rate. If the Panther Book Pack is not your

best option, you may opt out up to three days after the add/drop deadline. The deadline to opt back into the Panther Book Pack is also three days after the add/drop deadline.

If you do not opt out of the Panther Book Pack rental program, you will be charged \$20 per undergraduate credit hour for which you are registered and the course materials will be reserved in your name. For more details and to learn how to access your course materials, visit onestop.fiu.edu/bookpack.

Other Course Materials and Open Educational Resources (OER)

Additional readings for term paper and related assignments will be available on-line.

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

Student learning outcomes allow faculty to assess the level of proficiency in content knowledge and skills that their students acquire in a course.

If the objective meets a special designation, you will see the code after the objective:

University Core Curriculum: UCC

Gordon Rule Writing: GRW

Global Learning: GL

Civic Literacy: CL

- Gain in-depth, empirically-based knowledge of social issues and dynamics in contemporary Japan.
- Understand how processes of globalization are affecting contemporary Japan.
- Understand Japan's position and role in global society.
- Be able to reflect on how Japan's response to social problems related to globalization can shed light on experiences of other societies.

- Students will be able to demonstrate understanding of how processes of economic, demographic, and cultural globalization interact with social institutions and conditions in contemporary Japan: GL
- Online discussions will be assessed using a global learning awareness matrix to identify the extent to which the interrelatedness of multilevel causes of social issues in Japan are discussed: GL
- Students will be able to analyze how global and local social contexts interact to shape social problems in contemporary Japan. Assessment: Individual term papers will be examined to assess the extent to which they assess different theoretical perspectives on a social issue. A global learning perspective rubric will be applied to these assignments: GL
- Students will be able to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of possible solutions to social problems related to globalization in contemporary Japan. Assessment: Individual term papers will also be assessed according to the extent to which potential solutions to social problems are explored in the paper: GL
- Be able to critique “essentializing” descriptions of Japanese and other cultures and societies.

Expectations of this Course

This is a hybrid course, meaning half of the coursework will be conducted in class, on campus, with the remaining half conducted out of class, including in this Canvas course. Expectations for performance in hybrid courses are the same as in a traditional course. Hybrid courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills which can make these courses more demanding for some students.

Students are expected to:

- **review the getting started** page located in the course modules;
- **introduce yourself to the class** during the first week by posting a self-introduction in the appropriate discussion;
- **take the practice quiz** to ensure that your computer is compatible with the learning management system, Canvas;
- **interact** online with instructor and peers;
- **review** and follow the course calendar and weekly outlines;
- **Attend class sessions** in person as scheduled

Policies & Resources

Before starting this course, please review the Policies & Resources Page in Canvas which includes comprehensive information on various University and Course Level Policies such as:

- University Policies
- Accessibility and Accommodations
- Online Etiquette
- Technical Requirements and Skills
- Computer & Digital Literacy Skills
- Course Technology Accessibility Statements and Privacy Policies
- Academic Integrity
- Copyright Statement
- Core Principles of This Course
- Nondiscrimination Statement
- Panthers Care & Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

- Fair Use Policy

Assignments & Assessments

Participation

Attendance at each class meeting from start to finish is required and is worth one point. However, if you are sick or have symptoms of transmissible illness (Covid or otherwise), please do not come to class. If you let me know before the class you miss, your absence will be excused and you will receive your one point for attendance. I will be taking attendance either at the beginning or at the end of class. Attendance does not simply mean showing up but showing up *prepared and on time*. Thus, you are to do all assigned readings *prior* to class. You should also be prepared to participate in discussions in class and/or to ask and answer questions about the material. Students participating in University-sanctioned events (athletes, debaters, musicians, etc.) must inform me in advance of any event that will conflict with class time and make up work they miss. Documentation must also be submitted before the event.

Online Discussion Assignments

Each week there will be an online discussion assignment. You must do the chapter reading and post your response to the prompt by 8 AM Thursday.

Students are required to post a reflection in response to the instructor's discussion questions. You will post your response to the questions for that particular week. **You will need to read the assigned chapter readings before posting in order to demonstrate your knowledge of key concepts.**

A point about the elephant in the room (AI)...

I strongly recommend that you do not use AI at all for any assignment in this class. Developing strong analytical and writing skills is crucial for any career and being an informed citizen. My honest opinion is that relying on AI is wasting time in college. Also, I

feel a bit disrespected when students submit material clearly generated by AI. I am genuinely interested in reading your perspectives, so submit your original writing proudly!

Each student's reflection will be graded according to the following rubric. Points will be deducted if the post fails to meet the following criteria. If your post fails to meet multiple criteria, or fails to meet a criteria in an extreme manner, you will likely receive 0 to 5 points.

- Originality: **the posts must be written without the use of AI.** If you use unassigned materials, be sure to cite and list them.
- Relevance to assigned material: the posted ideas indicate that the student has read the assigned material. **You must use at least two terms or concepts from the assigned readings for that module and highlight them. Terms in the title of the chapters do not count.**
- Clarity, coherence: the ideas are stated clearly and coherently.
- Critical thinking: there is evidence that the student has adequately analyzed, synthesized, and evaluated the assigned material.
- Poses a discussion question about the assigned material or draws a connection between a current event or personal experience and the assigned material.
- Spelling, grammar: the posting must meet university-level standards of spelling and grammar. Be sure to break up your post into paragraphs for clarity.
- Length: the initial posting for each weekly module must be no less than 500 words. **Be sure to do a word count before submitting it.**

For graduate students only—you will also be required to submit a response paper for each of the books that we read. These papers should be at least 1000 words and discuss core ideas in the books and how they relate to your research interests. If making connections with your interests is difficult, you can also write up a critique, evaluation, and reaction to the main ideas and methodologies of book. These response papers will be submitted on Canvas. They should be carefully proofread.

Term Paper and Assignments

The term paper will be a social science literature review paper developed around a topic and research question of your interest. Your paper will be focused on Japanese society but will address a social issue of global import (for example, immigration, gender, inequality, etc.). You will use at least 5 scholarly sources (10 for graduate students) to develop a theoretically organized review of major research on a specific, sociological research question. Your paper is to be around 3,000 words, not including references (5,000 words for graduate students). Graduate research papers will include a research proposal. There will be the following assignments (dates are below in the class schedule) that will guide you through completion of the paper. Some assignments will be done in class, but most will involve submitting material via Canvas. Late assignments will not be accepted.

A. Library Exercise

B. How to Read Research Articles/Books

C. Sociological Topic and Question

D. Literature Review References 1st Draft (Peer Review)

E. Literature Review References 2nd Draft

F. Theoretical Perspectives

G. Evidence/Support

H. Outlining/First Draft

I. Second Draft

I will provide a more complete explanation of the paper and these assignments early in the course.

Presentation

All students will be giving a brief presentation (around 15 minutes) on their term paper. You can use presentation software (Powerpoint, Keynote, etc.) and other visual aids. I will go over some ways to make effective presentations in class.

For graduate students only-- You will also make a presentation and lead a discussion on at least one of the books assigned. In the presentation, the graduate student should explain the main points of the book in a manner that undergraduates will understand (around 20 minutes) and lead a discussion (around 15 minutes). All graduate students are required to comment and respond to questions on all books assigned. Graduate students should email the professor during the first week of class to state a preferred book (of the three assigned) on which to present. Depending on enrollment, graduate students will collaborate on presentations/discussions.

Grading

Course Grades Distribution Table

Course Requirements	Number of Items	Total Points Available
Term Paper	1	30
Term Paper Assignments	9	20
Paper Presentation	1	20*
Online Discussions	12	20
Participation	15 meetings	10
Total	38	100

*For graduate students, this includes your presentation on one of our graduate readings

Letter Grade Distribution Table

Letter Grade	Sample Range %
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Letter Grade	Sample Range %
A	95 - 100
A-	90 – 94.99
B+	87 – 89.99
B	83 – 86.99
B-	80 – 82.99
C+	77 – 79.99
C	70 – 76.99
D	60 – 69.99
F	0 – 59.99

LATE WORK/INCOMPLETE

Late work without legitimate and documented excuses will have points deducted.

CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

DO NOT EVEN THINK ABOUT IT!

Please consult the section on “Academic Misconduct” in the annual *Student Handbook* for definitions of both. I will have you submit all papers to Turnitin.com to identify cases of plagiarism (use of AI, direct copying of text from books, on-line

resources, etc. without proper citation, submitting papers from other courses). In all cases of cheating and plagiarism, I will follow the university protocols on reporting.

Canvas Schedule

Due Date	Assignment Name	Assignment Type	Points
	10/16	Assignment	1
	10/2	Assignment	1
	10/23	Assignment	1
	10/30	Assignment	1
	10/9	Assignment	1
	11/13	Assignment	1
	11/20	Assignment	1
	11/6	Assignment	1
	12/11	Assignment	1
	12/4	Assignment	1
	8/28	Assignment	1
	9/11	Assignment	1
	9/18	Assignment	1
	9/25	Assignment	1
	9/4	Assignment	1
	Academic Honesty Policy	Quiz	0

Due Date	Assignment Name	Assignment Type	Points
	Introduce Yourself	Discussion	0
	Open Forum	Discussion	0
	Practice Quiz	Quiz	0
	Syllabus Quiz	Quiz	5
8/28/25	Discussion 1	Discussion	10
9/4/25	Discussion 2	Discussion	10
9/11/25	Discussion 3	Discussion	10
9/11/25	Term Paper Assignment A: Library Exercise	Assignment	10
9/18/25	Discussion 4	Discussion	10
9/18/25	Graduate Student Response Paper 1	Assignment	10
9/18/25	Term Paper Assignment B: How to Read a Research Article/Book	Assignment	10
9/25/25	Discussion 5	Discussion	10
9/25/25	Term Paper Assignment C: Sociological Research Question	Assignment	10
10/2/25	Discussion 6	Discussion	10

Due Date	Assignment Name	Assignment Type	Points
10/2/25	Term Paper Assignment D: Literature Review References First Draft	Assignment	10
10/9/25	Discussion 7	Discussion	10
10/9/25	Term Paper Assignment E: Literature Review References Revised Draft	Assignment	10
10/16/25	Discussion 8	Discussion	10
10/16/25	Graduate Student Response Paper 2	Assignment	10
10/23/25	Discussion 9	Discussion	10
10/23/25	Term Paper Assignment F: Theoretical Perspectives	Assignment	10
10/30/25	Discussion 10	Discussion	10
11/6/25	Discussion 11	Discussion	10
11/6/25	Term Paper Assignment G: Evidence and Support	Assignment	10

Due Date	Assignment Name	Assignment Type	Points
11/13/25	Graduate Student Response Paper 3	Assignment	10
11/13/25	Discussion 12	Discussion	10
11/20/25	Term Paper Assignment H: Outline/First Draft	Assignment	10
12/4/25	Term Paper Assignment I: Second Draft	Assignment	10
12/11/25	Term Paper Presentation	Assignment	20
12/12/25	Term Paper Final Draft	Assignment	30

Schedule of Topics

Date	Before Class	In Class
<u>Week 1: Historical Backdrop: Disintegration and Restoration</u>	Read Chapter 1 and do Discussion Assignment 1 on Canvas by 8 AM Thursday	Introduction to the course
<u>Week 2: The Japanese Phenomenon: Analysis and Understanding</u>	Read Chapter 2 and do Discussion Assignment 2 on Canvas by 8 AM Thursday	Introduction to the term paper
<u>Week 3: Class:</u>	Read Chapter 3 and do	Library Exercise (Term

<u>Stratification and Disparity</u>	Discussion Assignment 3 on Canvas by 8 AM Thursday	Paper Assignment A) <i>Meet in GL 280</i>
<u>Week 4: Generations and Geography: Variations in an Aging Society</u>	Read Chapter 4 and the reading for Term Paper Assignment B, do Discussion Assignment 4 and submit Term Paper Assignment A on Canvas by 8 AM Thursday (graduate students submit response paper on Canvas)	How to Read a Research Article/Book (Term Paper Assignment B), Graduate Presentation and Class Discussion 1
<u>Week 5: Work: 'Japanese Style' Management and Cultural Capitalism</u>	Read Chapter 5 and the reading for Term Paper Assignment C, do Discussion Assignment 5 and submit Term Paper Assignment B on Canvas by 8 AM Thursday	Sociological Topic and Question (Term Paper Assignment C)
<u>Week 6: Education: Diversity and Unity</u>	Read Chapter 6 and do Discussion Assignment 6 and submit Term Paper C Assignment on Canvas by 8 AM Thursday	Literature Review References 1st Draft (Term Paper Assignment D , will be graded in class)-- be sure to bring an electronic or paper copy of your references to class to share with a classmate
<u>Week 7: Gender and</u>	Read Chapter 7 and do	Literature Review References 2 nd Draft

<u>Family: Changes to Ideology</u>	Discussion Assignment 7 on Canvas by 8 AM Thursday	(Term Paper Assignment E)
<u>Week 8: Ethnicity and Japaneseness: Defining the Nation</u>	Read Chapter 8 and do Discussion Assignment 8 and submit Term Paper E Assignment on Canvas by 8 AM Thursday	Graduate Presentation and Discussion 2
<u>Week 9: The Establishment: Competition and Collusion</u>	Read Chapter 9 and do Discussion Assignment 9 on Canvas by 8 AM Thursday	Theoretical Perspectives (Term Paper Assignment F)
<u>Week 10: Religion: Belief and Secularization</u>	Read Chapter 10 and do Discussion Assignment 10 and turn in Term Paper Assignment F on Canvas by 8 AM Thursday	Evidence and Support (Term Paper Assignment G)
<u>Week 11 Culture: The Popular and the Cool</u>	Read Chapter 11 and do Discussion Assignment 11 and turn in Term Paper Assignment G on Canvas by 8 AM Thursday	Graduate Presentation and Discussion 3
<u>Week 12 Civil Society: Activism and Friendly Authoritarianism</u> (No meeting during Thanksgiving week)	Read Chapter 12 and do Discussion Assignment 11 on Canvas by 8 AM Thursday	Outlining (Term Paper Assignment H)
<u>Week 13 Paper Draft</u>	Submit Term Paper	Peer-review of outlines,

<u>Discussions</u>	Assignment H by 8 AM Thursday	First Draft (Term Paper Assignment H), and overview of presentation assignment and techniques
<u>Week 14 Presentations</u>	Submit Second Draft (Term Paper Assignment I) by 8 AM Thursday	Student presentations, attendance by all is required
<u>Week 15 (Finals Week) Presentations</u>	Term paper due on Canvas by 11:59 PM Sunday	Student presentations, attendance by all is required

Core Principles of this Course

This course is designed to serve all students by fostering collaboration and encouraging an appreciation for multiple perspectives and ideas. We recognize and value the lived experiences that each student brings to the classroom and are committed to ongoing education that supports open participation.

In alignment with Florida International University's endorsement of the Florida Board of Governors' Statement of Free Expression, this course supports full and open discourse. Civil and respectful discussion is fundamental to critical thinking, both within the classroom and in broader university events. Students are expected to engage in discussions with curiosity, respect, and a willingness to consider differing viewpoints.

Nondiscrimination Statement

The **Office of Civil Rights Compliance and Accessibility (CRCA)** is responsible for ensuring that FIU maintains a workplace and learning environment free from discrimination, where current and prospective faculty, staff, and students are treated equitably. If any student, employee, or applicant has a sincere and reasonable belief that they have been discriminated against or harassed based on age, color, disability, gender, marital status, ethnic or national origin, race, religion, retaliation, sex, or any other

protected category, they can report their concerns to the CRCA team through report.fiu.edu.