

Media and Contemporary issues in Japan

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Course Description

In the era of information overflow, we need to develop “media literacy” to screen out fake news and find trustworthy and important information. Through analyzing news reports and media responsibilities, this course will look at contemporary social issues in Japan from labor exploitation and perpetuating poverty to gender equality and racial discrimination. Based on the understanding that we stand at the transition of media format from the conventional outlets to the cyberspace presentation, we will discuss not only Japanese media and society but where they stand in relation to the international community and its media.

Aims of the Course

This course will introduce students to significant social issues in Japan and how they are reported. It is hoped that by examining the complexity of the nature and background of media, the students will become equipped to think critically about the role media play in raising awareness about and resolving the social issues, as well as think about how they can help create a better medium.

Course Format

This class will combine lectures, discussions, presentations and reports. We learn from one another by actively participating in exchange of ideas and opinions. Students are expected to share their opinions, personal experiences and views in class.

Course Requirements

The final grade for the course will be determined by evaluation in the following areas:

1. Class Attendance and Participation	15%
2. Paper	15%
3. Presentation	30%
4. Final Examination	40%

1. Class attendance and participation in discussions are mandatory. Students are expected to read about daily news in and outside of Japan and be prepared to discuss them in class.

2. One report should be approximately 1,000 words.
3. Students are required to make a 5-minute presentation in a preferred medium.

Prerequisite

No prior study of Japanese media and society is required. A strong interest in and commitment to learning them is expected. All course readings to be provided prior will be in English, and students are required to study them before class. Students with advanced Japanese-language skills may write papers in Japanese.

Class Schedule

1. Overview and comparative analysis of Japanese media and society
2. Reporting the Great East Japan Earthquake: Nuclear or non-nuclear?
3. Turning point of Japanese media and a shift of society's response to mainstream media
4. "Karoshi," the internationally recognized word and working for "Black Corporations"
5. Guest speaker
6. Poor and emerging poor in the world's economic power house
7. Racism and discrimination in Japan (1) Japan's ethnic minorities
8. Racism and discrimination in Japan (2) "the untouchables"
9. Guest speaker
10. Racism and discrimination in Japan (3) Gender inequality, LGBT rights
11. Racism and discrimination in Japan (4) Immigrants and migrant workers
12. Looking at media and democracy through Okinawa, secrecy law, security law and conspiracy act
13. Presentations
14. Right to know, media freedom and responsibilities
15. Final exam

※The schedule and program are subject to change.