

**EAST 430: Contemporary Japanese Society (4 credits)
(GLOBAL LEARNING PROGRAM TO TOKYO, JAPAN, SUMMER
2018)**

Instructor: Dr. Massimiliano Tomasi, MH 222C

Office hours: MTWRF after class

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Course Description

This course analyzes historical events, cultural practices and social developments that have shaped contemporary Japanese society. The course examines four key areas of post-war intellectual discourse: atomic bomb literature, the portrayal of the occupation, and the aesthetics of war; the family, the work place and the competing identities arising from the post bubble economy; the myth of homogeneity and the shifting role of women and minorities; and the representation of otherness in literature and anime, including the semantics of the relationship between these two realms. Each of these four areas will be carefully examined through novels, film and published research. Class format includes formal lecturing, student presentation and extensive in-class discussion.

Student Learning Outcomes

After taking this course students will gain: 1) a nuanced understanding of key Japanese cultural concepts and contemporary historical and social concerns; 2) improved tools with which to analyze and interpret current issues in Japanese cultural and literary history; and 3) an advanced knowledge of representative literary works, cutting-edge scholarship and other forms of artistic expression such as film and anime that address contemporary cultural developments and social issues.

Student progress will be assessed with quizzes and a final research paper. Class participation and attendance will also be part of the assessment.

BOOKS REQUIRED (All on reserve or provided by GLP)

Gebhardt, Lisette and Masami, Yuki Masami eds. *Literature and Art after "Fukushima."* Berlin: EBV Verlag, 2014.

Ibuse Masuji. *Black Rain*. Tokyo: Kodansha, 1969.

Nakane Chie. *Japanese Society*. Tokyo: Tuttle, 1984.

Napier, Susan. *Anime: From Akira to Princess Mononoke*. New York, Palgrave, 2000.

Napier, Susan. *From Impressionism to Anime: Japan as Fantasy and Fan Cult in the Mind of the West*. New York, Palgrave, 2007.

Ōka Shōhei. *Fires on the Plain*. Tuttle, 2001.

Ōshiro Tatsuhirō. "Cocktail Party." In Steve Rabson, *Okinawa: Two Postwar Novellas*. Berkeley, Center for Japanese Studies, 1989.

Ōe Kenzaburō. *Teach Us To Outgrow Our Madness*. New York: Grove Press, 1977.

Treat, John Whittier. *Contemporary Japan and Popular Culture*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1977.

Yoshimoto Banana. *Kitchen*. New York: Washington Square Press, 1994.

Weiner, Michael ed. *Japan's Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity*. London and New

York, Routledge, 1997.

Requirements and grading procedure:

Presentation	20
Quizzes	20
Final paper	40
Class performance	20

100

A 93-100%; A- 90-92%; B+ 84-89%; B 78-83%; B- 71-77%; C+ 67-70%;
C 63-66%; C- 60-62%; D+ 56-59%; D 52-55%; D- 50-52%; F 49% and below

Schedule

SPRING 2018 (1 cr)

Early May Two-hour session: Study abroad logistics and introduction to EAST 430
Overview of key cultural concepts and social stratification of Japanese society.
Texts covered: Nakane Chie, *Japanese Society*.

Mid-May Two-hour session: Overview of key cultural concepts and social stratification
of Japanese society.
Texts covered: Nakane Chie, *Japanese Society*.

Late May: LUNCH hosted by KCP Japanese Language School

Early to mid-June: Two-hour session on pre-departure logistics and assignments for
July 9th

SUMMER 2018 (3 cr)

EAST 430 begins on 7/9/17 and meets 3.5 hours daily, 2-5:30 pm

7/9 Atomic Bomb and War Literature: Ibuse Masuji.'s *Black Rain* and Ōka Shōhei's
Fires on the Plain.

7/10 Movie: *Eien no zero*. Discussion.

7/11 Literature of Occupation: Okinawa's case. Ōshiro Tatsuhirō's "Cocktail Party."
Shifting identities: The "hikikomori" phenomenon. Student Presentations: "Hikikomori,"
"Furitaa," "Women and Gender Discourse in Japan."

7/12 Shifting identities. Movie: "Tokyo Sonata." Discussion.

7/13 **QUIZ #1** (*Black Rain and Fires on the Plain*). Yoshimoto Banana's *Kitchen*. The myth of homogeneity: Michael Weiner ed. *Japan's Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity*. Student Presentation: "Burakumin," "Ainu," "Zainichi Koreans."

7/14 EXCURSION #1: Studio Ghibli Museum.

7/15 SUNDAY: NO CLASS

7/16 NATIONAL HOLIDAY: NO CLASS

7/17 The Other: "Princess Mononoke." Discussion. Susan Napier, *Anime: from Akita to Princess Mononoke* (121-138, 175-192).

7/18 **QUIZ #2** (*Kitchen*). The Other: Ōe Kenzaburō, *Teach Us To Outgrow Our Madness* (3-219). Student presentation: "Fukushima" and "Tokyo Olympics."

7/19 **QUIZ #3** (*Teach Us...*). John Treat, *Contemporary Japan and Popular Culture* (275-308), and Susan Napier, *From Impressionism to Anime* (149-167).

7/20 *Literature and Art after "Fukushima."* (11-74) A Comparison of Kawabata Yasunari's and Ōe Kenzaburō's Nobel Prize for Literature acceptance speech: "Japan, the Beautiful, and Myself" versus "Japan, the Ambiguous, and Myself." Discussion.

7/21 EXCURSION # 2: Kamakura/Enoshima.

7/22 Sunday: Check out" and End of Global Learning Program.

8/10 Final paper due (submit by e-mail): a 4-5page essay on any literary work read during the course, and a 2 page short essay on one of the student presentation topics.

ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY at Western

<http://catalog.wvu.edu/content.php?catoid=5&navoid=463>

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

Reasonable accommodation for persons with documented disabilities should be established within the first week of class and arranged through Disability Resources for Students: telephone 650-3083; email drs@wvu.edu; and on the web at Disability Resources.

STUDENT SERVICES

Western encourages students to seek assistance and support at the onset of an illness, difficulty, or crisis.

- In the case of a medical concern or question, please contact the Health Center: 650-3400 or visit http://www.wvu.edu/chw/student_health/
- In the case of an emotional or psychological concern or question, please contact the Counseling Center: 650-3400 or visit <http://www.wvu.edu/counseling/>
- In the case of a health and safety concern, please contact the University Police: 650-3555 or visit <http://www.wvu.edu/ps/police/index.shtml>
- In the case of a family or personal crisis or emergency, please contact the Dean of Students: 650-3450 or visit <https://wp.wvu.edu/students/find-support/>
- To seek confidential support related to sexual violence, please contact CASAS http://www.wvu.edu/pws/about_casas.shtml (650-3700), the Student Health Center, and/or the Counseling Center.
- To report sexual violence, please contact University Police, Bellingham Police, and/or the Title IX Coordinator in Western's Equal Opportunity Office <http://www.wvu.edu/eoo/titleix.shtml> (650-3307). Faculty are responsible employees who are required to report sex discrimination, including sexual violence that they learn about to the Title IX Coordinator.

This syllabus is subject to change. Changes, if any, will be announced in class. Students will be held responsible for all changes.