



**AN/GS 310 GENDER AND FAMILY IN JAPAN**  
IES Abroad Tokyo

**DESCRIPTION:**

This course covers gender and family-related issues in Japan from historical, institutional, economic, and socio-cultural contexts. We will explore what gender/family means and how it is being shaped in and shaping contemporary Japan. The course focuses on how family-centered political ideology, laws and policies, norms and practices impact gender issues in Japanese society, such as marriage, work, reproductive rights, sexuality, abuse, and violence.

**CREDITS:** 3

**CONTACT HOURS:** 45

**LANGUAGE OF PRESENTATION:** English

**INSTRUCTOR:** TBD

**ADDITIONAL COSTS:** Students are required to pay for their transportation to excursion sites and may also have to pay modest entrance fees to events and exhibitions.

**PREREQUISITES:** A strong interest in gender issues in Japanese society is recommended.

**METHOD OF PRESENTATION:**

- Lectures
- Discussions
- Student presentations of Fieldwork
- Course-related Excursions

**REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:**

- Pre-class Reading Assignments and Posting Responses on Moodle 20%
- Class Participation & Group Discussion 15%
- Discussion Leader & Reflection 10%
- Course-related Excursion and Reflection 10%
- Mid-Term Fieldwork Proposal presentation 10%
- Fieldwork & Presentation 30%
- Reflection Paper 5%

**GRADING SCALE**

- |           |    |
|-----------|----|
| • 93-100  | A  |
| • 90-92.9 | A- |
| • 87-89.9 | B+ |
| • 83-86.9 | B  |
| • 80-82.9 | B- |
| • 77-79.9 | C+ |
| • 73-76.9 | C  |
| • 70-72.9 | C- |
| • 60-69.9 | D  |
| • 0-59.9  | F  |

**PRE-CLASS READING ASSIGNMENT RESPONSES AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (20%)**



Students **MUST** complete the relevant readings before each class and actively engage in class lectures, discussions, and activities. Additionally, every week students are required to write a short analysis (150-200 words) by responding to questions provided by the instructor. They must also post at least one discussion question for the group discussion on Moodle (under forum) regarding the readings by the day before the class.

### **PARTICIPATION (15%)**

Active participation in class and small-group discussions is a learning requirement for the course. Students should prepare to make meaningful contributions by presenting a critical viewpoint, active listening, co-constructing a discussion flow, and creating in-depth analyses with other students.

### **DISCUSSION LEADER (10%)**

All students lead the discussion at least once for their chosen topic. Discussion leaders facilitate, synthesize the discussion questions and encourage participation and contributions from group members. Discussion leaders who sign up for the same issue should work together to generate ideas for discussion by exchanging views and analysis.

Discussion leaders will do the following:

- (1) Present a critical assessment of the readings (thesis/argument, strengths and weaknesses)
- (2) Prepare discussion questions and explain the reasons for choosing the questions.
- (3) Provide their response to these questions and group members' questions.
- (4) Synthesize their questions with the group members' questions to build a flow and direction.
- (5) Summarize the content of the discussion and report back to the class.
- (6) Complete an after-class reflection assessment for the group discussion.

### **COURSE-RELATED EXCURSIONS AND REFLECTION (10%)**

During the course, we will visit two sites for participant observation. Students must **choose one** and write a reflection on their course-related excursion and analyze their experience through the concepts and issues they learned in class and the reading (500-700 words, double-spaced, 12 font).

#### Dates and Due Dates of Excursion Reflection Paper (FA24)

First Excursion: October 17 (Reflection paper due date October 24)

Second Excursion: November 28 (Reflection paper due date December 4)

### **MID-TERM: FIELDWORK PROPOSAL PRESENTATIONS (10%)**

You are required to do one fieldwork. Fieldwork is an exploration of people's responses and views on the issues we read and discuss in class.

- You can do it with a partner or a group.
- Choose a gender issue in Japan.
- Research background of the issue
- Develop interview questions
- Give 5-10 minutes presentation (using PowerPoint/Google Slides) of your fieldwork in class **on week 7**.
- The presentation should include a short background of your chosen issue, a rationale for the fieldwork, interview questions (a minimum of five), description of participants.

\*(7-10 slides, 28-30 pt, use a reference style you are familiar with)

### **FIELDWORK & PRESENTATION (30%)**

You will interview at least five people (or more if you can) about the gender issue you proposed. Analyze the findings of your fieldwork and give 15 -20 minutes presentation in class.

The presentation will include a comprehensive background of the issue, existing analytical viewpoints/theoretical, positions, your analysis of the interviews, and your conclusion.



**REFLECTION PAPER (300- 500 words, A4, double space, 12 pt, use a reference style you are familiar with) (5%):**

Reflect on the entire fieldwork process, fieldwork findings, insights you gained from the fieldwork, strengths and weaknesses of the analytical framework, achievements, challenges, and what you can improve.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of critical views and approaches to gender
- Contextualize and analyze gendered and gendering sociocultural phenomena from multiple perspectives.
- Students will also be able to write critical reflections, give presentations, and lead critical discussions.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

Following the attendance policy of IES Tokyo, attendance to all class meetings is strictly required for the students. In other words, students are required to attend every class meeting including excursions because there will be important information to learn but also it is fair that your classmates have your critical observations and insight in the class.

The three-hour format for classes makes missing a single class equivalent to missing a full week during a regular semester. Unexcused absences will therefore result in significant grade penalties. The first unexcused absence will result in a penalty of one-third of a letter grade from your final grade; additional unexcused absences will result in a penalty of one of letter grade for each additional absence. That is, one missed class turns an A into an A-, two missed classes turns it into a B-, three turns it into a C-, and so on. An absence is considered “excused” only if it is unavoidable due to illness or other health conditions, or for other reasons approved by the instructor in advance.

**ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND THE USE OF AI (ChatGPT etc.)**

You may use your laptop or tablet in their capacity as e-readers and to take class notes. Students are required to turn cell phones to silent (not just vibrate) in the classroom. Looking at non-related websites and checking your phone will affect your participation grade. Any student expecting an urgent call or text message should notify the instructor before class begins.

Using AI-generated responses and questions for class assignments is not permitted. You should provide your original thoughts and views.

**TRIGGER WARNINGS AND COURSE CONTENT**

Students should respect their peers and contribute to creating an inclusive learning environment. I have refrained from including explicit trigger warnings because I understand that any topic has the potential of triggering.

Please come prepared to each class and complete your reading assignments. Then, you will have a clear idea of the themes that will be discussed in class. Email the instructor before class if you feel uncomfortable or think a certain topic may trigger you.

**CONTENT:**

All readings in the table below are **required**.

Wee k	Content	Assignments
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Week 1	<p><b>Course Overview</b></p> <p><b>Construction of gender in Japan</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ninomiya, Shuhei (December 27, 2022) In Family Law, Japan Becoming the Land Time Forgot <a href="https://www.nippon.com/en/in-depth/d00855/">https://www.nippon.com/en/in-depth/d00855/</a></li> <li>Budgen, Mara (June 16, 2021). Pandemic magnifying household gender roles in Japan. The Japan Times.</li> <li>The Economist (February 22, 2024) Japanese Men have Identity Crisis. <a href="https://www.economist.com/asia/2024/02/22/japanese-men-have-an-identity-crisis">https://www.economist.com/asia/2024/02/22/japanese-men-have-an-identity-crisis</a></li> <li>Ezawa, Aya (2020). Chapter 10. Family, Inequality, and the Work-Family Balance in Contemporary Japan, in The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture Jennifer Coates, Lucy Fraser, and Mark Pendleton (eds): Routledge.</li> </ul>
Week 2	<p><b>Gender, Marriage, and Family</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dividing the Sexes: The Modern Evolution of Japanese Gender Roles in Marriage <a href="https://www.nippon.com/en/features/c05604/">https://www.nippon.com/en/features/c05604/</a></li> <li>Martin, Alex K.T (June 12, 2023). Hunting Marriage. The Japan Times.</li> <li>Hertog, Ekaterina (2020). Chapter 9. Attitudes to Marriage and Childbirth, in The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture Jennifer Coates, Lucy Fraser, and Mark Pendleton (eds): Routledge.</li> </ul>
Week 3	<p><b>Masculinity</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Masculinity in Japan: Beyond Singularity <a href="https://www.yuzukyodai.com/2021/04/28/masculinity-in-japan-beyond-the-singularity/">https://www.yuzukyodai.com/2021/04/28/masculinity-in-japan-beyond-the-singularity/</a></li> <li>草食 “Soushoku:” Men and the Changing Definition of Masculinity in Japan <a href="https://www.sugataresearch.com/jp/column/草食-soushoku-men-and-the-changing-definition-of-masculinity-in-japan/">https://www.sugataresearch.com/jp/column/草食-soushoku-men-and-the-changing-definition-of-masculinity-in-japan/</a></li> <li>Martin, Alex.K.T. (2024). The Evolving Nature of Fatherhood in Japan. The Japan Times.</li> <li>Cook, Emma (2017). Aspirational Labour, Performativity and Masculinities in the Making. Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific, 41.</li> </ul>
Week 4	<p><b>Gender and Employment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wakana, Shuto (2021). The Failed Promise of Workplace Equality in Japan: A View from the Trenches.</li> <li><a href="https://www.nippon.com/en/in-depth/d00653/?cx_recs_click=true">https://www.nippon.com/en/in-depth/d00653/?cx_recs_click=true</a></li> <li>Komatsu, Kyoko (2023). Persistent Gender Gaps in Japanese Labour Market</li> <li><a href="https://www.nippon.com/en/in-depth/d00863/?cx_recs_click=true">https://www.nippon.com/en/in-depth/d00863/?cx_recs_click=true</a></li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Macnaughtan, Helen (2020). Chapter 16. Gender and the Workplace, in Jennifer Coates, Lucy Fraser, and Mark Pendleton (eds), The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture: Routledge.</li> </ul>
Week 5	<b>Feminism in Japan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kano, Ayako (2020). Chapter 5. Debates in Japanese Feminism, in The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture Jennifer Coates, Lucy Fraser, and Mark Pendleton (eds): Routledge.</li> <li>Miura, Mari (2021). Flowers for Sexual Assault Victims: Collective Empowerment through Empathy in Japan's #MeToo Movement. Politics &amp; Gender, 17 (521-527).</li> <li>Dalton, Emma and Norma, Caroline (2022). Chapter 8. Japan's Feminist Movement Within the Global Sisterhood (109-128). Voices from the Japanese Contemporary Feminist Movement: Palgrave Macmillan.</li> </ul>
Week 6	<p>Excursion 1 &amp; talk  <i>Sapoko House Grief Support Setagaya</i>  <a href="https://vimeo.com/552703175/eda10a36ee?share=copu">https://vimeo.com/552703175/eda10a36ee?share=copu</a></p> <p>Talk (at the facility)</p> <p>Sachi Nakajima (NPO Resilience)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Osawa, Machiko (2023). Sexual Violence and Gender Inequality in Japan <a href="https://apjif.org/2023/11/osawa">https://apjif.org/2023/11/osawa</a></li> <li>Zenebe, Beza (2021). Cracking Japan's Systematic Sexual Abuse Culture. <a href="https://nupoliticalreview.org/2021/01/31/cracking-japans-systemic-sexual-abuse-culture/">https://nupoliticalreview.org/2021/01/31/cracking-japans-systemic-sexual-abuse-culture/</a></li> </ul>
Week 7	<b>Fieldwork Proposal Presentations</b>	<b>Mid-Term</b>
Week 8	<b>Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Muto, Tamayo &amp; French, Alice (2024). Japan Needs Better Contraception Access, Planned Parenthood Head Says. Nikkei Asia. <a href="https://asia.nikkei.com/Editor-s-Picks/Interview/Japan-needs-better-contraception-access-Planned-Parenthood-head-says2">https://asia.nikkei.com/Editor-s-Picks/Interview/Japan-needs-better-contraception-access-Planned-Parenthood-head-says2</a></li> <li>Misplaced Modesty Hampers Sex Education in Japan's Schools <a href="https://www.nippon.com/en/japan-topics/c06603/misplaced-modesty-hampers-sex-education-in-japan-s-schools.html">https://www.nippon.com/en/japan-topics/c06603/misplaced-modesty-hampers-sex-education-in-japan-s-schools.html</a></li> <li>Osumi, Magdalena (June 28 2022). Abortion Legal and Apolitical in Japan, but Cost and Consent Present Barriers. The Japan Times. <a href="https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/06/28/national/social-issues/abortion-japan-rights-explainer/">https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/06/28/national/social-issues/abortion-japan-rights-explainer/</a></li> <li>Shimomyama, Hiroko (2023). Abortion as Sexual and Reproductive Health/Rights Issue and the Possibility of Expanding Abortion Care Specialties in Japan. <a href="https://www.istage.jst.go.jp/article/niigatajohewe/23/1/23_2/html/-char/en">https://www.istage.jst.go.jp/article/niigatajohewe/23/1/23_2/html/-char/en</a></li> </ul>

Week 9	Sex Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dalton, Emma and Norma, Caroline (2022). Chapter 4. Nito Yumeno: Collaborating for the Rights of Teenage Girls (39-51). Voices from the Japanese Contemporary Feminist Movement: Palgrave Macmillan.</li> <li>Japan's Host Clubs: A Customer Paid Thousands of Dollars. <a href="https://edition.cnn.com/2024/06/07/asia/japan-host-club-debt-exploitation-intl-hnk-dst/index.html">https://edition.cnn.com/2024/06/07/asia/japan-host-club-debt-exploitation-intl-hnk-dst/index.html</a></li> <li>Takeoka, Toru (2022). Sex Work, in Jennifer Coates, Lucy Fraser, and Mark Pendleton (eds.), The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture: Routledge.</li> </ul>
Week 10	<p>Excursion 2: IMADR (The International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism) <a href="https://imadr.org/">https://imadr.org/</a></p> <p>Gender and Ethnicity: Women from Minority Communities in Japan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kumamoto, Risa (2011). "Chapter 16- Buraku Solidarity." In Kumiko Fujimura-Fanselow (ed.), <i>Transforming Japan: How Feminism and Diversity are Making a Difference</i> (pp. 229-238): The Feminist Press.</li> <li>Caster, Michael (2016). Challenging exclusion through cultural traditions: the struggle of Ainu feminists to end multiple discrimination in Japan. <a href="https://www.refworld.org/docid/5796081019.html">https://www.refworld.org/docid/5796081019.html</a></li> <li>Miyazaki, Osamu. Considering the Oppression of Zainichi Korean Women through the Lens of Black Feminism <a href="https://socialdialogue.online/sd23/17_article.html">https://socialdialogue.online/sd23/17_article.html</a></li> </ul>
Week 11	Conducting Fieldwork Interviews & Preparation for the Presentation	
Week 12	<p>Final Research Project Presentations</p> <p>Reflection Paper</p>	For the presentation file, <b>only one person from each group/pair</b> should submit the file. Everyone must write the reflection paper and submit it on Moodle.