AN/ SO 391 Social Organization of Japan with Field Placement
IES Abroad Tokyo

DESCRIPTION:
In this seminar, we will explore the structure and cultural principles of Japanese social organizations and the behavioral patterns of members from those organizations. Students use their field experience as a basis for understanding Japanese organizations and comparing them with organizations in other cultural systems. Students will be encouraged to examine their field placement as a reflection of the larger society while seeking to know specific circumstances and variations within the society.

Through their first-hand experiences in the Japanese organizations, students will become sensitive to the dangers of sweeping cultural generalities and stereotyping, and at the same time will become self-reflective to their own culture assumptions. Issues such as individualism, Collectivism, group loyalty, the roles of rituals, the spatial patterns, and modes of communication within organizations are examined. Gender role expectations, the notions of work and leisure, and social relations in and outside of the work settings are also closely examined and discussed.

CREDITS: 3

CONTACT HOURS: 21 + Field Placement Hours

LANGUAGE OF PRESENTATION: English with Japanese terms

PREREQUISITES: None

ADDITIONAL COST: None

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:
Students are placed in Japanese organizations as "Participant-Observers" for eight to ten hours a week. In addition, the seminar will meet for a total of seven sessions including an individual conference. Please refer to the class schedule for the specifics.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:
- Class Participation - 30%
- Host supervisor evaluation, weekly checklist and reflection letter to the host organization - 20%
- Student field placement portfolio and presentation [culture learning journal, research proposal, final paper, etc.] - 50%
  The field placement absence will affect your final grade.

Field Placement Portfolio (Ethnographic Record)
The Field Placement Portfolio will help you assume responsibility for analyzing, managing, and synthesizing your learning in the seminar and the field placement experience. Goals inherent in the portfolio design will serve as a framework for organizing, reflecting, assessing, documenting and linking course content with individual field placement experiences.

While you are encouraged to take a creative approach to developing your portfolio presentation, required components for every portfolio are listed below and are to be arranged as such. Previous students have used considerable Japanese in their portfolios and have also included reference letters from field placement supervisors and other documentation prepared by the student during the placement. (Previous students’ portfolios are on reserve in the IES Center.)
Due: No late portfolios are accepted. Late submissions will adversely affect your final grade.

Form of Assessment: The portfolio grade (50% of total course grade) is based upon Quality of Insight and Analysis (25%); Organization, Clarity, Effective Communication (10%); and Required Components/ Fulfillment of Assignment (15%).

Portfolio Description

1) TITLE PAGE
An acceptable title page will include the date, name of course and course instructor, name of field placement organization, and the student name.

2) TABLE OF CONTENTS (1 PAGE)
Please be sure to list your appendices and other attachments.

3) PROFILE OF ORGANIZATION (1 PAGE)
Please write (in your own words) a brief introductory profile of your field placement organization. You may want to consider the following questions for reflection:

- What is the main activity and mission of the organization?
- What is the organization’s product or service?
- Who are your organization’s customers or clients?
- How old is the organization and where is it located?
- If your organization has an organization chart, is it flat or vertical?
- Who established the organization, where acomnd for what purpose?

If available, please attach an organizational brochure and the business card(s) of your principle contact(s)

4) DESCRIPTION OF PLACEMENT (1 PAGE)
Please write in one page or less a description of your field placement assignment. You may want to consider the following questions for reflection:

- What will/did your activities and duties involve?
- What sort of expectations do/did you have of the placement and what expectations do/did you think are being made of you?

If possible, please attach a photo or two taken at your field placement and preferably of you interacting with colleagues.

5) RESEARCH PROPOSAL (1 – 2 PAGES)
Focus on one or more aspects of Japanese organizations and propose a topic or issue that you would like to explore during the field placement. Select a specific topic related to your field placement experience that interests you and something you wish to explore in greater depth. For example, a student with an education placement may choose to write on a topic such as the mainstreaming of mentally handicapped students in Japan. A student in a corporate or business placement may choose to write about generational
differences within the Japanese work force. The proposal should include the methods you would employ in order to approach the
issue or to get the information, such as observation, ethnographic interviews, additional reading, oral presentations, etc.

6) CULTURE LEARNING JOURNAL (FOUR ENTRIES, 3-5 PAGES EACH)

In addition to field notes that come directly from observing and interviewing, ethnographers should always keep a journal. The
Culture Learning Journal is designed to capture a process of culture learning organized around experience and reflection.

Cultural Journal #1 - #3

1. Record an interesting, puzzling, irritating or an otherwise significant occurrence at your field placement. Please keep in
mind that you are doing more than merely recording events, but are engaging in a form of ethnographic research that will
ultimately open a channel for more systematic engagement with Japanese culture.

2. As a participant observer engaged in ethnographic research, here is the place to record initial analyses of cultural meanings,
interpretations and insights into the culture studied. You are encouraged to analyze the experience in terms of your current
level of understanding Japanese social organization and offer interpretations for the cultural forces shaping those events.
What cultural assumptions are people in your field placement using to organize their behavior and interpret their
experience? What meanings do the interactions have for them?

The course instructor will reflect back on the themes students seem to be exploring and as possible, will suggest additional
approaches for data collection and interpretation.

Cultural Journal #4 – Reflection of Cultural Journal #1-3

Re-examine the experience. Has your interpretation changed? Record the changes. What helped you to learn more about the
experience? This reflection will allow you to move from focusing on particular events towards reviewing your reasons for thinking,
feeling and believing in responses to significant new experiences. This process will also allow you to take into account the personal
biases and feelings that filter your understanding of Japanese social organization. You are strongly encouraged to use outside
sources which may include library research and course readings, post- experiences, ethnographic interviews, cultural informants,
etc.

All journal entries are to be typed using A4 size paper, 1.5 - 2.0 spaced, and void of grammatical and typographical errors. You are to
make proper citations when using secondary research. As with all portfolio entries, you should keep in mind that you are writing
both for yourself and for the instructor, who has not shared the experience. Therefore, both what has occurred and what has been
learned must be clearly conveyed.

7) FINAL PAPER/ TOPIC ORIENTED ETHNOGRAPHY (4-6 PAGES)

Ideally, the final paper should be based on the research proposal you submitted in the beginning of the semester.
An academic paper in nature, the final paper is to be typed using A4 size paper, 1.5 - 2.0 spaced, and void of grammatical and
typographical errors. You are encouraged to use sources from the course, your field placement and incorporate research from
outside sources. All sources must be cited using a commonly accepted citation style such as MLA, APA, or Turabian.

Previous final paper topics have included:

- "Japanese Politics: Continuity and Change" (Political placement)
- "Volunteerism in Japanese NGOs and NPOs" (Political NGO placement)
- "Domestic Violence in Japan: The Plights of Foreign and Japanese Wives" (NGO placement)
- "Surface Tension: An Analysis of the Push for Reforms in the Traditional Realm of the Japanese Legal System" (Legal
placement)
- "The Japanese School Culture: A Comparative Study of Stereotypes" (Education placement)
- "A Shrimpy Tale: An Analysis of Japanese Conflict Resolution and Negotiation Styles" (International shipping placement)
- "Underlying Reasons for the Japanese Refugee Policy" (Human rights placement)
- "It's Not What You Say, It's What You Mean: Linguistics and Difficulties in Translation" (NPO placement)
- "The Changing Role of Women in the Japanese Workplace" (Human resources placement)
LEARNING OUTCOMES:
By the end of the course students will be able to:
• Gain the basic knowledge about ethnographic research methods, intercultural communication theory and Japanese social value systems.
• Develop cultural sensitivity and articulate differences of cultural perspectives.
• Develop self-confidence to work/communicate with different people and know their own selves more through self-reflection

ATTENDANCE POLICY:
Following the attendance policy of IES Abroad Tokyo, attendance to all class meetings is strictly required for the students. 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 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.

CONTENT

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<td>Students will be introduced to the course goals and design (Field Placement + Seminar = Ethnography), and elements of the course (Culture Learning Journal, Field Placement Synthesis Presentation, Final paper). Further, the basics of ethnographic research will be introduced as a means of cultural learning used in this course.</td>
<td>• _. &quot;Learning To Be a Participant Observer: Theoretical Issues” Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers. AltaMira Press, 2011: 19-40.</td>
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<td>In analyzing ethnographic data and writing a topic-oriented ethnography, students need to be aware of their own cultural biases. In writing an ethnography, questions should be asked to identify important values of those whom the participant observer observed, interacted and interviewed. What kind of world view do they have based on their cultural values? How do they differ from yours? The class discussion will also cover</td>
<td>• _. “Doing Participant Observation: Becoming a Participant” Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers. AltaMira Press, 2011: 41-66.</td>
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<td>• Condon, John C. and Matumoto, Tomoko. “In Sync with the Rhythms of the Year.” With Respect to the</td>
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the topics such as ethnocentrism, generalization and stereotyping.

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<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Japanese “Vertical Society” and the Importance of Context</th>
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<td>Japan has been called a “vertical society” (tate shakai) by Chie Nakane. The class will review the hierarchical structure of organization. We will also learn about the concept Senpai 先輩 /Kohai 後輩.</td>
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<td>Edward T. Hall mentioned Japan pays more attention to context in order to interpret the meaning of words, while US trusts the words to understand and to be understood. The class will discuss the importance of “context” in Japan.</td>
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<th>Assignments Due:</th>
<th>1) Profile of Organization &amp; Description of Placement</th>
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<tr>
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<td>2) Field Placement Agreement</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3) Cultural Learning Journal #1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Anna Wierzbicka. “Japanese Key Words and Core Cultural Values.” Understanding Culture through Their Key Words: English, Russian, Polish, German and Japanese. Oxford University Press, 1997: 235 - 280</td>
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<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Communication in Social Organization and Education in Japan</th>
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<td>Members of each social organization have their unique patterns of interaction and communication. Yet, the interaction practices and communication styles of the members are often a reflection of the larger culture the organization is nestled in. The class will compare communication patterns in Japan and the United States, and how these differences are attributed to the concept of self, ethics, and ideal social relations in respective society.</td>
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<td>Our behaviors or ways of thinking are affected by our value systems. Our value systems are affected by our past experiences and education. We will discuss the relationship between our behavioral patterns/communication styles and</td>
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<th>Assignments Due:</th>
<th>1) Research proposal</th>
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<td>2) Cultural Learning Journal #2</td>
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value systems. We will find out what kinds of values are promoted in Japanese school education.

**Discussion Question:**
How do people interact with each other in your field placement organization? What are common communication styles that you find? How do they differ from styles of communication typically observed in the States? What kind of information do they share and how? How are decisions made among members of the organization? What are the informal/formal channels of communications/decision making process observed? Describe some of the communication gaps you encountered in your field placement or with your home-stay family. Contemplate the sources of miscommunication.

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| Week 4 | Individual conference to discuss about research paper with the instructor (by appointment) |
| Week 5 | **Gender Relations and the Japanese Sense of Identity** |

Every culture defines gender role expectations with its unique logic. Sometimes, for a non-native to the culture, the gender role is an aspect of social organization most difficult to understand, accept, and/or participate in. In this session, we try to see Japanese gender roles from the native’s point of view(s) first. We then seek to look beyond the normative gender role expectations and how the expectations are resisted and challenged.

We will also explore the Japanese sense of ethnic and national identity and the illusion of Japanese homogeneity. Our discussion includes position of ethnic minorities and the social organization of Japan with respect to issues of cultural diversity and internationalization. Students are encouraged to employ comparative perspective in approaching to the issues of ethnic relations in Japan with that of their society.

**Discussion Questions:**
Observe what kinds of tasks and roles are shared and differentiated between male and female workers and how their interactions tell you about appropriate male and female behaviors. Or can you find some behaviors that you may think “deviate” from what you perceived as “ideal” gender roles in Japan?

Assignments Due:
1) Cultural Learning Journal #3
- Eric Prideaux. “Chizuko Ueno: Speaking up for her sex.” *Japan Times,* March 6, 2006 [http://www.japantimes.co.jp/life/2006/03/05/lifestyle/speaking-up-for-her-sex/#.Vt2Kz_mLTIU](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/life/2006/03/05/lifestyle/speaking-up-for-her-sex/#.Vt2Kz_mLTIU)
Describe some of the experiences or events that you felt particularly being treated as gaijin. Can you think any instance that you felt being treated “insider”? Prepare to discuss how the Japanese attitude toward cultural diversity differ/similar to the one of your society.

### Session 6 & 7 Presentation of research papers & Course Evaluations

This is a chance for you to present your research paper on your field placement experience. In addition, the knowledge you have gained through course readings, outside research, and class discussions should be fully utilized. Although the academic quality of the presentation needs to be high, students are encouraged to take a creative, entertaining, as well as an educational approach in their presentation style.

The group members and the presentation topic should encourage class discussion and interest. All presentation topics must be discussed with the course instructor by 17 June. Each student will have between 15-20 minutes for the presentation (depending on number of presenters) and should use visual aids and other media. The presentation session will be open to the IES staff members and associates.

**Assignments Due:**
1) Reflection letter to the host organization

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**REQUIRED READINGS:**

- Chikamochi, Yuichiro. “Here’s hoping the ikumen fad fades as Japan ages like fine sake”, Japan Times. June 3, 2015 http://www.japantimes.co.jp/community/2015/06/03/voices/heres-hoping-ikumen-fad-fades-japan-ages-like-fine-sake/#.VuUZ8_mLIUI
- Prideaux, Eric. “Chizuko Ueno: Speaking up for her sex.” Japan Times, March 6, 2006 http://www.japantimes.co.jp/life/2006/03/05/lifestyle/speaking-up-for-her-sex/#.Vt2Kz_mLIUI
- http://geert-hofstede.com

RECOMMENDED READINGS:
• Kashiwagi, Akiko. “Japan ： Devoted Dads – the redoubtable salaryman is seeking a more balanced life. Hellish hours at work are out. Family life is in.” Newsweek Nov. 27, 2006 http://www.newsweek.com/id/44497
• 2001:1-42
• Okano, Kaori and Tsuchiya, Motonori “Analytical Frameworks: Schooling and Society” Education in Contemporary Japan: Inequality and Diversity Cambridge University Press. 1999: 1-11