



## ***Bodies in Japan, From 1945 to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century***

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*There will be a set of 8 lectures and 8 classes in Michaelmas Term.*

### **Course Description:**

This graduate course covers histories of many bodies and how they experienced postwar Japan, interrogating the narratives of postwar historiography from a multitude of perspectives. The course begins with a discussion of why the body is a useful perspective on writing history in general, and the way in which it has featured in histories of postwar Japan, and what turning our attention to histories of the body in this period can reveal about the past. We will then take an approach that combines the chronology of late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> Century historiography alongside foci on different kinds of 'body' that come into the forefront of scholarship at different points throughout this period – including, but not limited to, performing bodies, gendered bodies, and queer bodies.

Each week class topics will be paired with readings from various media and non-academic sources, which will form the basis for a part of class discussion as they are considered alongside the secondary reading lists.

### **Course Objectives:**

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

1. explain the historiography of mid-twentieth century Japan to the 21st Century, its innovations and limitations.
2. generate research questions and build a research plan that centres around the study of embodiment, including whether it is useful to understand this period of history.
3. to produce spoken and written work (in the form of formative coursework, class discussion, and written examination) which is both intertextual and intersectional around the topic of bodies in 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Japan.
4. to have familiarity with, and to competently incorporate into written assignments the following emerging subfields of history: gender, body, sexuality, everydayness, and performance and their relation to postwar Japan.

### **Format:**

The course consists of a combination of lectures, discussions, student presentations, and writing assignments. The class will be assigned core readings. Depending on their interest, you will also select additional readings that deepen our knowledge of the week's theme. Individual students will make a presentation each week based on that week's theme. There will also be one additional class to explore 1960s performance art.

**Course Assessment:**

The main assessment will be through a three-hour examination in Trinity Term.

All students will be required to submit two pieces of written work for assessment, one by the end of week 4 of the term in which the classes are taught. Details will be given during the first class of the term.

**Note:** No background in History is required for this course.

**Recommended Introductory Reading:**

Boydston, J. 'Gender as a Question of Historical Analysis', *Gender and History* 20/3 (2008), pp. 558-583.

Kano, A. *Japanese Feminist Debates: A Century of Contention on Sex, Love, and Labour* (Honolulu, 2017).

Shigematsu, S. 'Rethinking Japanese Feminism and the Lessons on Ūman Ribū: Towards a Praxis of Critical Transnational Feminism.' In Bullock, J, Kano, A, Welker, J (eds) *Rethinking Japanese Feminisms*. (Honolulu, 2018): 205-229.

Zohar, A, *PostGender: Gender, Sexuality and Performativity in Japanese Culture* (2010).

**Statement of Coverage**

This document applies to students starting the MSc and/or MPhil in Japanese Studies in Michaelmas Term 2024. The information in this handbook may be different for students starting in other years.

**Disclaimer**

The information in this document is accurate as at 01 October 2024, however it may be necessary for changes to be made in certain circumstances, as explained at [www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/coursechanges](http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/coursechanges). If such changes are made the department will publish a new version of this handbook together with a list of the changes and students will be informed.