



Japanese Society

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Course Description:

Eight Lectures and Eight Classes in Hilary Term

This graduate course offers a broad introduction to the subject matter of indigeneity in the Japanese context. Focusing on Ainu and Ryukyuan societies it discusses topics such as environmental change, political activism, and assimilation policies through the lens of Japan's colonial history and its relevance for present-day developments. By engaging with these topics, students will not only get an understanding of some major aspects of Ainu and Ryukyuan history and societies but will also critically discuss their position in the framework of the modern Japanese state at large and their adaptation of globally circulating ideas of indigeneity. By the end of the course, students will have acquired foundational knowledge and skills to critically analyse Japanese society from the perspective of internally marginalised minority groups, providing them with novel angles of scientific inquiry.

Format:

The course consists of a combination of lectures, discussions, student presentations, and writing assignments. The class will be assigned three core readings: one theoretical, one on Ainu, and one on Ryukyuan society. Individual students will make a presentation each week based on that week's reading and prepare a question to kick off the discussion.

Course Assessment:

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

All students will be required to submit 2 pieces of written work for assessment, one by the end of week 4 and the other in week 9 of the term in which they are taught.

Course Objectives:

- Situate Indigenous minorities in a wider understanding of Japanese society and get an understanding of the interrelatedness of (colonial) history and present
- Acquire an understanding of Ainu and Ryukyuan cultures
- Critically analyse Indigeneity in relation to other topics such as gender, politics, environment etc.
- Develop an advanced ability to construct academic arguments using scientific expression and supporting materials

Recommended Readings to Prepare for the Course:

- Morris-Suzuki, Tessa. *Re-inventing Japan : time, space, nation*. Armonk, N.Y: M.E. Sharpe, 1998.
- Weiner, Michael. *Japan's minorities : the illusion of homogeneity*. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Allen, Matthew. *Identity and resistance in Okinawa*. Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002.
- Hudson, Mark J., Ann-Elise Lewallen, and Mark K. Watson (eds.). *Beyond Ainu Studies: Changing Academic and Public Perspectives*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014.
- Liboiron, Max. *Pollution Is Colonialism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2021.

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 19 September 2024, however it may be necessary for changes to be made in certain circumstances, as explained at 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.

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