

JAS580 Country Life: Human Relationship in Japanese Local Communities

(3 credit hours)

Instructor: Kaeko CHIBA, PhD

Office hours:

Office: CRESI

Website:

email: kaekochiba@aiu.ac.jp

Semesters: Winter

Meeting times: Tue, Wed, Thu 13:00-14:50

DESCRIPTION:

Akita city is located in the northern part of Japan on the main island of Honshu. The atmosphere of Akita is different from other metropolitan areas like Tokyo. People from Akita have the reputation as being 'not-friendly, conservative, isolated and not-sophisticated', but can we simply accept these images? This class focuses on interpersonal relations and the concept of selfhood in Akita. Students will examine human relations, notion of self and self-identity in Akita by following the stages of life (birth, childhood, adulthood, work, sex, death and afterlife). In order to examine this topic further, students will also examine their own experiences in Akita and of their home countries with literature review. This course is suitable for students who have started to study Japanese society. This topic is crucial for these students since human relationships and personhoods relate to all other field in Japanese Studies; business, politics and education field. This class will be taught in Japanese with Japanese book chapters, novels, autobiographies, oral narratives, magazines and newspaper articles. Students will also have fieldtrips where interpersonal relations can be seen first hand.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Cultivate deeper understanding of Akita society by exploring examples of interpersonal relations in Akita
- 2) Understand interpersonal relations in Japanese society
- 3) Build the ability to analyze interpersonal relations in Akita by comparing students' own experiences based on their countries
- 4) Build the skill to examine the research topic critically and present their opinions in Japanese

STUDY MATERIALS:

Textbooks

None

Reference books, sources of readings and other information

Japanese

NHK, 2004. *Gendai Nihonjin no Ishiki Kozo*, Tokyo: NHK

Yamamoto, T. 2007. *Nihonjin to Soshiki*, Tokyo: Kadokawa

ASSESSMENT:

Student achievement will be measured in terms of their individual performance in the following three areas: 1) a final examination consisting of two essays (50%), 2) a paper presentation during classes (35%), 3) class participation (15%)

ACADEMIC PREPARATION:

This course suitable for advanced learners of Japanese.

POLICIES:

- 1) If you need to miss a session for a valid reason, you must contact me prior to the day you will be missing the class. In which case you will be assigned with additional work.
- 2) When essays involves using readings, mere summarizing or paraphrasing of the readings is not allowed. Essays should be brought to class; emailed essays cannot be accepted. Extensions will not be granted unless a valid reason is provided at least two days before the deadlines. Please come to inform me if you need an extension; having other papers due in the same week is not a valid reason.

COURESE FORMAT AND ACTIVITIES:

Weekly classes will be split between students' presentations (40%) and lectures (60%). For each class topic, several research questions will be provided the week prior and two or three presenters will be requested to analyze these research questions through examining their own experiences outside of campus with a selected reading list. However, everyone will be required to read the relevant key text so that they can properly contribute to the discussion. Lectures will follow the presentations and will examine the key points of the class topic.

SCHEDULE:

WEEK1

Introduction

Session 1

Theme: Japanese House: *uchi/soto*, Mother and Child

Lecture: The first class introduces the structure of a Japanese home, the first contact space for a child and examines the boundary between *uchi/soto* (inside/outside). Further, the class will examine how mothers raise their children with an emphasis on the concept of *honne/tatemaie* (private

feeling/public behavior). Students will also be introduced to mother and child's behavior of *amae* (dependence).

Reading:

Japanese

Articles from Japanese newspapers and magazines

Doi, T. 1973. *The Anatomy of Dependence*. Tokyo: Kodansha International. (Selected chapters) (also available in English)

Session 2

Theme: Household

Lecture: Continuing from the previous lecture, this class explores the interpersonal relationship between the family members. In order to do so, students will discuss the *ie* system in Japanese society. This class also covers the discussion of the notion of *haji/meiyo* (shame/honor),

Reading:

Japanese

Mori, S. 2002. *Kiku to Katana saihaken*, Tokyo: Tokyo Tosho shutuhankai.

Articles from Japanese newspapers and magazines

WEEK2

Session 3

Theme: Architect in Akita (Fieldtrip to Kakunodate)

Lecture: The class will review the *uchi/soto* (inside/outside) boundary and family members' relationships by exploring several housing styles in Akita area.

Reading:

Japanese

Akitaken Kyoiku Iinkai, 2001. *Akita no Yukei Bunkazai*, Akita: Mumyosha. (Selected pages)

Ookawa, N. 1976. *Nihonno Minka*. Tokyo: Kyoyo Bunko (Selected chapters)

Session 4

Theme: School and Company

Lecture: What kind of interpersonal relations do children and teenagers face when they go to elementary and high school? How these relationships change when they start working at companies? This class examines the phenomena of the *sempai-kohai* and *oyabun-kobun* relationship and discusses whether the hierarchy system still exists.

Reading:

Japanese

Etoba, S. 1996. *Yamete yokata*, Tokto: Nihon Keizai Shinbunsha. (Selected chapters)
Articles from Japanese newspapers and magazines

WEEK3

Session 5

Theme: Kanto Festival in Akita (Fieldtrip to Neburinagashi kan)

Lecture: The class will review *sempai-kohai* and *oyabun-kobun* relationship by exploring the Kanto festival practice in Akita.

Reading:

Japanese

Akita Sakigake Bunkabu, 1971. *Akita no Ninyo, Geino, Bungei*. Akita: Akita Sakigake. (Selected pages)

Minzoku Geijyutu Kenkyusyo, 2004. *Akita Geino Densyosha Katari*, Akita: Akita Bunka Shutupan. (Selected pages)

Session 6

Theme: Reciprocity

Lecture: Students will be introduced the way of gift-giving as one of the significant tools used to maintain interpersonal relations. This class examines the various types of gift-giving on different occasions; birth, marriage, sickness, funeral, promotion, seasons.

Reading:

Japanese

Articles from Japanese newspapers and magazines

WEEK4

Session 7

Theme: Concept of Self

Lecture: How would Japanese conceive of their own selves? Based on the previous discussions of interpersonal relations, students will examine whether self and society are separate entities. This class will also explore several discussions in terms of the definition of self from an anthropological point of view.

Reading:

Japanese

Articles from Japanese newspapers and magazines

Session 8

Theme: Gender and Class

Lecture: Introducing women and men's voices, students will discuss how gender roles and class status are reflected in the sense of selfhood. By looking at ethnographic data in this class, students will reexamine the concept of self in Japanese society.

Reading:

Japanese

Ōya, Y. 1999. 'Gendai Chadō-shurensa no Ishiki (Self-perception of Contemporary Tea Ceremony Practitioners)', in I. Kumakura and H. Tanaka (eds.), *Chadō-gaku Taikei (Collected Studies of the Tea Ceremony)*, 1. Kyoto: Tankosha: 235-264.

WEEK5

Session 9

Theme: Women's Lives in Rural Akita

Lecture: The class will further explore the relationship between selfhood and gender roles by examining women's lives in the rural areas in Akita prefecture.

Reading:

Japanese

Iwasaki and Miyagi, 2001. *Seikosuru Noson Jyosei Kigyō*. Tokyo: Ieno Hikari Kyokai.
Akitaken Rojin Club Rengokai, 1986. *Onnatachi ha Zatusono youni*, Tokyo: Gaifusha

Session 10

Theme: Social Class in Akita

Lecture: The class will further explore the relationship between selfhood and class by examining women's lives in Akita city.

Reading:

Japanese

Articles from Japanese newspapers and magazines

WEEK6

Session 11

Theme: Metropolitan/Non-Metropolitan? Japanese/ Non-Japanese?

Lecture: Is the concept of self different in metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas? This class explores whether this notion of self is permeable and if selfhood can be more 'individual' in metropolitan areas. How does the Japanese notion of self change when they meet non-Japanese? This class will also learn the notion of 'identity' and examines the boundaries between the self and the other.

Reading:

Japanese

Fujiwara, M. 2006. *Koka no Hinkaku*. Tokyo: Shinchosha. (Selected chapters)

Articles from Japanese newspapers and magazines

Session 12

Theme: Identity as an Akita person?

Lecture: The class will explore the identity concept as being an Akita resident.

Reading:

Japanese

Yugi, T. 2001. 'Atarimae no Jimotogaku,' *Gendai Nogyo*, Tokyo: Nosongyoson Bunka Kenkyukai, 14-24.

Articles from Japanese newspapers

WEEK7

Session 13

Theme: Illness, Death and Belief

Lecture: How do Japanese perceive themselves when they face their sickness and death? This class will highlight Japanese perceptions of death and its relation to the notion of self. Students will also explore the conception of death and the afterlife within a religious context.

Reading:

Japanese

Akita Sakigake, 1997. *Akita no Otera*. Akita: Akita Sakigake.

Hinohara, J. 2006. *Tata Ichido no Jinseidakara*. Tokyo: Forest Books.

Oosaka, T. 1985. *Akita no Butsuji*, Akita: Mumyosha.

Session 14

Theme: Generation to Generation?

Lecture: Students will examine how interpersonal relations and the notion of self has changed from generation to generation. Additionally, students will learn how gift-giving custom has changed throughout the centuries. In this class, I will also introduce ethnographic data from my fieldwork.

Reading:

Japanese

Articles from Japanese newspapers and magazines

WEEK8 (only 100mins)

Session 15

Theme: Course Review

Lecture: In order to prepare for the examination (writing essays), this class will be devoted to review all the topics from the previous classes. Students may ask any questions.

N/A

The recommended reading list will be adjusted to suite the students' level.