

Pitts in Japan

The Environment of Contemporary Japan

(Syllabus subject to minor adjustments)

Jun 3– Jul 3 2020

Prof. Tsu

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Course Description

This course seeks to understand contemporary Japan through the lens of its environment. The syllabus brings broad political, social, and cultural questions to bear on selected aspects of Japan's environment. Some of the issues discussed (e.g. Minamata) have been confronted and largely resolved while others (e.g. Fukushima) remain major challenges. The first half of the course focuses on the politics, socioeconomics, and culture that undergird the latest Japanese discourses and practices regarding "nature" in various manifestations. The second half of the course examines the history and current condition of the country's industrial pollution as well as their amelioration. Overall, the course encourages students to critically reflect on the different ways Japanese society deals with the country's alleged "natural beauty" and "inherent vulnerability."

This course is structured around five (5) fieldtrips that complement the lectures and readings. Students will have the opportunity to observe first-hand conservation projects, disaster reduction structures, and the cultural infrastructure that has been put in place to forge consensus between government and citizens over the country's environment.

Assessment Methods

1. 2 10-min PPT presentations: 15X2=30%
2. Research paper (2,000 words): 60%
3. Participation: 10%
4. All 5 fieldtrips are compulsory.

Fieldtrip Destinations in Kobe

1. Sake Brewery Museums (learning objective: Japanese discourse and practice on food and nature)

2. Ashiya “Rock Garden” (learning objective: *satoyama* as landscape and social construction) This trip requires moderately strenuous hiking on unpaved trails in the hills.

3. Higashinada Water Treatment Plant (learning objective: “comprehensive water treatment”)

4. Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake Museum (learning objective: disaster reduction & the construction of the meaning of natural disasters)

5. Tokagawa River Walk (learning objective: landscaped rivers & anti-erosion structures). This trip requires moderately strenuous walking and some hiking through the woods.

Class Schedule

#1&2	Lecture 1: Perspectives on the Japanese Environment
Wed Jun 3	Fieldtrip 1: Sake Brewery Museums
#3 Thu Jun 4	Lecture 2: Food Security <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading 1: Hall, Derek. 2010. Food with a visible face. <i>Geoforum</i> 41:826-835.
#4 Fri Jun 5	Lecture 3: Gastro-Eco-Nationalism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading 2: Takeda, Hiroko. 2008. Delicious food in a beautiful country. <i>Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism</i> 8:5-30.
#5 Tue Jun 9	Lecture 4: Satoyama as Ideal and Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading 3: Knight, Catherine. 2010. The Discourse of “Encultured Nature” in Japan: The Concept of Satoyama and its Role in 21st-Century Nature Conservation. <i>Asian Studies Review</i> 34:421-441.
#6&7 Wed Jun 10	Fieldtrip 2: Ashiya “Rock Garden”
#8 Thu	Watch & discuss Satoyama Documentary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading 4: Tsu, Timothy. 2006. Nature, Development and Disaster in Postwar Kobe: An Exploration of the

Jun 11	Environmental Thinking of Japanese Local Politicians. <i>European Journal of Asian Studies</i> . 5:131-155.
#9 Fri Jun 12	Watch & discuss Satoyama Documentary
#10 Tue Jun 16	Student PPT Presentation 1 (10 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prompt: What I have learned about the Japanese environment through the 2 fieldtrips. • Discuss the fieldtrips with explicit reference to readings 1-4 and the 1st documentary film. • Focus the presentation on your observation and assessment of the Japanese environment.
#11&12 Wed Jun 17	Fieldtrip 3: Higashinada Water Treatment Plant
#13 Thu Jun 18	Lecture 5: Ashio in Retrospect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading 5: Mori, Masato. 2008. Environmental pollution and bio-politics: The Epistemological constitution in Japan's 1960s. <i>Geoforum</i> 39: 1466-79.
#14 Fri Jun 19	Lecture 6: Minamata in Retrospect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading 6: Johnston, Eric. 2006. Minamata at 50: The Tragedy Deepens. <i>Asia-Pacific Journal/Japan Focus</i> 4(5).
#15 Tue Jun 23	Watch & discuss Minamata documentary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading 7: Waley, Paul. 2000. Following the Flow of Japan's River Culture. <i>Japan Forum</i> 12(2):199-217.
#16&17 Wed Jun 24	Fieldtrip 4: Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake Museum
#18 Thu Jun 25	Lecture 7: Hazardous Archipelago <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading 8: Samuels, Richard. 2013. Repurposing local government, In <i>3.11 Disaster and Change in Japan</i>, chapter 6, pp.151-179.
#19	Lecture 8: Phoenix Japan

Fri Jun 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading 9: Leng, Rachel. 2015. Japan's Civil Society from Kobe to Tohoku Impact of Policy Changes on Government NGO Relationship and Effectiveness of Post Disaster Relief. <i>Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies</i> 15, issue 1, article 2.
#20 Tue Jun 30	<p>Lecture 9: Recreating River & <i>Furusato</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No reading. Prepare for presentation 2.
#21&22 Wed Jul 1	Fieldtrip 5: Tokagawa River Walk
Jul 2	<p>No class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare for presentation 2.
#23 Fri Jul 3	<p>Student Presentation 2 (PPT, 10 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prompt: What I have learned about the Japanese environment from the last 3 fieldtrips. Discuss the fieldtrips with explicit reference to readings 5-9 and the 2nd documentary film. Focus the presentation on your observation and assessment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hand in research paper by <u>mid-night July 14 (US Eastern standard time)</u>. Refer to <i>Journal of Asian Studies</i> for stylistic matters (citation, bibliography, etc.). Submit as email attachment. Suggested working paper title: My assessment of the current state of the environment of Japan. Supply your own variation on this title or add a subtitle to specify your perspective. Please be reminded to discuss in the paper ALL of the readings in the syllabus and ALL of the fieldtrips. There is no need to read beyond the syllabus. 	