

## Ethnographies of Japanese Culture (文化論 II)

Dr. Emma Cook ([cook@imc.hokudai.ac.jp](mailto:cook@imc.hokudai.ac.jp))  
(Fall Semester 2017)

### Aims and Overview:

This course is designed for MJSP students who have taken introductory courses in society and culture. There are two aims: the first is to extend learning through in-depth reading and discussion of ethnographies of Japan. The second is to learn how to critically analyze ethnographic writing and ultimately produce a piece of ethnographic writing as the final assessment. Each week we will focus on one study of Japan, reading and analyzing two or three chapters of each book.

Please note that non MJSP students are welcome to attend, however it is advisable to have taken some courses about Japan beforehand to get the most out of the class, because there will be no explanatory lectures provided.

### Format

Each class is conducted as a seminar. There are no lectures in this course. Small group and class discussion based on the readings predominate. Students will take the lead presenting their analysis of the readings and their comments and critical observations each week. To pass this course it is vital for you to do the readings each week and actively participate in the class.

Please note that this is a second year MJSP course that builds on knowledge gained in year 1. There is therefore an expectation that students have completed introductory courses on Japanese society and/or culture. If you have not taken such courses before please come and see me at the end of class.

### Evaluation Criteria

This course is evaluated on class participation and coursework:

- Class participation is based on submitted discussion questions, and an oral analysis of one of the readings.
- Coursework is based on an ethnographic essay to be submitted in the final week of the class.

### 1. Class Participation (50%)

#### a) Discussion Questions (30%)

Each week we will read part of an ethnography. In preparation for class, all students must read the readings and email me a minimum of one open-ended discussion question (per chapter) by 11 p.m. every Tuesday to: [cook@imc.hokudai.ac.jp](mailto:cook@imc.hokudai.ac.jp)

If you are late with your question, if the question is not relevant to the topic, or if it is a factual question rather than a *discussion* question, you will *not get credit* for it.

In the email, please write '**Week X; Ethnographies Discussion Question**' in the subject line, and submit the question in the body of the email, not as an attachment. **Please just write your name and the question(s) underneath – you do not need to write** 'Dear Professor Cook,' etc. The format should be:

Emma Cook

In this week's reading etc etc etc

Discussion questions **should not** be *fact* based. If you could find the answer to your question by Googling it, then this is not a discussion question. I am not looking for questions that have ‘correct’ answers, but questions that reflect your *thoughts, analyses, and critiques* that came up as you were reading the texts. The questions are supposed to stimulate discussion of the readings so please consider the materials carefully and link your questions to the readings. Your question(s) should be based on the content of the reading and should aim to promote discussion with your classmates relating to the text. Please note that you will not get individual feedback on each discussion question you send in.

All the required readings are available for download from my website: <http://www.emma-e-cook.net>. Go to the ‘Teaching’ Section and click on the class name (Ethnographies of Japanese Culture). The password for accessing these readings is: ethno

### *b) Reading Analysis and Discussion (20%)*

Each week one student will give a short analytical commentary on the points/arguments they thought were most important in the text we are reading or which they particularly want to discuss with the class. They will then facilitate the discussion for the rest of the class period. The aim is not to tell us what the author wrote (after all, you should all have read the same reading), but to highlight the main argument(s) in the chapter and then explore them analytically through discussion.

## **2. Ethnographic Essay (50%)**

Over the course of the class, each student will do a small amount of ethnographic fieldwork, which will result in a final 2000 word essay.

**Due Date:** Final day of class (January 25<sup>th</sup> 2018 by 5 p.m. via email in Microsoft Word Format). Word count should be written on the essay.

### **Deadlines**

All assessed work must be emailed to me by the deadline stated. If you hand in work late without consultation, 2% will be deducted from your grade per day that it is late.

### **Academic Honesty and Plagiarism**

Academic honesty is required in all the work you hand in. **Plagiarism will not be tolerated and you will be automatically failed for the piece if you are found to have plagiarised.** Therefore please be very careful with your citations and references. If you are not sure how to cite correctly please ask me. The following is a basic guide to not committing plagiarism:

1. If you **summarise** an author’s work or idea you must refer to that author in your text. For example: Cook (2014) argues that xxx.  
When you are summarising another author’s ideas in your own words you just need to write their name and the date of the publication. Make sure you also include a full reference in your bibliography.
2. Any **direct quotes** you use from a book or journal must be cited in the text of your essay in double quotation marks and be written in the bibliography. For example: “Research on delayed marriage points to the fact that men in low-income jobs find it harder to marry than other men” (Cook 2014: 37).

Please note that a proper citation of direct quotes includes double quotation marks, the name of the author, the date of the work, and the relevant page numbers.

3. If you copy any part of a book, article or website without referencing it and citing it properly, or if you copy another student's work or ideas, you will be engaging in plagiarism. This is dishonest and constitutes cheating. If it is discovered that you have plagiarised (and I use software to check) you will be given **0 points** for the report or essay in which you have plagiarised.

If you are in any doubt about this please come and see me before handing in your essay!

## Weekly Schedule

**Week 1. September 28<sup>th</sup> 2017:** Introduction to Social Anthropology and Ethnographic Writing  
[No Readings or Discussion Question Due]

**Week 2. October 5<sup>th</sup> 2017:** Fieldwork and Ethnographic Writing

Required Reading:

James Clifford, "Introduction: Partial Truths" in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. University of California Press, 1986, pp. 1-26.

Ian Reader, "Chance, Fate and Undisciplined Meanderings: A Pilgrimage through the Fieldwork Maze" in *Doing Fieldwork in Japan*, Theodore Bestor, Patricia Steinhoff and Victoria Lynn Bestor (eds.), University of Hawai'i Press, 2003, pp. 89-105

**Week 3. October 12<sup>th</sup> 2017:** Wrapping Cultures

Required Reading:

Joy Hendry, *Wrapping Culture: Politeness, Presentation and Power in Japan and Other Societies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993. Read pp. 1-7 (Introduction), pp8-26 (Chapter 1), and pp. 123-137 (Chapter 6)

**Week 4. October 19<sup>th</sup> 2017:** Food Cultures

Required Reading:

Theodore C. Bestor, *Tsukiji: The Fish Market at the Center of the World*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004, Chapters 1 (pp1-50) and Chapter 4 (pp126-176).

**Week 5. October 26<sup>th</sup> 2017:** Reading Week

[No Readings or Discussion Question Due]

This week is a chance for you to review your readings but also to begin formulating what kind of topic you want to write your ethnographic essay on.

You must email me your plan for your essay by November 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017.

**Week 6. November 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017:** Drinking Cultures

Required Reading:

Paul Christensen, *Japan, Alcoholism, and Masculinity: Suffering Sobriety in Tokyo*. Lexington Books, 2015. Pp. ix-xiii (Introduction), pp. 1-24 (Chapter 1), pp. 25-44 (Chapter 2), pp. 123-140 (Chapter 7).

**Week 7. November 9<sup>th</sup> 2017:** Popular Cultures and Consumption

Required Reading:

Anne Allison, *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006, pp. 1-34 (Chapter 1: Enchanted Commodities), and pp.192-233 (Chapter 7: *Pokémon*).

**Week 8. November 16<sup>th</sup> 2017:** Fieldwork for Ethnographic Essay

[No Readings or Discussion Question Due]

**Week 9. November 30<sup>th</sup> 2017:** Sports Culture

Required Reading:

Aaron L. Miller, *Discourses of Discipline: An Anthropology of Corporal Punishment in Japan's Schools and Sports*, Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, 2013, pp. 1-30 (Introduction), pp. 125-153 (Chapter 5)

*Optional Extra:* Chapter 1: Anthropology and Corporal Punishment (pp. 31-26).

**Week 10. December 7<sup>th</sup> 2017:** Rural Cultures and Migration

Required Reading:

Lieba Faier, *Intimate Encounters: Filipina Women and the Remaking of Rural Japan*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009, pp. 1-35 (Introduction), pp. 137-157 (Chapter 4), and pp. 158-189 (Chapter 5).

**Week 11. December 14<sup>th</sup> 2017:** Culture and Illness

Required Reading:

Junko Kitanaka, *Depression in Japan: Psychiatric Cures for a Society in Distress*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012, pp. 1-18 (Introduction), pp. 89-106 (Chapter 6), and pp. 129-150 (Chapter 8).

**Week 12. December 21<sup>st</sup> 2017:** Fieldwork and Ethnographic Essay Preparation

[No Readings or Discussion Question Due]

**Week 13. January 11<sup>th</sup> 2018:** Cultures of Aging

Required Reading:

Margaret Lock, *Encounters with Aging: Mythologies of Menopause in Japan and North America*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993, pp. xiv-xliv (Prologue), pp. 3-30 (Chapter 1).

**Week 14. January 18<sup>th</sup> 2018:** Cultures of Death

Required Reading:

Susan Orpett Long, *Final Days: Japanese Culture and Choice at the End of Life*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005, pp. 1-13 (Chapter 1), pp. 14-28 (Chapter 2), and pp. 150-182 (Chapter 7).

**Week 15. January 25<sup>th</sup> 2018:** Course Review and Feedback Discussion

Ethnographic Essay Due by 5pm