

# KC3025 Japanese Minority Groups

Yokohama  
GILL Thomas P.  
Mon 3 & Thu 3

## 【Course Description】

This course deals with ethnic and cultural minority groups in contemporary Japan. We will discuss: foreigners in Japan, with special reference to Koreans, Chinese, Filipinos and Brazilians; indigenous minorities (Ryukyuan and Ainu), and a culturally defined minority, the Burakumin. Also economic minorities (poor, homeless, single-parent families); sexual minorities (gay, lesbian, trans-sexual), political (far-left, far-right), subculture (yakuza, bikers, gamblers, street musicians, graffiti artists etc.), new religious groups, and victims of the Fukushima nuclear power plant disaster.

## 【Class Goals】

Japan is often described as a homogeneous society, and indeed does have a very dominant ethnic and cultural mainstream. That is a fact of life for minority groups in Japan, and we will aim for a nuanced understanding of how some of them have positioned themselves vis-a-vis the mainstream in finding a place for themselves in Japanese society.

## 【Course Schedule】

- 【第1回】The Debate on Homogeneity and Multiculturalism
- 【第2回】Ainu, indigenous people of Hokkaido
- 【第3回】Ryukyuan, indigenous people of Okinawa
- 【第4回】Foreigners in Japan
- 【第5回】Koreans, Japan's biggest and oldest ethnic minority
- 【第6回】Koreans 2: Contemporary issues
- 【第7回】Film: Osaka Story (dir. Toichi Nakata)
- 【第8回】Chinese in Japan
- 【第9回】Filipinos in Japan
- 【第10回】Japanese-Brazilians, an artificially created ethnic minority
- 【第11回】Vietnamese in Japan
- 【第12回】Burakumin: descendants of Japan's outcast people
- 【第13回】Burakumin and slaughterhouse workers
- 【第14回】Mid-term test
- 【第15回】Day laborers and freeters
- 【第16回】Homeless
- 【第17回】Bosozoku and Yakuza
- 【第18回】Gamblers
- 【第19回】Medical minorities: Disabilities, mental illness, AIDS, Hansens etc.
- 【第20回】Guest lecture: To be announced
- 【第21回】Political minorities: far left, far right etc
- 【第22回】Film: The Emperor's Naked Army Marches on (dir. Kazuo Hara)
- 【第23回】Fukushima: Birth of a new minority?
- 【第24回】Fukushima part 2
- 【第25回】Working women and single mothers
- 【第26回】Sexual minorities: gay/lesbian, transsexuals etc.
- 【第27回】'Old new' religions: Soka Gakkai, Tenrikyo etc.
- 【第28回】'New new' religions: Aum Shinrikyo, Koufuku no Kagaku etc.
- 【第29回】Film: A (dir. Tatsuya Mori)
- 【第30回】Final round-up

## 【Preparation for Class】

I will prepare a set of readings which will be available on-line and a photocopied handout. There will be one reading for each week, of about 20 pages, which you will be expected to read in advance for discussion in class.

## 【Review of Class】

There will be a variety of follow-up activities, including class discussions and in-class quizzes.

## 【Remarks for Class】

Please come prepared to take a lively, active role in class.

## 【Texts】

Obligatory reading: The course handout

## 【Reference Books】

Japan's Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity, ed. Michael Weiner (Routledge 2008)  
Japan's Diversity Dilemmas: Ethnicity, Citizenship and Education, ed. Soo-Im Lee, Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu and Harumi Befu (iUniverse, 2006)  
Multicultural Japan, ed. Donald Denoon et al, (Cambridge UP 1997)

## 【Evaluation Criteria】

Participation, 20%. Class assignments and quizzes, 30%. Two 1,000-word papers, each 25%.

## 【Notes】