Anthropology 175S: Images of and Ethnographies from Japan

Winter 2007
Tuesdays and Thursdays 8:00-9:15
Room: Fowler A139
Office Hours: Tuesdays 12-2
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Course Description

Japan is perhaps the first “non-Western” society that became a highly industrialized society. This made Japan as a society that the West must maintain extensive communication. Nevertheless, the more is spoken and written about Japan, the more “exoticized” Japan seems to have become.

After a brief overview of the modern history of Japan, this course begins with the examination of the Western “images” of Japan, with the focus on the concept of “Orientalism.” The course will also ask what the consequences of the production of such images have been for the history of US-Japan relationships. Second, the course will read several ethnographies of Japan to understand what is behind the Western images of Japan.

Course Reading

Book required- available at UCLA Store (any inquiry should be addressed to the store).
John Dower. War Without Mercy.
(This textbook will also be placed at the Powell Library 2-hour reserve.)

Reading Packet- available at COPYMAT at 925 Westwood Blvd (310-709-3791).

Course Schedule

Part 1: Japan: History and People: Overview
In this introductory section, I will give you the lecture that I offered to K-12 teachers in the greater Los Angeles area on “postwar Japan” in the summer of 2002 and in the fall of 2006. I combine lecture with film clips. Note that some of these films, from which I made clips, are NOT available at the media library. If you miss my lecture, you will miss them all.

Part 2: Orientalism: The Western Images of Japan

Pierre Lotti, Madame Chrysanthème (selections).
John Dower, War without Mercy (Preface, Parts I and II).
Ruth Benedict, The Chrysanthemum and the Sword (selections).

Video: Know Your Enemy: Japan
Part 3: Ethnography of Japanese Families and Companies

3-1 Japanese kinship systems
Read:
Harumi Befu, “Corporate Emphasis and Patterns of Descent in the Japanese Family.”

3-2 Japanese Families
Read:
M. Hamabata, “Marriage” in his Crested Kimono.
Gail Lee Bernstein, “Haruko and Shô-ichi” and “Haruko’s Work” in her Haruko’s World.

3-3 Japanese Companies
Read:
Theodore Bestor, “Family Firm” in his Tsukiji.

Part 4: Conclusion, back to images: How do the Japanese people present themselves to the West?

Read: Dower, Parts III and IV.
Video: Things Japanese
Read also: Harumi Befu. “Symbols of Nationalism and Nihonjinron.”
Read also: Joseph J. Tobin. “Re-Made in Japan” (excerpts).

Requirements (tentative)

1) Regular attendance: Attendance is taken seriously. Remember that everything happens in class, NOT on the class website. Unreasonable absences will be noted and taken into consideration in the grade.

2) The first response paper at the end of Part 1. The question will be given at the end of Part 1.

3) The second response paper at the end of Part 2 (either group or team project).

4) Final in class (or take-home) exam during the 10th week.

Point distribution (tentative):
Paper 1: 20%
Paper 2: 30%
Final exam: 50%