

<b>Course number</b>		U-LAS07 10003 LE31					
<b>Course title (and course title in English)</b>		Current Issues in Japan I Current Issues in Japan I		<b>Instructor's name, job title, and department of affiliation</b>		Institute for Liberal Arts and Sciences Professor,KAWAI JUNKO	
<b>Group</b>		Humanities and Social Sciences		<b>Field(Classification)</b>		Understanding Japan	
<b>Language of instruction</b>		English		<b>Old group</b>		Group A	
				<b>Number of credits</b>		2	
<b>Number of weekly time blocks</b>		1		<b>Class style</b>		Lecture (Face-to-face course)	
				<b>Year/semesters</b>		2025・First semester	
<b>Days and periods</b>		Tue.2		<b>Target year</b>		All students	
				<b>Eligible students</b>		International students	
<b>[Overview and purpose of the course]</b>							
<p>This course introduces current conditions and issues in Japanese society, examining the effects of social changes on everyday practices in the family, schools, and the workplace. While “Current Issues in Japan II” covers industries, economy, and management, this course “Current Issues in Japan I” spends time to look into daily practices in Japanese society.</p> <p>Key concepts will be introduced within the main topics of households, education, technology, sports and leisure, and media and communication. We will investigate the background of these aspects of Japanese society by using texts taken from such fields as sociology, anthropology, literature, and history, as well as various media in order to understand the complexity of current issues in Japan.</p> <p>Each class includes a lecture and discussions led by students. Each student, as a group, is required to facilitate discussion of at least one assigned reading over the course of the semester.</p>							
<b>[Course objectives]</b>							
To deepen your understanding of a variety of social issues in contemporary Japan.							
<b>[Course schedule and contents)]</b>							
<p>Week 1) Introduction: What do you know about Japan?</p> <p>Week 2) Approaches to Japanese Society: Exploring traditional views on Japan</p> <p>Weeks 3-4) Current Issues 1: Family          What issues do Japanese families face today?          How do social changes contribute to emerging issues in the family?          Key concepts: M-shaped curve in labor force participation rate, growth of single-person households, diverse regional characteristics and regional disparities.          (女性の就業率M字カーブ、単独世帯の増加、地域的多様性と地域間格差)</p> <p>Weeks 5-7) Current Issues 2: School          What issues do Japanese schools face today?          How do social changes contribute to emerging problems in schools?          Key concepts: truancy, hikikomori, bullying, reform of entrance examinations, decline in academic performance, English proficiency and language education.</p>							
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## Current Issues in Japan I(2)

(不登校、ひきこもり、いじめ、入試改革、学力低下問題、日本人学生の英語力と言語教育)

Weeks 8-9) Current Issues 3: Technology and Sciences

How do technology and science affect social issues, and vice versa?

Key concepts: Development of technology in Japan,

artisans in Japanese industry, rise of the machines: merits and demerits of robots and AI (Artificial Intelligence)

(日本の技術革新、職人、ロボット・人工知能の発達の功罪)

Weeks 10-11) Current Issues 4: Work, leisure, and sports

What are the characteristics of work life and leisure in Japanese society?

How do social changes reflect the characteristics of current conditions?

Key concepts: Working hours of Japanese workers and time for leisure, multicultural aspects in Japanese sports

(日本人の労働時間と余暇、スポーツに見る文化的多様性)

Weeks 12-13) Current Issues 5: Media and communication

What issues do Japanese media and communication face today?

How do social changes reflect the characteristics of current conditions?

Key concepts: Internet Addiction Disorder

(ネット依存)

Week 14) Conclusion: What do we know about Japan now?

Week 16) Feedback

### [Course requirements]

This class is limited to international students. However, any local students who wish to attend this class on a no credit basis are welcome.

No prerequisites required. You should be interested and committed to learning about current issues in Japan.

### [Evaluation methods and policy]

Participation in class activities (30%), a group discussion facilitation (30%)\*, a midterm exam (20%)\*\*, and a final report (20%).

\* About a group discussion facilitation:

- Each student will be assigned to one reading and facilitate small group discussion during weeks 3-13.
- The facilitator will prepare a handout (A4x 1page) including a summary of the reading and 3-5 discussion questions and submit it to the instructor by the noon of Monday, one day before your presentation date.
- The facilitator will give 10 minutes presentation to the small group and lead a group discussion in 10-15 minutes.
- The discussion group will be decided randomly each week.
- After facilitating the group discussion, each facilitator of the week will give a short summary orally to the whole class.

\*\* The midterm exam will be a take-home exam. You will receive the exam questions on week 7, and will be due in class of week 8. It will cover the material assigned for the first half of the course.

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## Current Issues in Japan I(3)

### [Textbooks]

Handouts will be distributed.

プリント配布

### [References, etc.]

( References, etc. )

Goodman, Roger (ed) 『Family and Social Policy in Japan: Anthropological Approaches』 ( Cambridge University Press )

Kingston, Jeff (ed) 『Critical Issues in Contemporary Japan』 ( Routledge )

Asahi Shinbun 『Selected volumes, ASAHI Keywords』 ( Asahi Shinbun shuppan ) ( Abridged translations in English will be provided. )

The Japan Times 『Selected volumes, The Japan Times NEWS DIGEST』 ( The Japan Times )

### [Study outside of class (preparation and review)]

- Students are expected to complete the reading assignments and actively participate in class discussion every week.

- Students are expected to prepare for facilitating a discussion on one of the assigned readings.

### [Other information (office hours, etc.)]

Please make an appointment in advance by e-mail.

### [Essential courses]