

Bodies, Gender and Sexuality in Modern Japan

What is the course about?

This course is about examining a number of key issues in modern Japan through the lens of bodies, gender and sexuality. This involves understanding concepts such as nationalism and colonialism as socio-political endeavours and ideologies that shaped particular gender identities and bodily performance. With this approach, we will aim to gain fresh insights into our understanding of Japanese history and society. We will address questions such as: ‘How and why did tolerance towards male homosexuality disappear in Meiji Japan?’, ‘How was an effort to improve women’s hygienic practices informed by nation building in the Meiji period?’, ‘How and why was sterilization justified under fascist Japan?’, or ‘What links the (in)famous Japanese work-ethos to the masculinity of “salary-men” (サラリーマン)?’



Weekly schedule

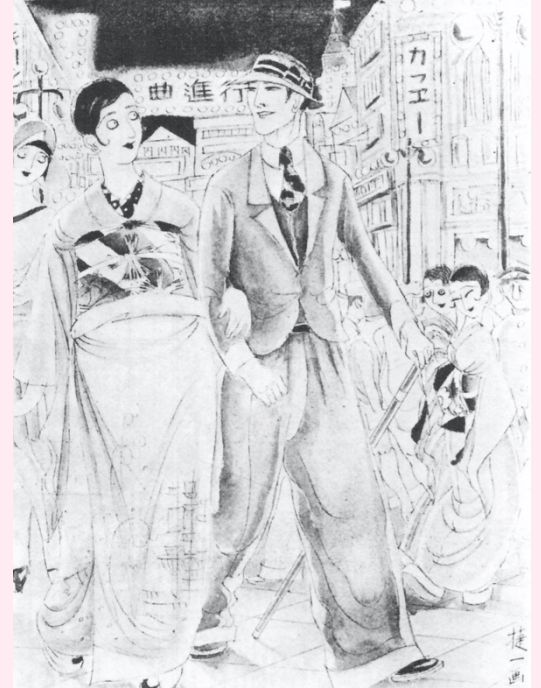
Week	Theme	Keywords
1	<i>Erotic bodies</i>	• <i>Shunga</i> – pornography of Edo Japan?
2	<i>Bodies for the nation</i>	• Nation-building, hygiene, Japanese race
3	<i>Promiscuous bodies</i>	• Prostitution, ‘modern girls’, ‘café waitresses’, ‘erotic grotesque, and nonsense’
4	<i>Healthy bodies and the Japanese state</i>	• Cult of health, eugenics and fascism, healthy soldiers, mothers and babies
5	<i>Colonial and colonized bodies</i>	• Colonial medicine, drug addiction, human experimentation and Unit 731
6	<i>Irradiated bodies</i>	• A-bomb, H-bomb and Fukushima
8	<i>Queer bodies</i>	• Male-male eroticism, lesbianism, ‘hermaphrodites’, ‘gay boy’, ‘new-half’ boom, <i>josō</i> and <i>dansō</i>
9	<i>Reproductive bodies</i>	• Abortion, infanticide, pro-natalism, family planning
10	<i>Overworked bodies</i>	• Salaryman and Japan Inc., death from overwork, education mothers and childcare neurosis
11	<i>Unproductive bodies?</i>	• Declining birth rates, bad wife and mothers, homeless, <i>fritā</i> , NEET and <i>otaku</i> men

Assessments (TBC in August 2020)

- Weekly multiple-choice questions (20%)
- Source analysis or translation (40%)
- Invention of a fictional primary source and a commentary (40%)

Indicative readings

- Jennifer Coates, Lucy Fraser and Mark Pendelton eds. *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture* (London: Routledge, 2019).
- Früstück, Sabine and Anne Walthall eds. *Recreating Japanese Men* (Berkeley: University of California, 2011).
- Molony, Barbara and Kathleen Uno eds. *Gendering Modern Japanese History* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Asia Center, 2005).



Lecturer

Aya Homei, Lecturer in Japanese Studies aya.homei@manchester.ac.uk