

32060 FIELDWORK RESEARCH METHODS FOR JAPAN

INSTRUCTOR: Robert Croker

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides students with the opportunity to do a mini-fieldwork project while they are in Japan. These projects can be on youth culture, the music scene, fashion consumerism, bicultural identities, food habits and time, modern family roles, environmental volunteering, or other suitable topics that each student chooses. Doing such research can help make students' stay in Japan richly rewarding – they have the chance to really 'see', 'ask', and 'listen to' Japan, combining what they are reading in their textbooks with the experience of looking at the real living worlds of Japanese people. As students develop their own mini-fieldwork project, they will learn how to do fieldwork here, discovering the multitude of resources available, practicing the skills of observation and how to interview Japanese people, and learning how to creatively portray their research. Each week, a small number of students will present and lead discussion on their fieldwork project topic, and some of the fascinating anthropological and sociological fieldwork that has already been conducted in Japan will be introduced and discussed. Where relevant, guest speakers will be invited to come and speak about their experiences conducting fieldwork, serving as resources for students' own mini-fieldwork projects. In the final classes, students will have the opportunity to listen to their classmates' presentations.

Please note that as this is a fieldwork and discussion class, only 15 students will be able to complete the course. If more than 15 students initially enrol, students will be selected based upon an interview during the first two weeks of classes.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Weeks 1 and 2: Overview of fieldwork research conducted in Japan – introduces some of the significant and fascinating fieldwork studies that have been done in Japan, in culture, education, families, gender, health, migration, religion, and social movements

Week 3: Deciding on a mini-fieldwork project focus – students frame their own mini-fieldwork project

Weeks 4 to 11: Students present and lead mini-discussion on their fieldwork project; also, each week in a subtopic, students are introduced to the 'how-to' of doing a mini-fieldwork project in Japan. These subtopics focus on the practicalities of doing fieldwork in Japan, demonstrating how to organize fieldwork, and how to create, interpret, and understand your data

Week 4 subtopic: the fieldwork research process, and data management – illustrates that fieldwork is a cyclical process, and how to manage the different types of data that fieldwork creates

Week 5 subtopic: resources for doing fieldwork – introduces the most accessible resources to help students doing a mini-fieldwork project in Japan (blogs, research engines such as CiNii, the mass media including *ミクシィ* and *2ちゃんねる*, print resources, and people)

Week 6 subtopic: ethical issues of doing fieldwork, and ensuring its credibility – how do you make sure that you are not imposing on or harming the people that you are researching? How can you ensure that your audience will believe your research?

Weeks 7 subtopic: research using observation – explores what types of interesting phenomena you can observe in Japan, how to observe them, and how to record what you see

Weeks 8 and 9 subtopic: research using interviews – demonstrates how to find and approach participants, how to interview in a Japanese cultural context, and how to analyze Japanese language interview data

Weeks 10 subtopic: making sense of the data – seeing patterns and themes – shows how to put the puzzle together

Week 11: Presenting fieldwork – 'taking your audience to the field' – using web blogs, visual montages, powerpoint, stories and narratives, film and performance, and written reports

Weeks 12 and 13: Presentations – students present their mini-fieldwork presentations to the class, demonstrating that they have done some original fieldwork, thoughtfully explored their fieldwork site, and carefully considered the ethical, linguistic and cultural challenges of doing fieldwork in Japan.

TEXTS

Main Text:

Bestor, T. C., Steinhoff, P. G., & Bestor, V. L. (Eds.) (2003). *Doing fieldwork in Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Supplementary Reading

A list of supplementary reading will be provided in the first class, covering the most interesting and significant fieldwork completed in Japan, to help students find the topics that they would like to explore in their mini-fieldwork project.

ASSESSMENT

Classroom mini-discussion presentation 20%; Classroom mini-discussion participation 40%; Final presentation and report 40%