Course description:
This course examines the development and current state of contemporary Japanese society. The scope of topics discussed will span from conceptions of Japanese uniqueness via gender constructions, the political system, class and stratification, to family, youth, minorities, work and demographic challenges. It will also attend to the media, popular culture as well as leisure time and consumption. The idea of this course is to create an overview about various aspects that shape the current state of Japanese society and to enable the participants to create their own and more comprehensive idea about Japan.

Requirements:
Reading assignments for classes will be given and students are required to prepare the respective texts for each class. Course meetings will comprise of lectures and discussions of the respective topics based on the assigned readings.

Grading:

Attendance 30\%: Missing one class means a 10\% lower grade. Missing 4 classes means an automatic fail.

Final Exam 70\%: The final exam will comprise of various kinds of questions including short essays. The best preparation for this exam is to attend and actively participate in each class and to read the assigned readings.
Course outline:

I. Introduction

II. Interpreting Japanese Society – Japanese and Western approaches

III. Shaping core values – Gender I
Reading: Koyama Shizuko: “Domestic Roles and the Incorporation of Women into the Nation-State”. In: Andrea Germer (et.al.) (eds.): Gender, Nation and State in Modern Japan. Routledge, 2014, pp. 85-100.

IV. Shaping core values – Gender II

V. Class and stratification – The myth of a middle-class society… and now?

VI. Constitution and the political system
Reading: tba

VII. Youth and education

VIII. **Marriage and family**

IX. **Demographic change**


X. **Work life**

XI. **Minorities**

XII. **Media**

XIII. **Popular Culture**

XIV. Leisure time and Consumption

XV. Final Exam