

## [PAAS 181] Modern Japanese Culture

Fall 2021 (Online Course)  
Instructor: Sujin Lee (sujinl@uvic.ca)



### Course description:

This course examines the ways in which culture has functioned as a crucial vehicle for social commentary in modern and contemporary Japan. Japanese culture has often been presented as an ethnically homogenous narrative. This image of Japanese culture has also been interpreted to be incommensurable with its Western counterparts. This course puts both cultural essentialism and cultural incommensurability into question and locates culture within political, social, economic, and technological contexts. The 20C Japanese cultural history presents us with multifaceted views of social issues and helps us understand the dialectical relationship between culture and society as opposed to the static, harmonious images of Japan's national culture.

This course covers a wide range of topics including colonialism, war, technology, disaster, family, gender, and race/ethnicity. A variety of cultural materials including novels, nonfiction essays, reportages, films, manga, and contemporary scholarly articles will help you elaborate on the culture-society relationship in Japan.

### Proposed assignments:

- Active participation in online discussions (15%)
- A film review essay (15%)
- A book review essay (15%)
- Blog Assignment: "Re/Views: Japan& Culture" (15%)
- Midterm & Final Exams (essay questions, each exam 20%, total 40%)

### Proposed reading list:

- Okubo, Miné. *Citizen 13660*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014.
- Furukawa, Hideo. *Horses, Horses, in the End the Light Remains Pure: A Tale that Begins with Fukushima*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2016.