Cover of the first issue of 'Shukan Anpo,' (1969-1970) the magazine of the Beheiren, a Japanese anti-war organization. The illustrated text refers to two issues central to Beheiren activists: opposition to Japanese involvement in the war in Vietnam and the presence of US military bases on the island of Okinawa.

Japanese Protest in the Global 1960s

Prof. Matt Swagler, Fall 2025

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the turbulent decades following Japan's traumatic defeat in World War II, with a specific focus on the "New Left" protest movements that dramatically altered Japanese culture and politics in the 1960s and early 1970s. Direct American occupation after the war helped reshape Japan into a formally democratic, anti-Communist ally and industrial powerhouse. But while the Japanese economic "miracle" created a growing middle class, it also created contradictions that gave rise to dissent among many segments of society. The course is mostly concerned with protest in Japan (and the Kansai region in particular), but examines the global context that gave rise to dozens of parallel movements around the world. Specifically, readings and primary sources address the concurrent rise of Japanese-American activism.

The first part of the course focuses on the aftermath of World War II, the American occupation and the drive to forcibly reshape Japanese politics and the economy. In the 1950s, workers struggled against increasingly monotonous and profit-driven production, giving rise to diverse forms of resistance, from poetry clubs to militant strikes. Next, the course examines the movement against Japan's military alliance with the United States, from the massive 1960 demonstrations to later confrontations that specifically challenged complicity with America's war in Vietnam. Third, the course dives into the rise of campus student occupations in 1968-69 and the intertwined issues of violence, sacrifice, and gender within them. Lastly, we consider how marginalized groups, particularly women and ethnic minorities, created organizations in the 1970s that both carried on the liberatory ideals of the new left while trying to jettison past exclusionary practices.

As a class rich in historical study, we will regularly be working with primary source materials from the time period under consideration (translated or captioned in English), including artwork, *manga*, magazines, and manifestos. These primary sources will be central to the final project, which may be completed as a paper, but may also take various creative forms mirroring the materials themselves.

FUNDAMENTAL COURSE GOALS

This course aims to help you better understand the following:

1. The social transformations that took place in Japan following the end of World War II.
2. The role of protest movements in (re)shaping contemporary Japanese culture, particularly in the Kansai region.
3. The linkages between the rise of Japanese and Japanese-American activism in the 1960s.
4. How to work with Japanese and Japanese-American primary sources from this period and use them in a research project.

ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

The key components of the coursework are as follows:

Discussion participation & attendance (20%)
Because much of the course is discussion-based, participation will be a critical aspect of the course. This entails completing the assigned materials ahead of time, and being present and ready to discuss the materials in class. Discussion includes both sharing your ideas *and* actively listening to and responding to your fellow students. You may also be asked to participate in smaller group conversations or take turns kicking off discussions.

Weekly Reading Analyses (7 total) (45%)
During 8 weeks of the semester you will be asked to write an analysis of the materials assigned for *one* of that week's class days. You should write an analysis during 7 of these weeks and can take 1 week "off" (of your choosing). Each analysis should be ~500-1000 words and must be submitted at least one hour *before* class begins to our shared google folder. I will post discussion questions for each class meeting that can serve as a starting place for your analyses. As the semester progresses, prompts will increasingly ask you to compare materials from different sections of the class.

Final Project: Japanese and Japanese-American Protest through Primary Sources (30%)
You will work with a partner to dive deeply into one of three possible sets of primary sources from the historical period of the course: the artwork of Nakamura Hiroshi; the anti-war magazine *AMPO: A Report on the Japanese People's Movements*; or the illustrations and writing by Japanese-Americans in *Gidra: The Monthly of Asian-American Community*. The final product may be a written paper, but may also take creative or digital forms. The project will be broken down into multiple components due throughout the semester, including a proposal, draft, presentation, and final submission. You are encouraged to use your weekly reading analyses to generate material for your final project.

Self-Assessments (5%)
These will take the form of a series of questions that you will answer about your experience in the class, your participation, and your work on the assignments. One will be due halfway through the semester and one due at the end of the semester.

All assignment expectations may be adjusted in discussion with Prof. Swagler.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Assigned materials listed below each class meeting should be completed before class begins. Materials subject to change.

Week 1 (Sept 8-12)
Introduction

Class 1 Course Introductions

Class 2 Contextualizing Japanese Protest within the Global Upheavals of the 1960s
(Lecture + reading discussion)

- "What Was 1968?" and introductory section on Japan, in *Voices of 1968: Documents from the Global North*, ed. Salar Mohandesi, Bjarke Skærlung Risager, Laurence Cox (2018), 1-30 & 105-109.

Week 2 (Sept 15-19)
From Occupier to Occupied: Japan and after World War II

Reading analysis #1 due this week before the start of class

Class 1 Scattered Communities: from Tokyo to Tule Lake
(Lecture + reading discussion)

- John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (1999), excerpts from chapter 1, "Shattered Lives," 33-64.
- Podcast: "George Takei and the American Internment Camps," *BBC Radio 4*, June 28, 2023 [29 minutes]

Class 2 Japan Under US Occupation
(Lecture + reading discussion)

- Dower, Embracing Defeat, chapter 6, "Neocolonial Revolution," 203-224.

Possible Friday field trip: Utoro Peace Memorial Museum, about the community first created by wartime Korean laborers—*exact date TBD*.

Week 3 (Sept 22-26)
The 1950s: Japanese Workers in the Shadow of the Economic Miracle

Reading analysis #2 due

Class 1: Disciplining the Japanese Working Class in the 1950s
(Lecture + reading discussion)

- Wesley Sasaki-Uemura, "The Poets of Ōi Factory and Work Culture," in *Organizing the Spontaneous: Citizen Protest in Postwar Japan* (2001), 81-111.

Class 2 The Crescendo of Labor Radicalism: The Miike Coal Mine Strike
(Lecture + reading discussion)

- Kaoru Ōta, "The Labour Conflicts of the Mitsui-Miike Coal Mines, 1959–60" in *The Human Face of Industrial Conflict In Post-War Japan*, ed. Hirosuke Kawanishi (1999).

Possible Friday field trip: Osaka Labor Archive, an archive of activism and worker organizing in and around Osaka—*exact date TBD*.

Week 4 (Sept 29-Oct 3)
Anpo 1: The Movement Against the US–Japan Security Treaty

Reading analysis #3 due
Introduction to the final project

Class 1: "Topple Kishi!" The Post-War Order in Question
(Lecture + reading discussion)

- Nick Kapur, *Japan at the Crossroads: Conflict and Compromise after Anpo* (2018), 1-34.

Class 2: Artists, War, and the *Anpo* Movement
(Discussion + primary source analysis)

- Film: *ANPO: ART X WAR*, dir. Linda Hoaglund, 2010.
- Primary sources: Nakamura Hiroshi gallery (Final project archive option #1)

Week 5 (Oct 6-10)
Anpo 2: The Movement Against the US–Japan Security Treaty

Reading analysis #4 due

Class 1 Storytelling and the Memory of the *Anpo* Struggle
(Reading discussion)

- Manga in translation: 安保闘争研究会 (Security Treaty Struggle Research Group), マンガ安保闘争―日本人なら知っておきたい「日米安保」の真実 (Manga Security Treaty Struggle: The Truth About the Japan-US Security Treaty That Every Japanese Should Know), (2008).

Class 2 The Concurrent Rise of *Manga* and the New Left
(Reading discussion)

- William Andrews, "Japan Radicalism and New Left Protest Movements Told Through Manga," *Throw Out Your Books*, Nov 3, 2015.

Week 6 (Oct 13-17)
Japanese-Americans and the Transnational New Left

Reading analysis #5 due

Class 1 Mothers with Guns: New Models of Asian Womanhood in America
(Lecture + reading discussion)

- Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, "Hypervisibility and invisibility: Asian/American Women, Radical Orientalism, and the Revisioning of Global Feminism," in *The Rising Tide of Color: Race, State Violence, and Radical Movements across the Pacific*, ed. Moon-ho Jung (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015), 238–65.

Class 2 The Birth of Asian-American Identity and Politics
(Reading discussion + primary source analysis)

- Nina Wallace, "In the Belly of the Monster: Asian American Opposition to the Vietnam War," *Denshō Catalyst*, November 15, 2017.
- Primary source: *Gidra: Monthly of the Asian-American Community*, Vol 1, No. 1, April 1969. (Final project archive option #2)

Week 7 (Oct 20-24)
Japan's New Left and the Student Uprisings of 1968-1969

Reading analysis #6 due

Class 1 Making Everyday Life Political Behind the Barricades
(Lecture + reading discussion)

- Takemasa Ando, "Transforming 'everydayness': The Formation and Development of New Left Movements in the 1960s," in *Japan's New Left Movements* (2014), 50-76.
- Primary sources: Watanabe Hitomi's photos of student barricades at the University of Kyoto and University of Tokyo.

Class 2 The Echoes of Kyoto Students' 1968-1969 Protests
(Reading discussion + preparation for Friday's meeting)

- Lola Simon & Ren Long, "Save Yoshida: The Uncertain Fate of Japan's Oldest Dormitory," *The College Hill Independent*, September 25, 2023.
- William Andrews, "The Kumano Festival clock tower occupation and the hauntology of Kyoto University," *Throw Out Your Books*, Dec 27, 2021.

Possible friday field trip: Meeting with Till Knaudt, Associate Professor, Institute for Research in Humanities, University of Kyoto, to work with sources from his archive of the new left at Kyoto University—*exact date TBD*.

Week 8 (Oct 27-31)
The Ethos of Sacrifice in the Anti-War Movement

Final project proposals due
No weekly reading analyses due this week

Class 1 The Gendered Symbolism of Three Martyrs: The "innocent" Kanba Michiko, the fictional Joe Yabuki, and Kansai's Yamazaki Hiroaki
(Lecture + video discussion)

- Anime: Three episodes of あしたのジョー (Ashita *no Jō*), television series, dir. Osamu Dezaki (1970-1971). [~90 mins]

Class 2 The Anti-War Movement Beyond the Campuses
(Research trip)

- In-class: Doshisha University Library visit to work with original copies of *AMPO: A Report on the Japanese People's Movements* (Final project archive option #3)

FALL BREAK (Nov 3-7)

Week 9 (Nov 10-14)
Popular Perceptions of Violence

Reading analysis #7 due

Class 1 Media Representations of Violence at the Haneda and Sasebo Showdowns
(Lecture + reading discussion)

- William Marotti, "Japan 1968: The Performance of Violence and the Theater of Protest," *American Historical Review* 114, no. 1 (2009), 97-135.

Class 2 From Female Victims to Killer Women: The Mass Media and Gender Panics
(Lecture + reading discussion)

- Chelsea Szendi Schieder, "'Gewalt Rosas': The Creation of the Terrifying, Titillating Female Student Activist," in *Coed Revolution: The Female Student in the Japanese New Left* (2021), 132-157.

Week 10 (Nov 17-21)
Women's Liberation (*Ūman Ribu*) 1

Reading analysis #8 due

Class 1 Women's Experiences Behind the Barricades w/possible guest speaker, Chelsea Szendi Schieder, Aoyama Gakuin University (Remote guest lecture with Q&A)

- Chelsea Szendi Schieder, "Human Liberation or Male Romance?" The Gendered Everyday of the Student New Left," in *The Red Years: Theory, Politics, and Aesthetics in the Japanese '68*, ed. Gavin Walker (2020).

Class 2 Japanese-American and Japanese Women's Experiences in Comparative Context
(Guest lecture recap + reading discussion)

- Sara Evans, "Sons, Daughters, and Patriarchy: Gender and the 1968 Generation," *American Historical Review*, vol. 114, No. 2 (2009), 331-347.
- Selections from the first women's liberation issue of *Gidra: Monthly of the Asian-American Community*, Vol. III, No. 1, January 1971 will be split between class members.

Week 11 (Nov 25-28)
Women's Liberation (*Ūman Ribu*) 2

Final project drafts due
No reading analyses due this week.

Class 1 What Defined *Ūman Ribu*? w/ possible guest speaker, Setsu Shigematsu, University of California, Riverside (Remote guest lecture with Q&A)

- Setsu Shigematsu, "'68 and the Japanese Women's Liberation Movement," in *The Red Years: Theory, Politics, and Aesthetics in the Japanese '68*, ed. Gavin Walker (2020).

Class 2 Working with *Ūman Ribu Theory*
(Guest lecture recap + reading discussion)

- Primary source: Tanaka Mitsu, "Liberation from the Toilet" (1970).

Possible Field Trip: Visit to Kyoto University for the festival of the Kumano dorm, which includes a symbolic annual re-occupation of the roof of Kyoto University's iconic Clock Tower Centennial Hall each November—*exact timing TBD*.

Week 12 (Dec 1-5)
After 1970: Ethnic Minorities, Land, and Militarism

No reading analyses due this week.

Class 1 Sovereignty and Land: Okinawans and the US Military
[Lecture + reading discussion]

- Wesley Iwao Ueunten, "Rising Up from a Sea of Discontent: The 1970 Koza Uprising in US-Occupied Okinawa," in *Militarized Currents: Toward a Decolonized Future in Asia and the Pacific*, ed. Setsu Shigematsu and Keith L. Camacho (2010), 91-124.
- Video: "On Okinawa, Locals Want US Troops to Leave," *PBS NewsHour,* Sept 16, 2017 [10 mins]

Class 2 Thinking about the Environment: Farmers, Students, and Struggle Against Narita
[Lecture, video discussion, and final project check-ins]

- Video: "The Battle Against Narita Airport," *AP Archives*, October 14, 1976. [9 mins]

Week 13 (Dec 8-12)
Conclusions

Class 1: Final Project Presentations

Class 2 Final Project Presentations