

Gender and Sexuality through Linguistic Practices in Japanese

Associated Kyoto Program

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Course Description

The field of language, gender, and sexuality is one of the most interdisciplinary areas of study in sociolinguistics. This course explores ideas about gender and sexuality as they emerge through linguistic practice and embodied behavior. Drawing on its interdisciplinary pedigree to provide a broader perspective and set of tools for the study of gender, sexuality and linguistic practice, this course examines: (1) how we evaluate issues of gender inequality in language (how linguistic representations give a clue to the place of women and sexual minority groups); (2) how gender roles play in the structure of human interaction and society; (2) how we analyze various explanations for differential language use among people of diverse genders and sexualities; (3) how the normative ideology of language affects how we perform gender and sexuality; and (4) the historical development of gendered speech from Heian to Reiwa.

Learning Goals:

1. Students learn how to examine and evaluate a diverse body of research from anthropology, sociolinguistics, and gender and sexuality studies;
2. Students learn to examine various theories of gender, sex and sexuality;
3. Students learn to examine some of the ways that gender, sex and sexuality influence language use;
4. Students learn how concepts of gender, sex and sexuality are shaped by discourse.

Course Format: Discussions and lectures

Grading:

Class Attendance and Discussion Participation: 20%

Reading Quizzes: 20%

Leading Class Discussions: 20%

Mid-term Exam (short and long essay questions): 20%

Research: 20%

Reading Materials

Book chapters and Journal articles

Abe, Hideko. 2020. "Performativity of Gender in Speech: Life Experiences of Japanese

- Trans Women." *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal*, 58 (fall): 35-53. University of Hawaii Press.
- Abe, Hideko. 2010. "Lesbian Bar Talk in Shinjuku, Tokyo," *Queer Japanese: Gender and Sexual Identities through Linguistic Practices*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Baudinette, Thomas. 2017. "Constructing Identities on a Japanese Gay Dating Site," *Journal of Language and Sexuality* 6 (2): 232-261.
- Endo, Orie. 2008. "The role of court lady's language in the historical norm construction of Japanese women's language," *Gender and Language*, Vol 2.1: 9-24.
- Ho, Michelle. 2025. *Emergent Genders: Living Otherwise in Tokyo's Pink Economies*, Duke University Press.
- Nakamura, Momoko, 2022. "Feminist approaches to Japanese language, gender and sexuality, *Handbook of Japanese Sociolinguistics*, 271-294.
- Okamoto, Shigeko, and Shibamoto-Smith, Janet, 2004. *Japanese Language, Gender and Ideology: Cultural Models and Real People*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Ozaki, Yoshimitsu, 2022. "Male-female differences in Japanese," *Handbook of Japanese Sociolinguistics*, 173-214.
- Reynolds, Katsue. 2022. "Genderization in Japanese: A typological view. *Handbook of Japanese Sociolinguistics*, 239-270.
- Shibamoto-Smith, Janet. 2021. "Japanese? Language? And Gender?" *Gender and Language*, vol 15.4: 582-590.

Tentative Course Schedule

Week 1 (1/12-1/16): Introduction to the studies in the field of Japanese language, gender, and sexuality

Readings:

Ozaki, Yoshimitsu, 2022. "Male-female differences in Japanese" *Handbook of Japanese Sociolinguistics*, 173-214.

Week 2 (1/19-1/23): Historical and theoretical foundations for the Japanese language

Readings:

- Shibamoto-Smith, Janet. 2021. "Japanese? Language? And Gender?" *Gender and Language*, vol 15.4: 582-590.
- Endo, Orie. 2008. "The role of court lady's language in the historical norm construction of Japanese women's language," *Gender and Language*, Vol 2.1:9-24.

Week 3 (1/26-30): Japanese language, gender and sexuality studies overview

Readings:

Reynolds, Katsue. 2022. "Genderization in Japanese: A typological view," *Handbook of Japanese Sociolinguistics*, 239-270.

Nakamura, Momoko, 2022. "Feminist approaches to Japanese language, gender and sexuality," *Handbook of Japanese Sociolinguistics*, 271-294.

Week 4 (2/2-6): Lesbians

Readings:

Abe, Hideko. 2010. "Lesbian Bar Talk in Shinjuku, Tokyo," *Queer Japanese: Gender and Sexual Identities through Linguistic Practices*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Guest Speaker: Dohi Itsuki (Kansai University) on transgender students

Week 5 (2/9-13): Linguistic diversity

Readings:

Miyazaki, Ayumi. 2004. "High School Girls' and Boys' First-person Pronoun Use and Their Social World," *Japanese Language, Gender and Ideology: Cultural Models and Real People*, 256-274.

Sunayoshi, Yukako, 2004. "Farm Women's Professional Discourse in Ibaraki, *Japanese Language, Gender and Ideology*, 187-204.

Week 6 (2/16-20): Gay Culture

Guest Speaker: Katsuki Okajima on Gay Culture in Japan

Readings:

Baudinette, Thomas. 2017. "Constructing Identities on a Japanese Gay Dating Site," *Journal of Language and Sexuality* 6 (2): 232-261.

Week 7 (2/23-27): Mid-term Exam and its Reviews

Week 8 (3/2-6): Transgender Diversity

3/4-3/6=Research Travel to Hiroshima

Guest Speaker: Nishida Saya (Seika University) on Transgenderism in Japan

Week 9 (3/9-13): Linguistic Negotiation among Transwomen

Readings:

Abe, Hideko. 2020. "Performativity of Gender in Speech: Life Experiences of Japanese Trans Women." *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal*, 58 (fall): 35-53. University of Hawaii Press.

Video Viewing: Kareraga honki de amutoki wa, 2017.

Week 10 (3/16-20): Japanese Films and Gender

Guest Speaker: Chika Kinoshita, University of Kyoto

Video Viewing: Shinjuku Boys

Week 11 (3/23-27): Danso culture in Japan

Readings:

Ho, Michelle, 2025. "Introduction," *Emergent Genders: Living Otherwise in Tokyo's Pink Economies*, Duke University Press, 1-27.

Ho, Michelle, 2025. "Alternative Worlds in Akihabara: The Rise of contemporary Joso and Danso cultures," *Emergent Genders: Living Otherwise in Tokyo's Pink Economies*, Duke University Press, 79-107.

Week 12 (3/30-4/3): Takarazuka Theater

Field Trip: Takarazuka

Readings:

Robertson, Jennifer, 1998. "Introduction", *Takarazuka: Sexual politics and popular culture in modern Japan*, University of California, 1-24.

Week 13 (4/13-17): Research presentation by students