

The Social History of Postwar Japan
Grading Options

Content and format
“Research paper” (only) on a single topic chosen by the student. Due 24 January.
Essay examination (only) on two of the topics listed below. Due 24 January.
Both the “examination” and the “research paper” are written outside of class time. The difference between the “examination” and the “research paper” is that the instructor provides the topics and basic readings for the “examination” while students are responsible for their own topics and their own sources in the case of “research papers.”

For more detailed instructions concerning “research papers,” consult the separate handout on this subject.

Examination questions (Write a response to any **TWO** of the following.)

- (1) Morris-Suzuki High Tech Japan and Boyle Economic Miracle were written at a time when many foreign observers (and Japanese) thought that Japan would be the preeminent economy of the 21st century. Pick ONE of these two works and analyze the changes that have taken place since it was written.
- (2) For much of the postwar period Japan was celebrated as a country where “more than ninety percent of the population is middle class.” Analyze this claim and document the current state of the “middle class” in contemporary Japan.
- (3) Japanese widely believe that “University entrance in Japan is very difficult but graduation is very easy. In the United States university entrance is very easy but graduation is very difficult.” Analyze this claim and document the current state of university entrance in Japan.
- (4) Japanese society is commonly reported in English and Japanese language journalism in a manner that implicitly or explicitly presents Japan as unique or peculiar or uses Japan-specific explanations for

patterns that are in fact found in other countries. Pick **TWO** items from the following, documenting and analyzing examples of foreign reporting that fit this model.

- Low birth rate
- Parasite singles
- Freeta and NEET
- “Lifetime” employment
- Women in the workforce
- Suicide
- Divorce
- Discrimination against foreigners
- A topic of your choice

Responses to the examination questions should be written like a short research paper. If you cite readings for this course, give a simple note of the form [author, title word, page]. If you use other sources including the Internet, use the same from but also supply a full citation in a “sources consulted” section at the END of your response.

Use the cover sheet and format specifications as described in the handout for “research papers.” Use only a single cover sheet for “examination” responses. Put the title of each question on the cover sheet. A few key words from the “examination” questions are a sufficient title.