

Social History of Postwar Japan
2011 Fall Term
Suggestions and Specifications for Reports

Report topics may cover any aspect of postwar social history. The suggestions given below are just that - suggestions to start to you thinking about a topic. While you are welcome to pursue one of these suggestions, you should feel free to come up with your own topic. You may also take one of the examination questions proposed by the instructor and expand it into a report.

This list of possible topics was developed with reference to resources available in English but you should feel free to use sources in any language that you can read.

A topic does not need to be "academic." Life style issues, sport, popular culture including music and anime, etc. are all appropriate areas for investigation.

All reports should have a cover page with the paper title, course name, your name, and your student number. All reports should have a list of sources consulted including Internet sources. Reports should be on the order of ten (10) pages (+/- 3 pages) including sources. Quality counts more than quantity.

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 form but also supply a full citation in a "sources consulted" section at the END of your response.

Submissions by email will be accepted only by prior arrangement and only for compelling reasons such as not being in Japan, having a job interview on the submission day, etc.

If you submit your report via email, the file name should use the template below.

postwar your name student number actual paper title

postwar – this identifies the course

Give your name as it is rendered in Romanization in Keio administrative documents

Your actual student number

Actual paper title –abbreviate to key words if the title is very long.

EXAMPLE: Your name is Taro Urahshima (浦島太郎). Your student number is 0901313. Your paper topic is “Cup Noodles in Postwar Japan.” In this case, the attached file you submit should have the file name

Postwar Taro Urashima 0901313 Cup Noodles in Postwar Japan.rtf

Case (capitalization) is unimportant. Dashes or underscores can be used in place of spaces.

Files NOT in the correct format will be rejected.

RTF (rich text format) is the preferred file format. HTML, DOC, DOCX, ODT, and PDF format files are also acceptable.

Use a header or footer that contains the page number and your name and/or student number.

The deadline for submission is 24 January (date for in class examination) but students are encouraged to submit their papers on 17 January the last scheduled lecture. The instructor will collect any outstanding papers on 24 January at the usual classroom. (There will be no in class examination as such.)

Papers should preferably be in English but reports written in Japanese will be accepted.

SPORT Examine the development of a particular sport in the postwar period. Baseball and sumo are well covered in English. Soccer and rugby are also possible topics. The rise of golf as a popular rather than elite pastime is a conspicuous feature of postwar Japan although English materials may be hard to find.

RECREATION Examine the development of a recreation such as skiing or a pastime such as pachinko or karaoke. Of these, karaoke is the best documented in English.

MUSIC Examine the popularity of a foreign or domestic genre. Jazz including blues and hip-hop are well covered in English.

ENTERTAINMENT Examine a modern or traditional entertainment form or medium in the postwar period. The diffusion and impact of television is an important element of postwar social history. Analyze a popular film series such as *Otoko ha tsurai yo* or the works of a particular director in terms of postwar social change.

PERSONALITIES Describe the role of a well-known personality such as the wrestler Riki Dozan or the baseball star Sadaharu Oh in the context of postwar social history.

MINORITIES AND SOCIAL GROUPS Examine some aspect of the life of a minority group such as Koreans (在日韓国人・朝鮮人) or "outcastes" (被差別部落民) in the context of postwar social and economic change.

IMMIGRANTS Although Japan is not usually seen as an immigrant society, it in fact had a large immigrant population in the prewar period and has a new immigrant population that has been growing since the 1980s. The Brazilian immigrant population is particularly well documented in English. Foreign women married to Japanese men and living in Japan are a subset of the overall immigrant population that has also received special treatment in English.

WOMEN There are any number of topics pertaining to women that can be easily researched using English materials including women in the labor force, marriage and divorce, child bearing, etc. Women as a market for goods and services or particular segments of the female population such as "parasite singles" may also be researched using English materials.

CEREMONIES Marriage ceremonies and funerals are two aspects of Japanese life that have been well documented in English. They are also the subjects of Japanese films (Itami Juzo, for example) that are available in English versions.

CONSUMER GOODS The mass diffusion of consumer goods is one of the most conspicuous features of postwar social and economic change. Automobiles, television, and cell phones are obvious subjects.

EDUCATION There are many important and interesting topics pertaining to postwar

Japanese education including the spread of higher education, changes in the university entrance examination system, the diffusion of supplementary education (juku), etc. English language coverage is, however, spotty and often out of date. Use care and consult with the instructor.

LIFE STYLE Living in large apartments and commuting by train is a conspicuous feature of postwar urban life. English language material is somewhat thin but there is enough to document some features of this aspect of postwar social history.

LABOR Wage labor including the trade union movement is generally well documented in English. An important theme with great contemporary relevance is the changing market and supply of day or short-term labor.

FARMING Although a smaller proportion of the population farms in Japan than in some European countries, the agrarian sector continues to attract attention. There is a large volume of anthropological writing about village Japan that can be used to describe social change outside the cities.

POPCULTURE Anime and manga are well covered in English and provide numerous topics including the development of the genre, social change as seen through anime and manga, the works of particular artists, etc. Cosplay (costume play) also has a large volume of material in English.

SEX AND CENSORSHIP Brothel prostitution was abolished in 1957 but as in most countries commercial sex services flourish. There is a usable body of both scholarly and salacious material on the subject. Censorship of literary and art works has generated numerous court cases, and is a fruitful topic for comparative study.

CRIME AND JUSTICE Crime rates in Japan are relatively low and this has attracted the attention of numerous foreign writers, especially Americans. Organized crime (aka “the yakuza”) has produced a large volume of writing in English, not all of it fully reliable.