Center for International Programs

Oakland University

WINTER 2010

Tuesday/Thursday – 3:00 – 4:47 pm

IS 300 Special Topic:

Contemporary Japan

Professor Jane Yamazaki

Japan has changed dramatically over the past 60 years, even in the past ten years.

Starting with the wrenching forced changes during the American occupation, Japan set out in a new direction. In the late 1980s, Japan was beginning to be seen as the next superpower, the only remaining rival to US hegemony. Ten years later, Japan's economy seemed in the throes of a financial meltdown. Today, in 2009, after seeming to recover in the early 2000s, Japan is suffering from the same economic downturn as the US. How has all this turmoil and change affected life in Japan today and how does Japan offer insights into modern/postmodern life?

Course Goals:

This course offers an interdisciplinary introduction to various aspects of contemporary Japan, such as its political economy, modern history, society and technology and pop culture creations. It is designed to equip you to understand and evaluate the "news" and trends in Japan. Themes of globalization, democracy, memory and history, family life, media representation will be pursued. Areas for focus will be politics, society (crime, education, women, family, leisure), economy, international relations and pop culture.

This is intended largely as a reading plus Internet/new media 'reading' course. Students will be expected to contribute to the class through assigned reports and final research project concerning one of the issues facing Japan today.

Dr. Yamazaki has been teaching courses on Japanese history and culture in the International Studies department of Oakland University since 1998, most recently on Women in Japan. She has also taught a course on Conflict and Culture at Wayne State University. She received a Masters in Asian History from University of Virginia and a Ph.D in Communication at Wayne State University in 2002. She published a book *Japanese Apologies for World War II* (2004).