

Seminární práce a ukončení Jap214-JP225

Books to read:

1. Vogel, E. F. (1979). *Japan as number one : lessons for america*. Grand Book.
2. Kerr, A. (2001). *Dogs and demons : tales from the dark side of japan* (1st ed.). Hill and Wang.
3. Sugimoto, Y. (2014). *An introduction to japanese society* (Fourth). Cambridge University Press.

Uploaded in the IS folder.

2 essays to write in order to complete this course:

A) Write an analytical review paper on Vogel versus Kerr

In this essay, you are asked to compare two books written on the subject of “Japanese society”. One was published in 1979, the other roughly 20 years later. They are written in very different times and their authors approach the subject from different angles. Yet many of the issues they deal with overlap. Your task is to place both books in a historical context, compare their content and evaluate their arguments’ efficacy. Your essay should incorporate answers to the following questions:

1. Do Vogel and Kerr write about the same society? If so, what are its core features? If not, how does Vogel’s Japan differ from Kerr’s?
2. Are Vogel’s and Kerr’s take and understanding of the Japanese society in agreement? Or are they at odds with each other? If so, is there a way how to reconcile the two perspectives?
3. Which arguments/observations in Vogel and Kerr still apply to present-day Japan?
4. It is the year 2100. Which of the two books will be still read? Why?
5. Which of the two authors did you find more convincing and intellectually stimulating? Why?
6. What do you think is the reason for Vogel’s book having been so popular with readers in Japan? Is there more than just nationalist sentiment behind this?

Make sure to roughly divide the space evenly for both books in your essay. Moreover, your goal is two-fold: to provide an analytical think piece and to demonstrate that you have read the books carefully. When evaluating the authors’ arguments, try to step back and see them from a broader perspective – how do they see the Japanese society overall? What approach do they chose in studying it? Based on what evidence do they draw their conclusions? Also,

while you try to capture the more general themes in their writing but be very specific with your examples (especially when you answer question 1 to 3).

Last but not least AVOID WRITING A SUMMARY of THE BOOKS!!! Your task is to analyze and synthesize, not to simply regurgitate what they said.

B) Write an analytical review paper on Sugimoto's Japanese Society(2014)

Sugimoto's book is more a textbook than a cohesive analytical piece. It is also the most up-to-date work on our list. Instead of writing a simple a book review, I'd like you to analyze his arguments in relationship to the works we have already studied: Nakane and Benedict as well as Vogel and Kerr.

Particularly, answer the following questions in your essay:

A) How does Sugimoto's work relate to Nakane's and Benedict's?

- a) Is his methodology similar? Is his book more scientific/objective than those of Nakane and Benedict?
- b) Are there areas where Sugimoto agrees with the two anthropologists?
- c) Are there areas where he would criticize them? If so, what arguments would he use?
- d) Which of the three books will have a longer shelf-life (i.e. be read in the future)? Why?
- e) Which book was more difficult to write? Why? Which is a greater intellectual achievement in your view?
- f) Which book helped you see things about the Japanese society you didn't know before? What were they?

B) Sugimoto in relation to Vogel and Kerr:

- a) Which of the two authors - Kerr and Vogel - would Sugimoto likely agree with more, given the tenor of his arguments? Why?
- b) What evidence in Sugimoto's chapters on recent developments in the Japanese society would you use in support of Kerr's/Vogel's arguments?

Submission deadlines and format of the essays:

- a) **Vogel&Kerr: Length: 5000 – 7000 words (including footnotes)**
- b) **Sugimoto: Length: 2000 – 2500 words (including footnotes)**

to count words, use the "word count" function

FORMAT:

- font 10-12ppt
- only word document (NO PDF or other formats, I must be able to write comments into the text)

LANGUAGE: Czech or English (either is okay)

Citation style: APA, MLA or Chicago style (chose one and use consistently)

See, for example, here:

https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html

DEADLINE: 20th September 2020, by 8pm (upload to IS folder: “seminární práce”)

Late submissions will be penalized by -2% from your overall grade for each delayed day.

The exam period ends on 30th September. By that day, you all will have received a grade from me including a feedback on your writing.

If you need to get graded earlier (e.g. for reasons of SZZ etc): submit your essays whenever you are ready and let me know that you a grade soon. I'll grade you within the next 5- 10 days of your submission.

COVID-19 ADJUSTED GRADING SCALE:

First 3 quizzes in class (Gordon, Benedict, Nakane): 20%

Vogel&Kerr essay: 55%

Sugimoto essay: 25%

To pass this class, you need at least 65% and more.

Additional tips (DOs and DONTs in your writing):

- a) Be specific, use concrete examples from the books to support your thesis.
- b) Don't confuse a “well-supported position” with an “opinion”.
- c) Don't write things that you are not certain about; know the facts before you use them.
- d) Don't be dogmatic – avoid prejudged opinions, be aware of various angles.
- e) Edit, edit and edit!!! Essays with too many typos, sloppy formatting and cumbersome language point to one thing: you did not spend enough time on your task or did it in the last minute.
- f) Tell a coherent story – your text has to flow properly (i.e. sentences follow up on each other); each sentence and paragraph has a purpose. Avoid space fillers!
- g) Don't leave this assignment until the last moment – while reading the three books can be done in a matter of two weeks, writing the essays will likely take much longer.
- h) NO plagiarism; failure to paraphrase properly is also plagiarism.
- i) YOU ARE WRITING THIS ESSAY FOR ME – DON'T waste your time on repeating the content of the books – I have read them! Rather, show that you understand their core messages, that you are able to critically think about the Japanese society and that you can answer the questions above.