**Institutt for kulturstudier og orientalske språk**

**Det humanistiske fakultet**

**Universitetet i Oslo**

**Take-home exam**

**JAP2501 - Contemporary Japanese Culture, spring 2016**

**Exam time: Monday 9th May, 12:00 – Thursday 12th May, 15:00**

**………………………………………………………………………………………………**

Answer the following questions in your own words. Refer to the course literature and lectures. You may write in either English or Norwegian. Use Times New Roman, 12 points, 1.5 line spacing. Add a bibliography where you list the sources to which you have referred in your text.

Write all answers in one document, and upload it as a PDF file before the deadline (May 12, 15.00). The exam is anonymous, so do not write your name on the exam, but only the exam number you have been given.

1. In Japanese academic and media discourse, a distinction is often made between contemporary popular culture (“cool Japan”) on the one hand, and “traditional culture” (*dentō bunka*) on the other. Why is this distinction problematic? What is the contemporary significance of the category “traditional culture” (politically, socially and economically)? Give examples. (1-2 pages; 20%)
2. What is meant by the terms “identity politics” and “strategic essentialism”? How do these notions relate to the expression of contemporary Ainu and Ryukyu cultures? What is the significance of “culture” and “identity” for Ainu and Ryukyu struggles for legal and political recognition? Give examples. (1-2 pages; 20%)
3. What is the role of food (rice, seafood, tea, etc.) in modern Japanese nation building projects? How does food consumption relate to territoriality, landscape, and conceptions of “nature”? How do notions of purity and pollution related to food reflect notions of national belonging and otherness? Give examples. (1-2 pages; 20%)
4. Write a short essay on one of the following topics: (3-5 pages; 40%)

- Rebranding Japan, post-2011: Popular culture, heritage production, and sports

- A secular country? The significance of religion in contemporary Japanese culture

- Rural problems and solutions today: Agriculture, tourism, and environmental issues

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