



蘇州大學
Soochow University

JPN 220 Japanese Culture and Society

Summer 2024

Course Credits: 4

Contact Hours: 56 hours

Instructor: TBA

Email: TBA

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course provides a comprehensive survey of Japanese culture and society, covering various aspects such as religion, thought, visual arts, literature, theater, cinema, tea ceremony, and landscape gardening. This course aims to explore the unique cultural developments of Japan while also examining their connections to political, social, and institutional trends. The emphasis will be on understanding the essence of Japanese culture without overwhelming the students with an excessive focus on names, dates, and detailed historical information.

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Gain a comprehensive understanding of various aspects of Japanese culture and society;
2. Appreciate and understand the significance of key cultural practices such as the tea ceremony and landscape gardening;
3. Contextualize cultural developments within the framework of political, social, and institutional trends throughout Japanese history;
4. Analyze the impact of Japanese culture on the global stage and its contributions to the world's cultural heritage;
5. Conduct independent research on specific aspects of Japanese culture and its historical development.

PREREQUISITES

N/A

GRADING



Grades will be determined by accumulating points, with 100 points being the maximum, as follows:

| ITEM | POINTS |
|--------------|------------|
| Quizzes | 20 Points |
| Essay 1 | 15 Points |
| Essay 2 | 15 Points |
| Presentation | 20 Points |
| Final Paper | 30 Points |
| Total | 100 Points |

Late submissions will be graded at the end of the course. Grades will be assigned according to the following rule:

$A \geq 90 > B \geq 80 > C \geq 70 > D \geq 60 > F$.

We reserve the right to make adjustments to the overall grading policy.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required Texts:

H. Paul Varley, *Japanese Culture*, 4th Edition, University of Hawaii Press, 2000.

Recommended (Optional) Texts or Other Materials:

None

COURSE TOPICS

| MODULE | TASKS |
|----------|---|
| Module 1 | Topics: Topic 1: Introduction and Course Overview Topic 2: The Emergence of Japanese Civilization Topic 3: Key Characteristics of Prehistoric Japanese Culture Topic 4: Buddhism in Japan Essay#1 |



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|----------|--|
| Module 2 | Topics: Topic 5: The Court at Its Zenith: The Heian Period and the Flourishing of the Imperial Court Topic 6: Literature, Poetry, and the Tale of Genji Topic 7: The Advent of a New Age: The Rise of Samurai Power Topic 8: Zen Buddhism and Its Influence on Japanese Arts Assessments: Quiz#1 |
| Module 3 | Topics: Topic 9: Medieval Japan and the Aesthetics of Wabi-Sabi Topic 10: The Way of Tea (Chado); The Art of Flower Arrangement (Ikebana) Topic 11: The Country Unified, The Edo Period Topic 12: The Edo Literature; Kabuki and Noh Theater Essay#2 |
| Module 4 | Topics: Topic 13: The Flourishing of a Bourgeois Culture Topic 14: Heterodox Trends Topic 15: Religious Syncretism Topic 16: Encounter with the West: The Meiji Restoration Assessments: Quiz#2 |
| Module 5 | Topics: Topic 17: Modernization and Cultural Shifts Topic 18: Cinema and Cultural Identity, Contemporary Cultural Expressions Topic 19: Preservation and Promotion of Traditional Culture Topic 20: Reflection on Japanese Cultural Heritage Presentation Final Paper |

ATTENDANCE

1) Class attendance is required. Missing classes without permission will lead to decrease in overall grade.

Missing less than two classes: no penalty.

Missing more than two classes: 7% will be taken off from the overall grade.

If the instructor reports a student's frequent missing of class to the Soochow University Academic Administration Office, the student might get a written warning and might be prohibited from attending final exam.

2) Participants in this course are expected to arrive in class promptly and adequately



prepared. The primary objective of this course is to critically engage with the readings and the subject matter. Therefore, course participants are expected to have completed the reading prior to class and prepare thoughtful reflections/commentaries to share with fellow colleagues.

LEARNING REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Late assignments are not acceptable and are subjected to grade deductions.
- 2) Assignments submitted in the wrong format will be counted as not submitted.
- 3) Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component results in failure of the class.
- 4) Make-up for midterm and final exams only with valid excuses, as defined by the University.
- 5) In order to earn a Certificate of Completion, participants must thoughtfully complete all assignments by stated deadlines and earn an average quiz score of 50% or greater.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

The use of electronic devices in class is distracting, both for the user and for the rest of the class. Only non-programmable calculators can be used in the tests and exam. Any attempts to use cell phones and other electronic communication devices will be seemed as cheating. Laptops are discouraged, unless you use them for activities DIRECTLY related to the course (e.g., note taking, reading course documents).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Soochow University highly values the academic integrity and aims to promote the academic fairness, honesty and responsibility. Any academic dishonesty behaviors and any attempts to cheats and plagiarism will be reported to the university administration office. A written warning and the relevant penalties will be imposed. The record might be shown on the official university transcript.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION

Soochow University is committed to maintaining a barrier-free environment so that



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Soochow University

students with disabilities can fully access programs, courses, services, and activities at Soochow University. Students with disabilities who require accommodations for access to and/or participation in this course are welcome.

Note:

Please contact the University Administrative Office immediately if you have a learning disability, a medical issue, or any other type of problem that prevents professors from seeing you have learned the course material.