

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Subject Description Form

Subject Code	CBS1CN16
Subject Title	Understanding Japan: A Journey into Japanese Culture and Society
Credit Value	3
Level	1
Pre-requisite/ Co-requisite/ Exclusion	Exclusion: CBS1C16
Objectives	<p>The subject introduces a wealth of Japanese people's culture and society, including Japanese aesthetics, traditional clothing, martial arts, Zen philosophy, tea ceremony and seafood cuisine, as well as contemporary visual and youth culture (J-pop), including manga comics, anime, games, technology and social media. We will examine the social structure of Japan and the socio-cultural issues faced by the changing Japanese society.</p> <p>Leading professionals such as a kimono artist, sushi chef, and game creator will be invited from Japan to demonstrate their skills in the classroom and discuss different cultural concepts embodied in their professions. Supplemented with elementary Japanese language expressions (e.g., greetings and basic daily expressions), the subject provides students with a gateway into a deeper, anthropological understanding of Japanese culture.</p>
Intended Learning Outcomes <i>(Note 1)</i>	<p>Upon completion of the subject, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Demonstrate a general understanding of the development of Japanese culture and society; (b) Describe and analyze the perceptions, viewpoints, and life experiences of people in Japan; (c) Analyse in their own terms and compare the cultural aspects of Japan, including moral biases, social norms and world views; (d) Utilize methods of social and cultural analysis for overcoming ethnocentricity; (e) Develop appreciation of various forms of cultural expression; and (f) Formulate good research questions in the area of cultural studies and improve independent research skills.

<p>Subject Synopsis/ Indicative Syllabus <i>(Note 2)</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction to Japanese cultural history and demography 2. Japanese aesthetics and design: From Zen to kawaii 3. Traditional clothing: Invited workshop and kimono dressing demonstration 4. Consumption, food culture and identity 5. Food and drink culture: Invited workshop on sushi making 6. Japan as a technological power: Godzilla, the bullet train and robots 7. Soft power and ‘Cool Japan’: J-pop, anime and manga comics 8. Soft power and ‘Cool Japan’: Invited workshop on online augmented reality games 9. Leisure, sports and body: Invited workshop on kendo 10. The self in society: Japanese collectivism, language and thought 11. School and youth culture: Conformity and soft revolt 12. Family and work culture: Performing gender and sexless society 																																																						
<p>Teaching/Learning Methodology <i>(Note 3)</i></p>	<p>Teaching is in the form of lectures and seminars; some of the seminars will involve workshops with invited guests. The lectures are organized thematically and aim to present a variety of perspectives on the features of Japanese culture and society. Students will participate in discussions, pair/group work and in tasks related to the topics discussed in the lectures, with the aim not only of boosting cultural competence and appreciation for diversity within and between cultures, but also encouraging critical thinking and collaborative work. There will be student presentations in the final weeks of the term on a research project carried out by the student teams.</p>																																																						
<p>Assessment Methods in Alignment with Intended Learning Outcomes <i>(Note 4)</i></p>	<table border="1" data-bbox="507 1227 1445 1776"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Specific assessment methods/tasks</th> <th rowspan="2">% weighting</th> <th colspan="6">Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed (Please tick as appropriate)</th> </tr> <tr> <th>a</th> <th>b</th> <th>c</th> <th>d</th> <th>e</th> <th>f</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1. Mid-term test</td> <td>20%</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Group presentation</td> <td>40%</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Final test</td> <td>25%</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td></td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4. Participation</td> <td>15%</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100 %</td> <td colspan="6"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Explanation of the appropriateness of the assessment methods in assessing the intended learning outcomes:</p> <p>Mid-term test examines students’ knowledge of the Japanese cultural concepts and societal development introduced in the lectures and seminars from Week 1 to Week 6, and covers Intended Learning Outcomes (a), (b) and (c).</p> <p>Group presentation assesses the following areas of content and delivery: subject knowledge, organization, graphics, speaking skills and</p>	Specific assessment methods/tasks	% weighting	Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed (Please tick as appropriate)						a	b	c	d	e	f	1. Mid-term test	20%	✓	✓	✓				2. Group presentation	40%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	3. Final test	25%	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	4. Participation	15%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Total	100 %						
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	<p>enthusiasm, and aligns with the complete set of Intended Learning Outcomes by evaluating students' ability in formulating good research questions and competence in exploring cultural topics.</p> <p>Final test consisting of five essay questions assesses students' literacy development throughout the course by examining their critical understanding of the socio-cultural issues of Japan, and aligns with Intended Learning Outcomes (a), (b), (c), (e) and (f).</p> <p>Participation will assess students' active engagement with the topics through participation in activities, courage to ask questions, class discussion, attitude of academic curiosity, and ability to learn from peers. Intended Learning Outcomes (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e) are covered.</p>	
Student Study Effort Expected	Class contact:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lectures: 1 x 13 	13Hrs.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tutorials: 2 x 13 	26Hrs.
	Other student study effort:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reading and self-study 	25Hrs.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Group presentation preparation 	30Hrs.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Final test preparation 	25Hrs.
	Total student study effort	119Hrs.
Reading List and References	<p>Required Readings:</p> <p>Bestor, Victoria Lyon, Theodore C. Bestor, & Akiko Yamagata, Eds. (2011). <i>Routledge Handbook of Japanese Culture and Society</i>. Taylor & Francis.</p> <p>Sugimoto, Yoshio, Ed. (2009). <i>The Cambridge Companion to Modern Japanese Culture</i>. Cambridge University Press.</p> <p>Media:</p> <p>Eiichiro Oda <i>One Piece</i> (1997-)</p> <p>Hironobu Sakaguchi <i>Final Fantasy</i> (1987-)</p> <p>Makoto Shinkai <i>Your Name</i> (2016)</p> <p>Recommended Readings:</p> <p>Azuma, Hiroki (2009). <i>Otaku: Japan's Database Animals</i>. Translated by Jonathan E. Abel and Shion Kono. University of Minnesota Press.</p> <p>Baldwin, Frank & Anne Allison, Eds. (2015). <i>Japan: The Precarious Future</i>. New York University Press.</p>	

	<p>Craig, Timothy J. (2000). <i>Inside the World of Japanese Popular Culture</i>. M.E. Sharpe.</p> <p>Grenville, Bruce, Ed. (2008). <i>The Delirious World of Anime + Comics + Video Games + Art</i>. University of California Press.</p> <p>Hendry, Joy (2013). <i>Understanding Japanese Society (4th Edition)</i>. Routledge.</p> <p>Kawano, Satsuki, Glenda S. Roberts & Susan Orpett Long, Eds. (2014). <i>Capturing Contemporary Japan: Differentiation and Uncertainty</i>. University of Hawaii Press.</p> <p>MacWilliams, Mark W. (2014). <i>Japanese Visual Culture: Explorations in the World of Manga and Anime</i>. Routledge.</p> <p>Miyazaki, Hayao (2009). My Theories on the Popularity of Manga. In <i>Starting Point: 1979-1996</i>. Translated by Beth Cary and Frederik L. Schodt. VIZ Media.</p> <p>Morris-Suzuki, Tessa (1995). The Invention and Reinvention of "Japanese Culture". <i>The Journal of Asian Studies</i>, Vol. 54, No. 3, pp. 759-780.</p> <p>Sugimoto, Yoshio (2010). <i>An Introduction to Japanese Society</i>. Cambridge University Press.</p> <p>Stevens, Carolyn (2007). <i>Japanese Popular Music: Culture, Authenticity and Power</i>. Routledge.</p> <p>Yoda, Tomiko & Harry Harootunian, Eds. (2006). <i>Japan After Japan: Social and Cultural Life from the Recessionary 1990s to the Present</i>. Duke University Press.</p> <p>Wezorek, Joe (2008). Japanese Dominance of the Video Game Industry." In West, Mark I., Ed., <i>The Japanification of Children's Popular Culture: From Godzilla to Miyazaki</i>, pp. 85-106. Scarecrow Press.</p>
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