

**Japanese Culture and Society (1 credit)**

**The Japan Center for Michigan Universities  
Hikone, Shiga JAPAN  
In affiliation with Michigan State University  
Fall 2016  
Instructor: Benjamin J. McCracken, Esq.**

Fridays from 13:00 to 14:00  
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**Course Description:** The purpose of the JCMU Experience course is to help students develop strategies for thriving in Japan and beyond. Students will learn valuable skills including intercultural communications strategies, cultural shock awareness, and acculturation strategies. These skills will help students enjoy their time in Japan. Students will also learn and develop skills that will enable them to reflect on their experiences and use them for future employment.

**Instruction objectives include:**

1. To learn more about and be able to compare one's own cultural and traditions through comparative inquiries of Japan.
2. To learn and practice techniques for cultural understanding and intercultural communications.
3. To gain skills to facilitate inquiry into globalization and its impacts from the perspectives of others.
4. Learn life skills that will allow students to make use of their study abroad experiences in a more meaningful way.

**Course Requirements/ Assignments and Evaluations**

- ◆ **Punctuality and Attendance:** Students are required to attend all lecture meetings, field observations, and other scheduled events programmed for this course. Excessive tardiness to class and class activities may result in the dismissal of a student from a program.
- ◆ **Absence Policy:** Your attendance is very important not only to you but also to other classmates. Due to the nature of Study Abroad, no unannounced absences will be permitted. Please refer Office of Study Abroad for further details (<http://studyabroad.msu.edu>). Your tardiness may be counted as 1/2 unexcused absence. Excessive unexcused absences may result in dismissal from the course.
- ◆ **Preparation and Participation:** Students are expected to be prepared and participate. Students are expected to prepare for class by completing the reading assignments and

preparing for selected discussion topics prior to attending class. Participation is a key element to your success in this course. Class discussion and interactivity with the class as a whole is critical to developing an awareness of the content described in lectures and readings. Students that are not prepared will be asked to leave the class and will be marked as absent. Participation constitutes 20% of your grade.

**Presentations:** The presentation allows the students to educate through their experiences. They will have maximum flexibility in showing what they have learned. This will also allow the participants to reflect broadly about cultural experiences and cultural values and how these figure into major lessons learned. Additional information concerning the contents of the presentation will be provided in an additional handout.  
*Specific dates and times will be provided.*

**Reflection Paper:** There will be one final reflection paper.

**Required Reading:** Readings will be assigned as needed

**Academic Honesty and Classroom Etiquette**

Students should always value academic honesty in their own work. In addition to other things, plagiarism is considered among the most blatant forms of academic dishonesty. This means that a student will not submit any written work that has been copied from the Internet or any other form of published media. Additionally a student will not submit any work that has been written by another person without citing that source and will never submit another's work as his/her own. This would also include unacknowledged paraphrasing. As specified by university policy, such academic dishonesty may result in a penalty grade for the course. For more information on academic dishonesty policy please refer to the Ombudsman webpage: <https://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/honestylinks.html>

**Grading Criteria and Grading Scale**

You will be graded on four elements: a) papers or projects, b) attendance, c) participation, d) presentations as described above.

Attendance	Participation	Writing Assignments	Presentation
20%	40%	10%	30%

NOTE 1: Attendance makes up to 20 % of the whole course grade. However, if a student misses three (3) classes without permission or medical excuse, the student may be terminated from the course.

NOTE 2: Participation means "active" participation. Simply being there is not the same as participating. Points for participation will be awarded only when students are actively engaging in classroom activities, discussion, field exploration, and other learning activities for this course.

**Grade Breakdown**

Conversion Table between 4.0 Scale and Points

4.0      3.5      3.0      2.5      2.0      1.5      1.0      0.0  
point

90-100 85-89 80-84 75-79 70-74 65-69 60-64 59 &  
below

### **Class Schedule and Assignments**

Please note that the student prepared for discussions prior to each class. Be sure to bring to class the texts under discussion.

Class 1 (September 9th) – (This class will be two hours) Welcome and introduction to life in Japan. Video: A Life in Japan

Class 2 (September 16th) – Why did you come to Japan? – Goal setting and reflection

Class 3 (September 23rd) – Guest Lecture on surviving and thriving in Japan

Class 4 (September 30th) – Intercultural Communications Workshop I

Class 5 (October 7th) – Intercultural Communications Workshop II

Class 6 (October 14th) – Where are you now? – The different stages of culture shock

Class 7 (October 21st) – Halfway there - Goal Review (are you on target or off course in the right way?)

Class 8 (October 28th) – Current understanding vs. Initial expectations

Class 9 (November 4th) – Positives vs. Negatives

Class 10 (November 11th) – Potential careers in Japan – TESOL

Class 11 (November 18th) – Group Presentations

Class 12 (November 25th) – Group Presentations

Class 13 (December 2nd) – Resume workshop and discussing your experiences

Class 14 (December 9th) – (This class will be two hours) Final Reflections

Reflection Papers are due on December 13th by Midnight to [bmccracken@jcmu.org](mailto:bmccracken@jcmu.org)