

HURON UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
DEPARTMENT OF FRENCH AND ASIAN STUDIES
Japanese Program
Japanese 1650F 550: Perspectives on Japan (8675)
Fall 2023

Class Time: Monday 11:30am-12:30pm, Wednesday 11:30am-1:30pm

Place: HC-W108

Instructor: Christopher White

Office/Phone: A20

E-mail: cwhite53@uwo.ca

Office Hours: M: 12:30-1:30, or by appointment.

Course Description:

A multi-disciplinary overview of Japan, including territory, people, language, religion, economy, popular culture, science and technology, among others

Course Objectives:

After successful completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate

- knowledge and understanding of the main parameters of Japan Studies and East Asian Studies;
- their ability and skills in discussing and analyzing topics related to Japan;
- critical reading and thinking skills on the subject matter;
- their ability to use modern research methods;
- their ability to evaluate the relevance and importance of different ideas.

Class Methods:

The course presupposes no knowledge of Japanese civilization. Students investigate – and formulate questions – on Japan and East Asia within today's globalized world, identify their own cultural bias toward less familiar subjects, and critically evaluate diverse perspectives. Students are expected to prepare for each class by doing short (preliminary) research.

Course Readings: Required readings are available on OWL and will be posted each week.

Evaluation:

There are 3 short papers (1-2 pages each) (10x3=30%) and one short essay proposals (10%), the final paper (40=40%), and class performance (20%).

Short Papers:

The due dates are absolute unless an extension is granted. The short papers are generally revised and resubmitted.

(Tentative) Lecture and Discussion Topics:

Fall Term 2023

Week 1 (Sept 11/13) Course Introduction

Elements of Japan Studies/East Asian Studies
Importance of the critical evaluation of perspectives
Researching topics/ Research methodology

Week 2 (Sept 18/20) Conceptualizing Japan

Concepts of Country, Nation, History and State
Conceptions of “Facts of Life” in Japan

Week 3 (Sept 25/Sept 27) On Pre-Modern History: Topics on Japan (Issue 1)

Images of Pre-Modern Japanese History

Week 4 (Oct 2/Oct 4) On Modern History: Topics on Japan (Issue 1)

Images of Modern Japanese History

Week 5 (Oct 11/16/18) On Japanese Religion, Language, and Societal Etiquette (Issue 2)

Examining the role of religion and social etiquette
in Japanese society
How have images of Japan been shaped by religion and
Social etiquette

Week 6 (Oct 23/Oct 25) On Japan in World War II (Issue 3)

Examining the Japanese experience in World War II
How have images of Japan been shaped by its role in
WWII. How has it worked towards changing these
images in the postwar period

Proposal (Due Oct 25th): Your Thesis Proposal and Annotated
References

Reading Week – Oct. 30 – Nov 5

Week 7 (Nov 6/Nov 8) On Japanese Politics (Issue 4)

Examining the Japanese political system, elections, and bureaucracy
Discussing Right-wing and Left-wing politics in Japan and the images that
it projects globally

Week 8 (Nov 13/15) On Japanese Business Culture and the Economy (Issue 5)

Examining Japanese business culture, the 'bubble economy',
The 'lost decades', and images of economic success and failure
Why are these images projected and what are the realities?

2 Reflection Papers and 1 Documentary Analysis (Due anytime
after instruction is given) Opinion Pieces

Week 9 (Nov 20/22) On Japan's Relationship with Everything Nuclear (Issue 6)

Examining the effects of the atomic bombs used on Japan
Discussing the benefits and dangers of nuclear energy
And Japan's uneasy relationship with it

Week 10 (Nov 27/29) On Japanese Society: School System and Education (Issue 7)

Discussing the merits and pitfalls of the Japanese education system.
Examining the social and psychological effects that the Japanese
Education system has on its youth

Final Paper (Due Nov 29th):

Week 11 (Dec 4/6) On Japanese Society: Anime and Pop Culture (Issue 8)

How contemporary Japanese pop culture production has constructed a new
image for Japan since the end of World War II How the world consumes
Japanese pop culture and forms its own Images of Japan
Wrap-Up