

JAS 451 W 12:30-15:00

Cultural Background of Japanese Language (3 credit hours)

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DESCRIPTION:

JAS 451 is designed to acquaint students with the pragmatics of Japanese language, in particular with cultural contexts of its use and with typical patterns of thinking among Japanese people which for international students maybe unknown, and of which Japanese students may not be aware.

Based on the experience gained in class activities and the discussion among the classmates representing different culture students will identify, discuss, and compare contextual issues involved in exemplary situations. Similar assignments will be given to analyze authentic situations or examples from one's own experience.

Since the course activities will be carried out in Japanese language, international students will get some assistance in understanding readings and other assignments, however, the focus will not be on the grammatical or vocabulary issues, but on the pragmatic aspects of language. Class activities will include discussions and presentations of individual work assigned as homework.

Some field trips are included in the plan for this course to provide opportunities for making direct observation of communication pattern in various contexts and in authentic social environment.

OBJECTIVES:

International students will be able to communicate in Japanese language with increased level of competency in several pragmatic dimensions, including:

- Use of elements of the cultural background of Japanese language.
- Awareness of Japanese communication styles (verbal and nonverbal).
- Awareness of Japanese value orientations.
- Ability to find information from various authentic sources in situations when its comprehension requires cultural competence.
- Skills in intercultural adaptation.

Knowledge of the cultural background of Japanese language learned in this course will give Japanese students opportunity to recognize and reflect on essential elements of their cultural identity. Also, this knowledge will provide Japanese students with some

level of competence in assisting foreigners in the adaptation to life in Japanese society.

STUDY MATERIALS:

<Textbooks> TBA

<Reference books, sources of readings and other information>

- * Tokui, Atsuko. Multicultural Communication, Alk, 2002.
- * Yashiro, Kyoko, et al. Intercultural Training, Sanshusha, 1998.
- * Miura, Akira and Sakamoto, Tadashi. Japanese Cultural Episodes for Speed Reading.
Bonjin-sha, 1997.
- * Doi, Takeo. The anatomy of dependence, Kobundo, 1971.

ASSESSMENT: Students' achievement of the stated above course objectives will be measured in terms of their performance in the following five areas:

(1) Attendance and Class Participation*	30%
(2) Presentations	20%
(3) Reaction papers	20%
(4) Project	20%
<u>(5) Final Reflection Paper</u>	10%
	100%

* Class participation will be assessed based on frequency of students' active involvement in class activities.

ACADEMIC PREPARATION: Before enrolling in this course, international students should have successfully completed intermediate Japanese language classes or the equivalent.

POLICIES:

- 1) Students are expected to attend all classes and actively participate in all activities. If students have to miss class meetings for medical or other legitimate reasons, they need to contact the instructor in advance (or as soon as practical), and turn in an official letter that verifies the reason for the absence.
- 2) Absence for more than a third of the class sessions during the term will result in "F" grade.
- 3) Homework assignments are to be turned in at the class on the due dates. Incomplete or sloppily done assignments will receive only partial or no credit. Late homework will be given no credit.

4) Acts of plagiarism or other forms academic dishonesty will be dealt with harshly. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plagiarism> for more information.

COURSE FORMAT AND ACTIVITIES: Generally, the class session consists of a mini lecture and an introduction of some new Japanese vocabulary related to certain topic, followed by students' trials to formulate interview questions in Japanese regarding the topic. Students' homework assignment is to use these questions to interview Japanese people (usually AIU Japanese students) regarding the topic of the class. The following class, students present their interview results and their own conclusions on similarities with and differences from their own culture. The presentations are followed by the discussion in Japanese. Sometimes, Japanese person or persons are being invited to join the discussion. Course activities include four field trips giving students opportunities to experience direct interactions with Japanese people outside of the campus in the context of everyday professional, business, or other activities. Students are asked to write reaction papers after field trips and to prepare a presentation on selected topic at the end of the semester.

SCHEDULE:

<Week 1>	Introduction to the course
<Week 2>	Everyday life, religion
<Week 3>	Field Trip 1 - shrine / temple
<Week 4>	Education
<Week 5>	Education
<Week 6>	Field Trip 2 - school
<Week 7>	Job, occupation
<Week 8>	Job, occupation
<Week 9>	Field Trip 3 - company
<Week 10>	Communication styles
<Week 11>	Communication styles
<Week 12>	Field Trip 4 - varying destination
<Week 13>	Communication styles
<Week 14>	Presentations
<Week 15>	Presentations