

Course Syllabus – Spring Semester 2020

Japan and Nature – Landscape, climate and the people's attitude

Japan Center for Michigan Universities (JCMU)

Hikone, Shiga Prefecture, JAPAN: *In accordance with Michigan State University policy*

3 Credits: Lectures (27 hours) + Field Work: Total 45 hours

Instructor: Yoshimasa Kurashige, Kazuhisa Shimada

Friday 1:00- 4:00 P.M. (Some weekend field trips will be held)

Office Hours: By appointment: Please email below.

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Goals of the course

This is an integrative study in Natural and Social Sciences seeking to assist students to be more knowledgeable and capable in a range of intellectual and expressive abilities. The course encourages students to have multiple views on nature by analyzing natural phenomena, which caused disasters, and people's response to the disasters in Japan.

Description of the course:

The people have faced various types of natural disasters in the world. Nature, on the other hand, is necessary for all of us as we receive a lot of blessings of nature such as hot springs and in addition to natural products (fruits and vegetables, fish, drinking water, essential minerals etc). This course gives the students the insights of nature in Japan from the viewpoints of natural and social sciences. In the viewpoint of natural science, the course offers the study of Mt Fuji and the study of mechanism of previously occurred natural disasters. In the viewpoint of social science, the course explains the relationship between Japanese and mountains, modernization and nature in Japan and Great East Earthquake of March 11, 2011.

The course is often run by the discussion style, and holds study tours in order to help the students understand the topics being taught. The study tours will be held during weekends and public holidays.

Instructional Objectives

1. To deepen the understanding of the mechanism of natural disasters occurring in Japan and the understanding of how Japanese have lived with nature in history. Furthermore, to be able to compare one's own cultural and historical conditions through comparative inquiries of Japan;
2. To gain skills to facilitate inquiry into natural disasters and natural environment.

Course Requirements, Assignments and Evaluations

Punctuality and Attendance: Students are required to attend all lectures, field trips, and other scheduled events programmed for this course. Excessive tardiness to class and class activities may result in the dismissal of a student from the 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. Your tardiness may be counted as 1/2 unexcused absence. Excessive unexcused absences may result in dismissal.

Preparation and Participation: The student is 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. Class attendance and participation constitute 30% of your grade.

Class Writing Assignments: Students are required to demonstrate their knowledge of key concepts based on what they have learned during their Study Abroad program through a series of written assignments. The students will have 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. The following assignments are required for the successful completion of this course:

Three (3) essay assignments based on study tours (1 page each, single spaced)

Presentations: Students will be required to give **an individual presentation** based on the area they learned. Students will be given maximum flexibility to demonstrate what they have learned through field excursions and in class. Instruction for the presentation will be provided in due course.

Academic Honesty and Classroom Etiquette

Students must value academic honesty in their own work. In addition to other malpractices, 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 MSU Ombudsperson's webpage:
<https://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/academic-integrity/plagiarism-policy.html>

Grading Criteria and Grading Scale

Students will be graded on four distinct course elements:

- a) Class attendance and participation 30%*
- b) Essays 30%
- c) Final presentation 40%

* If a student excessively misses classes without advising the instructor, the student may be terminated from the course. Participation means "active" participation. Simply being in the classroom is not the same as participating. Points for participation will be awarded only when students are actively engaging in activities, discussion, field exploration, and other learning activities for this course.

The conversion table between the 4.0 grading scale and point system is as follows:

4.0	3.5	3.0	2.5	2.0	1.5	1.0	0.0
90-100	85-89	80-84	75-79	70-74	65-69	60-64	59 ↓

Online SIRS Evaluation Policy

Michigan State University (MSU) takes seriously the opinion of students in the evaluation of the effectiveness of instruction and has implemented the Student Instructional Rating System (SIRS) to gather student feedback (<https://sirsonline.msu.edu>). This course utilizes the online SIRS system, and you will receive an e-mail during the last two weeks of class asking you to fill out the SIRS web form at your convenience. In addition, participation in the online SIRS system involves grade sequestration, which means that the final grade for this course will not be accessible on STUINFO during the week following the submission of grades for this course unless the SIRS online form has been completed. Alternatively, you have the option on the SIRS website to decline to participate in the evaluation of the course. We hope, however, that you will be willing to give us your frank and constructive feedback so that we may instruct students even better in the future. If you access the online SIRS website and complete the online SIRS form or decline to participate, you will receive the final grade in this course as usual once final grades are submitted.

Class Schedule and Assignments

Please note that the student is expected to have read and studied the assigned reading and prepared for discussions prior to each class. Be sure to bring to class the texts under discussion. Field work is counted as class time: you will be required to keep notes and write summaries.

Class 1: January 10: Introduction

Class 2: January 17: Study tour to Isozaki shrine, 300m from JCMU, then lecture on
Modernization and nature in Japan

Class 3: January 24: Japanese and mountains

Class 4, 5: January 25 (Sat.): Study tour: to visit Miidera temple and Ishiyamadera temple in Otsu
city, Shiga (An essay assignment is given. 1 page single spaced.) *Spend a full-day in
the site

Class 6: January 31: The discussion time for the study tour, and Global environmental issues and
the role of Japan

Class 7: February 7: Volcanic disasters, earthquakes and tsunamis

Class 8, 9: February 8 (Sat.): Study tour: to visit the memorial museum and the sites of active
faults which caused Nobi Earthquakes in Gifu prefecture (An essay assignment is given.
1 page single spaced.) *Spend a full-day in the site

Class 10: February 14: Mt Fuji and local Fujis

Class 11: February 21: The discussion time for the study tour in Gifu, and Sudden downpours,
floods, typhoons and debris flows in urban areas

Class 12: March 6: Great Eastern Earthquake of 2011 and recovery policies

Class 13, 14: March 7 (Sat): Study tour: to visit Kyoto City Disaster Prevention Center in Kyoto to
learn how to protect yourself during disasters (An essay assignment is given. 1 page
single spaced.), and the visit to Tofuku ji temple to see a zen garden. *Spend a full-day in
the site

Class 15: March 13: Final presentation (individual)