

# **Japanese Economy and Business (JEB): Economic Systems, Business Practices, and Cultural Interactions**

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## **Course Objectives and Overview**

In this course, students can obtain fundamental knowledge on stylized facts of Japanese economy and Japanese firm systems as compared with those in the US and some other countries, and understand economic theories to put profound interpretations on them. Stylized facts seem to be old and some of them may have been obsolete. However, they are still useful for understanding Japanese economic systems and worker's behavior because they have economic rationality and economic complementarity. The essential characteristics are difficult to change. The current systems are historically rooted in them. Students are required to discuss current conditions on Japanese economy and firm systems, considering stylized facts and theoretical backgrounds. It is crucial to distinguish changing phenomena from unchanged principles.

In this course, I am going to provide the opportunity of cultural interactions between JCMU students and Shiga University students. Students are required to carry out two projects at least through group works: Local Marketing and Innovation Management. Students' attitude and skill under the university education in Japan are closely linked with Japanese firm system. JCMU students may be able to notice and understand Japanese students' way of thinking and attitude toward innovations.

## **Dates/Time and Venue**

12 September	Wednesday	12:50 ~ 16:00
26 September	Wednesday	12:50 ~ 16:00
28 September	Friday	12:50 ~ 16:00
03 October ~ 12 December	Wednesdays	12:50 ~ 16:00

At Room 545 on Shiga University Campus

## Assessment

Task	Timing of the assessment	Contribution to the final mark
Quiz and class contribution	In classes. The scores of quizzes are mainly assessed. Your class contributions will be evaluated as a bonus point.	25%
Group Presentation	24 October: Innovation Management 05 December: Local Marketing	10% and 25%
Exam	12 December	40%

## Schedule (tentative)

	Date	Subject	Note
1	12 Sept	Introduction	Course overview. Introduction of people. General discussion on Japanese economy and firm system.
2	26 Sept	Market vs. Organization	Fundamental theoretical backgrounds on markets and organizations are discussed.
3	28 Sept	Human-capital Firm	Human resource management in Japanese firm system: life-time employment; seniority remuneration system; and intra-firm labor union.
4	03 Oct	<i>Kanban</i> Production System	<i>TOYOTA</i> 's Just-in-time production system. Bottom-up <i>sashimi</i> (sliced raw fish) method vs. Top-down <i>yakitori</i> (skewered grilled chicken) method.
5	10 Oct	Subcontracting Group	What relationships do an assembly maker and suppliers develop? Long-term mutual committed transactions. Organizational market system (intermediate organization)
6	17 Oct	Knowledge-Creating Company	Explicit vs. tacit knowledge. How have Japanese successful companies managed the two types of knowledge?
7	24 Oct	Group Work for Innovation: Create a new product!	Students are required to design a new product through three-stage group works, and finally give a short presentation in the competition.
8	31 Oct	Fieldwork	The Yanmar Museum at Nagahama. (Date may be changed due to Museum's schedule.)
9	07 Nov	Local Marketing (1)	Fundamental things on marketing (including business strategy for competitive advantage) are taught in a lecture. In this project, students are required to search for a good that is not a hit in <i>Hikone</i> , and make a marketing strategy which

			enables us to make it a hot-selling product.
10	14 Nov	Local Marketing (2)	Group fieldwork. Walk in <i>Hikone</i> and find a target.
11	21 Nov	Local Marketing (3)	Continue to do the Group fieldwork with relevant research works.
12	28 Nov	Local Marketing (4)	Prepare for the Group Presentation.
13	05 Dec	Group Presentations	Students are required to give group presentations on the local marketing.
14	12 Dec	Exam	Students are required to take the final.

## Reading List

I recommend some books written both in Japanese and English. You can enjoy reading Abegglen and Stalk (1985) on stylized facts of Japanese internal management system. If you prefer an advanced book, I recommend Aoki (1988). This includes profound and elaborate economic analyses on Japanese economic and firm systems. If you want to learn the diversity of capitalism, I recommend Albert (1993). Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) is a novel book on the knowledge creation in Japanese companies, which is the original conceptual framework produced from Japan. In addition, relevant reading materials will be given in classes.

- Abegglen JC and Stalk G (1985) KAISHA: The Japanese Corporation. Charles E. Tuttle Company, Tokyo.  
 [ジェームス・アベグレン, ジョージ・ストーク (1986) 『カイシャ—次代を創るダイナミズム—』 講談社]
- Albert M (1993) Capitalism Versus Capitalism: How America's Obsession with Individual Achievement and Short-term Profit Has Led it to the Brink of Collapse. Four Walls Eight Windows. [ミシェル・アルベール(1992, 2008) 『資本主義対資本主義 (新装版)』 竹内書店新社]
- Aoki M (1988) Information, Incentives, and Bargaining in the Japanese Economy. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. [青木昌彦 (1992) 『日本経済の精度分析—情報・インセンティブ・交渉ゲーム』 筑摩書房]
- Aoki, M. (2001). Toward a Comparative Institutional Analysis. The MIT Press. [青木昌彦 (2008) 『比較制度分析序説—経済システムの進化と多元性』 講談社 (講談社学術文庫) ]
- Nonaka, I. and Takeuchi, H. (1995). The Knowledge-Creating Company: How Japanese Companies Create the Dynamics of Innovation. Oxford University Press, Oxford. [野中郁次郎, 竹内弘高 (1996) 『知識創造企業』 東洋経済新報社]

## Office Hour

Email me for making an appointment. [ko-mori@biwako.shiga-u.ac.jp](mailto:ko-mori@biwako.shiga-u.ac.jp)  
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