

## JCMU Experience (1 credit)

The Japan Center for Michigan Universities  
Hikone, Shiga JAPAN  
In affiliation with Michigan State University  
Fall 2024

Professors: Benjamin J. McCracken, Esq and Christopher R. Garth

Fridays from 13:30 to 14:30

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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 inter-cultural communications strategies, cultural shock awareness, and acculturation strategies. Students will also discuss and learn best practice for second-language study to support their experience studying abroad. 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. Learn life skills that will allow students to make use of their study abroad experiences in a more meaningful way both now and in the future.




### **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 Education Abroad, no unannounced absences will be permitted. Please refer Office of Education Abroad for further details (<https://educationabroad.isp.msu.edu/plan/academics-abroad/grades/>). 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.

◆ **Smartphones:** JCMU is moving towards a no-smartphone during class time policy. Outside of breaktimes and instructor-lead activities that require technology, students must keep their phones and devices in their bags at all times.

- ☐ Students who require the use of smartphones for recording of class time based on accommodations may work with their instructor(s) to determine the best place in the classroom for this, e.g. on the instructor’s table.
- ☐ Students who need to stay in contact due to an ongoing issue at home may ask their instructor(s) to make an exception to this rule.

**Journal:** Students must keep a journal for the entire period of this course. Fifteen entries should be made, with five due at the end of September, October, and November.

<b>Journal submissions for September 2024</b> (Due September 31 <sup>st</sup> at 11:59pm)	<a href="https://forms.office.com/r/W1zUmstv6v">https://forms.office.com/r/W1zUmstv6v</a> 
<b>Journal submissions for October 2024</b> (Due October 31 <sup>st</sup> at 11:59pm)	<a href="https://forms.office.com/r/EqmbziFbi3">https://forms.office.com/r/EqmbziFbi3</a> 
<b>Journal submissions for November 2024</b> (Due November 30 <sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm)	<a href="https://forms.office.com/r/uqc9fU1Zdc">https://forms.office.com/r/uqc9fU1Zdc</a> 

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

**Academic Integrity 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://ombud.msu.edu/resources-self-help/academic-integrity>

**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	Journal
20%	30%	50%

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 receive a failing grade for 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 % score

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	%

### 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 – What is the JCMU Experience?* Senpai time!

*Class 2 – Introduction to language study at JCMU.* This class will focus on what is needed to achieve maximum results from the JCMU Japanese language program.

*Class 3 – Setting goals* and thinking of how to achieve them. Review your plan for academic success.

*Class 5 – Guest lecture*

*Class 5 – Examining culture shock* - the stages of culture shock with strategies for overcoming it. Students will discuss any culture shock they've felt and what they can do to minimize culture shock's impact on their life at JCMU.

*Class 6 – Strive to THRIVE* - This class will have a guest speaker. The speaker will talk about their life in Japan and discuss with students how to not just survive, but to THRIVE in Japan.

*Class 7 – Half-Way There* - a review culture shock/acclulturation and will ask the students to reflect on their current situation. The class will also revisit their personal goals for their time at JCMU and faculty and staff will offer support in helping students reach any goals that they haven't been able accomplish. This is also a good time for students to re-evaluate their study habits.

*Class 8 – Current understanding vs. Initial expectations* - how initial expectations have changed in your time in Japan

*Class 9 – Looking backward and forward* - not only looking back at the experiences the students have had, but also looking forward to the remainder of the semester so students can plan out how they want to spend the rest of their time and balance that with upcoming presentations and other projects.

*Class 10 – What have we learned: About ourselves and Japan* - looking inward and discussing the ways the study abroad experience has changed the students

*Class 11 – Potential careers and working life in Japan*

*Class 12 – **CV workshop*** - how to make a great resume that can get you a Japan related job

*Class 13 – **Thinking about the future*** - focusing on how to talk about your study abroad experience both in terms of for future careers, but also with friends and family back home.

*Class 14 – **Reverse Culture shock*** – for those students returning to their home countries.