

### **Nature and People in Shiga and Japan**

Offered by The University of Shiga Prefecture  
2500 Hassaka-cho, Hikone, Shiga, Japan

**Fall Semester: Wednesday**

**13:10~16:20**

**Room Number: A7-102**

This course consists of two parts, both offered in English for JCMU students and USP students. JCMU students need to take both parts as one unit.

#### **Part 1**

#### **Views on Nature in the Japanese Literary Tradition**

Time: 13:10~14:40

Instructor: Kiyo SAKAMOTO (Office A1-111/Phone 0749-28-8607)

Office Hours: 14:50~16:20 on Tuesdays or by appointment

Email: sakamoto.ki@office.usp.ac.jp

#### **Course Description**

This part provides an overview of Japanese poetry and oral literature, from waka and haiku to modern poetry, and examines the meanings and uses of various motifs related to "nature" in each period and genre. Through small group discussions, students will also explore how the images and themes they perceive in the same poems and stories may differ among them based on their cultures, native languages, and literary traditions.

We will have a day trip to the Enryakuji Temple on Mount Hiei (founded in 788 and designated a World Heritage Site) to experience the landscape and religious background of Japanese literature.

#### **Objectives**

1. To understand the motifs of nature as expressed in Japanese literature, focusing on traditional short poems such as waka and haiku and oral traditions such as myths and legends.
2. To share interpretations of poems through small group discussions and translation activities.
3. To broaden one's perspectives on poetry and stories by studying with students from different cultural backgrounds and experiences.

#### **Evaluation for Part 1**

1. Weekly assignments (50%)  
Students will be required to read assigned texts and answer questions before class. There is no required textbook to be purchased. Reading materials will be provided by the instructor in class and via PDF downloads.
2. Final paper (20%)  
Students are required to write a paper on a topic related to the Japanese literary tradition, integrating course materials and personal insights.
3. Attendance and active participation in class (30%)  
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.

## Part 2

### Lecture Series: Nature and People in Shiga and Japan

Time: 14:50~16:20

Coordinator: Kiyo SAKAMOTO (Office A1-111/Phone 0749-28-8607) and  
Amanda MASHIMA (Office A1-114/Phone 0749-28-8617)

Office hours: 14:50~16:20 on Tuesdays (Sakamoto), 14:50~16:20 on Tuesdays (Mashima), or by appointment

Email: sakamoto.ki@office.usp.ac.jp / mashima.a@office.usp.ac.jp

#### Course Description

Each session of this part will feature a lecture in English by a USP faculty member, followed by small group discussion and Q&A with the faculty. The goal for students is to gain a deeper understanding of the lecture content by interacting, discussing, and presenting with classmates from a variety of native languages and cultural backgrounds.

We will take two field trips: (1) Maibara Hikiyama Festival (which began in the Edo period and is famous for festival floats and *kabuki* performed by local children); and (2) the Lake Biwa Museum with the instructor on the topic.

#### Objectives

1. To learn about the nature, history, and culture of Japan (and Shiga) from their respective expert faculty members and to deepen their understanding through small group discussions and Q&A.
2. To broaden one's perspective by learning with classmates from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

#### Evaluation for Part 2

1. Preparation for and reflection on class sessions and field trips (60%)  
Students are required to read assigned texts and complete pre-class questions. No textbook purchase is necessary; all reading materials will be provided by the instructor in class or as downloadable PDFs.
2. Group presentation (10%)  
Students are required to give a group presentation on a topic related to the nature, culture, or history of Shiga or Japan.
3. Active participation in class and field trips (30%)  
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.

### Course Requirements/ Assignments and Evaluations for Both Parts

#### Attendance Policy

Attendance is important not only for your own learning but also for maintaining group dynamics. Repeated tardiness may be counted as half an unexcused absence. Excessive unexcused absences may result in dismissal from the course.

#### Preparation and Participation

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. 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.

#### Academic Honesty and Classroom Etiquette

Plagiarism is a serious violation of academic integrity. It includes submitting work copied from

online sources or published materials without proper citation. Moreover, students must refrain from presenting others' work as their own, whether it's through direct copying or uncredited 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 Ombudsperson's webpage: <https://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/academic-integrity/plagiarism-policy.html>

### Grading Criteria and Grading Scale

The average of the two parts is used to calculate the total score.

### Grade Breakdown

Conversion Table between 4.0 Scale and Points

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

### Extra Assistance

If you need extra assistance with course materials or assignments, or have questions about your performance in the course, please feel free to contact us. You can make appointments outside of office hours by emailing us to arrange a time.

### Class Schedule

		Part 1 Views on Nature in the Japanese Literary Tradition	Part 2 Lecture Series: Nature and People in Shiga and Japan
Week	Date	Contents	
	9/24	< For JCMU students > Campus tour of the University of Shiga Prefecture	
1	10/1	Orientation Explanation of course content, participant self-introductions, and sharing of "My Favorite Natural Scenery"	Orientation Explanation of course content, participant self-introductions, and preparation for Field Trip 1
2	10/8	Nature in Japanese oral literature (1) The creation myth of Kojiki: Marriage of deities and the birth of the nation	Maibara Hikiyama Festival Professor Hideyuki ICHIKAWA (Department of Regional Studies)
Field Trip 1	10/11 Sat.		Field trip to the Hikiyama Festival in Maibara under the guidance of Prof. Ichikawa
3	10/15	Nature in Japanese oral literature (2) The creation myth of Kojiki: Violation of taboo and separation of deities	Lifestyle and culture of <i>satoyama</i> through folding screen paintings Professor Yohei UEDA (Regional Development Education Research Center)
4	10/22	Nature in classical Japanese poetry (1) Songs of Manyo-shu and Kokin-shu: Metaphor and personification of nature	Japanese culture in broadleaf evergreen forest culture hypothesis Professor Sachiko YOKOTA (Department of Regional Studies)
5	10/29	Nature in classical Japanese poetry (2) Refinement of poems in "yamato kotoba" (Japanese Language)	History of ancient Omi from an archaeological perspective Professor Woodae KIM (Department of Regional Studies)

6	11/5	Nature in classical Japanese poetry (3) The world of female poets	Allied prisoner of war camps in Shiga during World War II Professor Kaoru KAWA (Department of Intercultural Communications)
7	11/12	Influence of Buddhism and the view of nature Preparation for the field trip to Enryakuji Temple on Mt. Hiei	Analysis of female figures portrayed in pictures and handscrolls: from the point of view of gender studies Professor Wakana KAMEI (Department of Regional Studies)
Field Trip 2	11/15 Sat.	Field trip to Enryakuji Temple: Walking around Mt. Hiei, experiencing religion, history and nature *1	
8	11/19	The Birth of "haiku" The elegant and the vulgar: Basho's literary pursuits	Ecosystem around Lake Biwa Professor Shoko TANABE (Department of Ecosystem Studies)
9	11/26	Nature in Japanese oral literature (3) Comparison of marriage tales between humans and animals	Earthquake, active fault, and Lake Biwa Professor Michihiro OHORI (Department of Ecosystem Studies)
Field Trip 3	11/29 Sat.		Field trip to the Lake Biwa Museum under the guidance of Prof. Ohori
10	12/3	Modern Japanese Poetry and Nature: Waka and haiku after Meiji era	Group presentations (1)
11	12/10	Summary: Presentation based on your report	Group presentations (2)

\*1 In case of rain, the destination of Field Trip 2 will be National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka.