

# PIA4921: JAPANESE CULTURE

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## Effective Term

Semester A 2024/25

## Part I Course Overview

### Course Title

Japanese Culture

### Subject Code

PIA - Public and International Affairs

### Course Number

4921

### Academic Unit

Public and International Affairs (PIA)

### College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

### Course Duration

One Semester

### Credit Units

3

### Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

### Medium of Instruction

Other Languages

### Other Languages for Medium of Instruction

English / Japanese

### Medium of Assessment

Other Languages

### Other Languages for Medium of Assessment

English / Japanese

### Prerequisites

Nil

### Precursors

Nil

### Equivalent Courses

AIS4921 Japanese Culture

### Exclusive Courses

Nil

## Part II Course Details

### Abstract

This course provides a comprehensive overview of the key theoretical and empirical approaches to the study of Japanese culture. Students will explore influential theories of culture, and examine Japan through the intermediary of the nation-state, families, schools, businesses, as well as religion and folklore. Lectures integrate leading academic research from the social sciences, and they encourage students to deepen their understanding of Japan from a multidisciplinary perspective and through cross-cultural comparisons. Students will have the opportunity to further develop their research and critical thinking skills through a group project and a final research paper.

### Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if DEC-A1 DEC-A2 DEC-A3 app.)			
1	Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of various key concepts related to the study of Japanese culture and society, including from a comparative perspective.		x	x	
2	Use skills in engaging in discussion on topics related to Japanese culture.		x		
3	Apply skills in independent research, written and oral expression.		x		x
4	Discern issues of ideology behind the discussions on Japanese culture.		x	x	
5	Evaluate creative transformations of elements of Japanese culture and tradition.		x	x	x

#### A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

#### A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

#### A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

### Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs	Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lectures	Inform students about the key theoretical and empirical frameworks in the study of Japanese culture	1

2	Class Discussions	Encourage students to gain awareness of multiple viewpoints, and develop nuanced interpretations of leading scholarship	2	
3	Short Quizzes	Encourage students to pay attention to lectures and class discussions, and to complete the required readings	1	
4	Group Presentation	Encourages students to develop their research skills, and enhance their group presentation skills	2, 3, 4, 5	
5	Research Paper	Engages students in conducting independent research, and applying the studied material	3, 4, 5	

**Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)**

ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks (e.g. Parameter for GenAI use)	
1	Participation - To receive full credit, you are required to attend and contribute proactively to at least 9 sessions and the group presentations in Week 12.	1, 2	10	In cases where you anticipate several weeks of absence (e.g., due to illness, job interviews, or other recurrent scheduling conflicts), please inform the instructor beforehand so that alternative arrangements can be made.
2	Short Quizzes - You are required to complete 4 multiple-choice quizzes; each quiz is worth 5% of your final grade. These quizzes are meant to assess your understanding of the material discussed in lectures and addressed by the required readings.	1	20	

3	Group Presentation - You will deliver a 15-minute group presentation on a topic of your choice in Week 12. You are expected to form groups of 5-6, and confirm your topic with the instructor. There will be a workshop to ensure that your plan is in line with assessment requirements. Please refer to the assessment rubric for the finer details.	2, 3, 4, 5	30	
4	Research Paper - You will write a 3,000-word research paper on a topic of your choice. You should confirm your topic with the instructor. There will be a workshop to ensure that your plan is in line with assessment expectations. Please refer to the assessment rubric for the finer details.	3, 4, 5	40	

**Continuous Assessment (%)**

100

**Examination (%)**

0

**Assessment Rubrics (AR)****Assessment Task**

1. Participation

**Criterion**

Enthusiastic and positive learning attitude

**Excellent (A+, A, A-)**

Regular attendance; regular completion of the required readings; regular engagement in class discussions, and offering to express well-informed views

**Good (B+, B, B-)**

Regular attendance; somewhat regular completion of the required readings; somewhat regular engagement in class discussions, and offering to express well-informed views

**Fair (C+, C, C-)**

Irregular attendance; irregular completion of the required readings; occasional engagement in class discussions

**Marginal (D)**

Irregular attendance; very irregular completion of the required readings; limited engagement in class discussions

**Failure (F)**

Limited to no attendance; no evidence of completing the required readings; no engagement in class discussions

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**Assessment Task**

2. Short quizzes

**Criterion**

Concentration and logical thinking

**Excellent (A+, A, A-)**

Excellent grasp of lecture content and the required readings, ability to synthesize the main points of class discussions

**Good (B+, B, B-)**

Good understanding of lecture content and the required readings, with some occasional mistakes

**Fair (C+, C, C-)**

Basic understanding of lecture content and the required readings, with a number of lapses

**Marginal (D)**

Very limited understanding of lecture content and the required readings, with many lapses

**Failure (F)**

No knowledge of lecture content and the required readings

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**Assessment Task**

3. Group Presentation

**Criterion**

Responsible teamwork based on adequate research and argumentation

**Excellent (A+, A, A-)**

In-depth research related to the chosen topic, serious work on formulation of an argument, excellent presentation skills

**Good (B+, B, B-)**

Good evidence of research related to the chosen topic, efforts at working on the formulation of an argument, good presentation skills

**Fair (C+, C, C-)**

Fair research on the chosen topic, insufficient argumentation

**Marginal (D)**

Effort at conducting research and formulating an argument based on the chosen topic

**Failure (F)**

Lack of research and no effort in formulating an argument

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**Assessment Task**

## 4. Research Paper

**Criterion**

Sophisticated writing based on quality research and organization of the material

**Excellent (A+, A, A-)**

Critical assessment of secondary sources, good structure based on supporting an original argument, good style

**Good (B+, B, B-)**

Use of secondary sources, effort at formulating an argument and organizing the paper' s structure accordingly

**Fair (C+, C, C-)**

Partial reference to secondary sources, incoherent argument and problems with the organization of the material; careless submission (no proofreading, etc.)

**Marginal (D)**

Uncritical use of primary and secondary references; disorganized structure with an effort to propose a central argument

**Failure (F)**

Uncritical use of primary and secondary references; disorganized structure and lack of a central argument

**Part III Other Information****Keyword Syllabus**

Japanese History and Mythology, Japanese Sense of Nature, Traditional Arts (Ikebana, Tea ceremony, Performing Arts), Bushido Ethics, Nationalism and Ideology, Globalisation, Social Hierarchy, Group Formation, Concept of Dependence and Shame Culture, Literature and Film, Multiculturalism, Cultural Symbols.

**Reading List****Compulsory Readings**

Title	
1	Sugimoto, Yoshio, ed. 2009. <i>The Cambridge Companion to Modern Japanese Culture</i> . Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.

**Additional Readings**

Title	
1	Davies, Roger J., and Osamu Ikeno, eds. 2002. <i>The Japanese Mind. Understanding Contemporary Japanese Culture</i> . Tokyo: Tuttle Publishing.
2	Doi, Takeo. 1973 [1971]. <i>The Anatomy of Dependence</i> . Translated by John Bester. Tokyo: Kodansha International.
3	Kuki, Shuzo. 1997. <i>Reflections on Japanese Taste: The Structure of Iki</i> . Translated by John Clark. Sydney: Power Publications.
4	Nakane, Chie. 1972. <i>Japanese Society</i> . Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
5	Nitobe, Inazo. 2004. <i>Bushido: Samurai Ethics and the Soul of Japan</i> . Mineola, NY: Dover Publications.
6	Yamamoto, Tsunetomo. 2014. <i>Hagakure: The Secret Wisdom of the Samurai</i> . Translated by Alexander Bennett. Singapore: Tuttle Publishing.