

JPN493
PROJECT WORK
IN JAPANESE
Spring 2025



INSTRUCTOR

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PREREQUISITE

JPN 402 or JPN 405 or equivalent, or consent. Repeatable one time.

CREDITS AWARDED

3 credits

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to the qualitative research methodology of ethnography, which is used to examine people, communities, and cultures from an insider's viewpoint. By learning how to conduct ethnographic research, students will look closely into various elements of local cultures of the *Kansai* region, including family and parenting, education and schooling, youth and popular culture, dating and marriage, work and professionalism, and consumer culture and lifestyle. Students will select a topic and engage in a research project throughout the semester. While the main goal of this course is to promote cultural understanding of Japan, this course also aims to further develop students' Japanese language skills through research activities. In order to achieve these two goals, students are expected to use both English and Japanese when conducting ethnographic observations (E/J), carrying out interviews with local people (J), transcribing spoken data (J), collecting and analyzing media and artifacts (J), making oral presentations (E/J), and writing a research report (E). These activities will help students develop their research skills necessary to achieve a deeper and critical understanding of Japanese language, culture, and society while also enhancing their Japanese language skills.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. Gain cultural knowledge of Japan through research articles on Japanese culture and society.
2. Critically analyze information about Japanese culture and local communities of the Kansai region.
3. Conduct close observations of local communities and their practices
4. Conduct interviews with local people using Japanese in order to gain insight into their perspectives.
5. Summarize and present their research in a spoken and written format.
6. Comprehend and use a wide range of Japanese vocabulary and expressions in discussing Japan-related topics of current or historical importance to Japanese people.

In addition, the following Study Abroad Center Course Objectives also apply to this course:

7. Demonstrate awareness of own cultural values and biases and how these impact their ability to work with others.
8. Demonstrate knowledge of diversity with a focus on the population or topic of interest in the specific Study Abroad program.
9. Communicate appropriately and effectively with diverse individuals and groups.
10. Demonstrate an increased capacity to analyze issues with appreciation for disparate viewpoints.

COURSE GRADE

Reading Responses and Class Participation (SLO#1, 2, 7, 8).....	20%
Assignments (SLO#3, 4, 5, 6).....	50%
♦ Observation reports (20%)	
♦ Interview reports (20%)	
♦ Media/artifact analysis (10%)	
Final Project (SLO#1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9).....	30%
♦ Data collection	
♦ Analysis	
♦ Presentation	
♦ Paper	

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

A+ = 97.0% or above	B+ = 87.0 – 89.9%	C+ = 77.0 – 79.9%	D = 60 – 69.9%
A = 93.0 – 96.9%	B = 83.0 – 86.9 %	C = 73.0 – 76.9%	F = 59.9% and below
A- = 90.0 – 92.9%	B- = 80.0 – 82.9%	C- = 70.0 – 72.9%	

REQUIRED TEXTS/MATERIALS

The main textbook is “Ethnography Essentials: Designing, Conducting, and Presenting Your Research” by Julian Murchison. All other texts and materials will be made available on the course management site.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS

- Week 1: Introduction to ethnography
- Week 2: Basic ethnographic method
- Week 3: Family and parenting
- Week 4: Family and parenting
- Week 5: Education and schooling
- Week 6: Education and schooling
- Week 7: Youth and popular culture
- Week 8: Youth and popular culture
- Week 9: Dating and marriage
- Week 10: Dating and marriage
- Week 11: Work and professionalism

Week 12: Work and professionalism
 Week 13: Consumer culture and lifestyle
 Week 14: Consumer culture and lifestyle
 Week 15: Final project presentation

COURSE POLICY

f) Attendance

This course will be delivered in the in-person format. Students are required to be present and engage in discussions in each class meeting.

g) Reading and Reading Responses

Regular class attendance with readings in hand (either print outs or reliable e-versions on a laptop computer/tablet, not your smartphones) is mandatory. Students are expected to read assigned texts before class and post at least 3 comments/questions to "Perusall" by 10:00 pm before each class.

h) Informed Participation

Students are expected to contribute to the class discussion by asking questions, making comments, bringing additional information, etc. They are also expected to actively participate in and contribute to group activities.

i) Homework Assignments

Various assignments (e.g., analysis) are given to facilitate students' understanding of materials. Students are expected to complete and submit these assignments by specified due times/dates.

j) Final Paper and Presentation

Each student will be conducting an ethnographic project on a topic of his/her interest. Students will summarize their research in a written report and share the findings in an oral presentation. Details will be announced in class.

ASSIGNED READINGS (TENTATIVE)

Week 1 Introduction to Ethnography

- ♦ Ethnography Essentials Ch. 1-4

Week 2 Basic ethnographic method

- ♦ Ethnography Essentials Ch. 5-11
- ♦ Kaori Okano & Claire Maree (2018). Phase one of the longitudinal study of Kobe women's ethnographic interviews 1989–2019: Kanako 1989 and 2000.
- ♦ Ikuko Nakane (2018). Rapport and discourse transformation in ethnographic interviews.

Week 3-4 Family and parenting

- ♦ Mieko Hinokidani (2007). Housing, family and gender.
- ♦ Takashi Yamashita (2023). Limited family diversity in Japan: A legacy of traditional familism.
- ♦ Diana Adis Tahhan (2019). Connections, conflicts, and experiences of intimacy in Japanese-Australian families

- ♦ Laura Dales, Romit Dasgupta, & Tomoko Aoyama (2015). Accommodating Japan's ageing sexual minorities: the 'family of friends' concept in LGBTI seniors' residential care
- ♦ Laura Dales, Romit Dasgupta, & Tomoko Aoyama (2015). The family in twenty-first-century Japan: between nation and transnation.

Week 5-6 Education and schooling

- ♦ Amy Borovoy (2008). Japan's hidden youths: Mainstreaming the emotionally distressed in Japan.
- ♦ Nicolas Tajan (2021). Hikikomori subjects' narratives.
- ♦ Toshitsugu Otake (2023). Promoting diversity and inclusion in higher education: The case of Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University.
- ♦ Ana Sofia Hofmeyr (2022). Japanese university student responses to intercultural scenarios: Contact strategies and perceptions of otherness.

Week 7-8 Youth and pop culture

- ♦ Mary C. Brinton & Lawrence Kim (2010). The lost generation.
- ♦ Mary C. Brinton & Lawrence Kim (2010). Narratives of the new mobility.
- ♦ Vinai Norasakkunkit, Yukiko Uchida, & Tuukka Toivonen (2012). Caught between culture, society, and globalization: Youth marginalization in post-industrial Japan.
- ♦ Tuukka Toivonen (2013). Getting young adults back to work: A post-industrial dilemma in Japan.
- ♦ Daniel White (2022). Soft power: An affective history of the politically possible.
- ♦ Daniel White (2022). Kawaii diplomacy: Ambassadors of cute and the gendering of anxiety.
- ♦ Shintaro Kono & Gordon J. Walker (2020). Theorizing ikigai or life worth living among Japanese university students: A mixed-methods approach.

Week 9-10 Dating and marriage

- ♦ Allison Alexy (2019). What can be said? Communicating intimacy in millennial Japan.
- ♦ Living within the dilemma of choice: Singles.
- ♦ Shana Fruehan Sandberg (2019). Resisting intervention, (en)trusting my partner: Unmarried women's narratives about contraceptive use in Tokyo.
- ♦ Laura Dales & Beverly Anne Yamamoto (2019). Romantic and sexual intimacy before and beyond marriage.

Week 11-12 Work and professionalism

- ♦ Emma Cook (2019). Power, intimacy, and irregular employment in Japan.
- ♦ Lailani L. Alcantara & Yoshiki Shinohara (2023). Diversity and inclusion orientation in Japanese companies Does industry make a difference?
- ♦ Thi Huong Tang & Lailani L. Alcantara (2023). Conforming while being distinct The impact of social identity on perceived inclusion and business opportunity identification of Vietnamese entrepreneurs in Japan.

Week 13-14 Consumer culture and lifestyle

- ♦ Gavin H. Whitelaw (2018). Konbini-Nation: The rise of the convenience store in post-industrial Japan.

- ♦ Hendrik Meyer-Ohle (2018). Post-bubble Japanese department stores: The need to search for new paradigms.
- ♦ Stephanie Assmann (2018). Consumption of fast fashion in Japan: Local brands and global environment.
- ♦ Katarzyna J. Cwiertka (2018). Serving the nation: The myth of washoku.

Week 15 Final project presentations

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC FOR THE FINAL PROJECT

	4 Excellent	3 Satisfactory	2 Acceptable	1 Unsatisfactory
Reference to the existing research (SLO#1)	More than five references are cited	More than three references are cited	1-2 references are cited	No reference is cited
Quality of analysis (SLO#2, 3, 4)	Accurate and convincing analysis	Analysis is mostly accurate but some parts are not convincing	There are some inaccurate parts in analysis	Major issues with accuracy
Quality of presentation/writing (SLO#5)	Very effective and clear	Somewhat effective and moderately clear	Minor changes are required	Major changes are required
Knowledge of Japanese culture/concepts (SLO#6)	Clear evidence of mastery	Sufficient mention/use of concepts	Only marginal mention/use of concepts	No mention/use of concepts
Quality of arguments/discussion (SLO#7, 8, 9, 10)	Abundant display of awareness toward diverse, disparate viewpoints and issues involved	Some display of awareness toward diverse, disparate viewpoints and issues involved	Insufficient display of awareness toward diverse, disparate viewpoints and issues involved	No display of awareness toward diverse, disparate viewpoints and issues involved