

JPN 15s: Assisted Adventures in Japanese Culture

Spring 2015

U.C. Davis Quarter Abroad @ Kyoto Seika University

Instructor: Joseph T. Sorensen (jsorensen@ucdavis.edu)

Class Meetings: Thu 13:00-14:30

Classroom: Seifukan 清風館 C-101

Office Hours: Thu 14:30-15:00 and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is a general introduction to Japanese cultural life, particularly the riches that can be found in and around the Kyoto area. The goals of this course are twofold: 1) to encourage students, through readings and reports, to better understand aspects of contemporary and historical Japan, and 2) to help students earn credit for life experiences they gain outside the classroom while they are participating in the Kyoto Quarter Abroad Program. The course will be conducted in English, but students should use as much Japanese as possible in all assignments.

CLASS STRUCTURE:

Class meetings are once a week. During class, I will dispense information and advice about our planned field trips, and suggest itineraries for you to explore Kyoto and the surrounding regions on your own. We will cover some of the basics about the history of Japan in general, and Kyoto in particular, and I will provide preparatory background information for our planned field trips. Some class sessions will be comprised of short, optional guided field trips with the instructor. In the past, I have used John Dougill's *Kyoto: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 2006) as a required text and given quizzes based on the chapters. It is still a good book to read ahead of time, but **it is no longer required**. I encourage you to focus instead on a guidebook such as *Lonely Planet Kyoto* that was provided as part of this program, and read the few pages on culture and history.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING CRITERIA:

1) <i>Attendance and Participation</i>	20%
2) <i>Exploration Reports</i>	60%
3) <i>Term Paper</i>	20%
Total	<hr/> 100%

1) *Attendance and Participation*: 100% attendance in class once a week, as well as on all required field trips, is expected. Being mentally prepared to talk about your experiences will contribute to your participation grade, and make the class interesting for everyone.

2) *Exploration Reports*: In addition to the planned field trips, you will be required to visit five "cultural sites" on your own and write up short reports, about a page in either English or in Japanese, about your experiences. Going with friends in the program, or even better,

conversation partners or other Japanese friends, will enrich your experience. Use these visits to try out your Japanese language skills. All reports must describe your interactions with Japanese, either friends who accompany you or people you meet along the way.

[*Exploration Reports*, continued]

You may use the following questions to guide your write-up: What did you learn from your interactions with Japanese people (students or otherwise)? How did you use your Japanese? Did you learn any new Japanese or anything new about Japanese culture? Did you eat anything you haven't eaten before? How did you decide on your destination for the day? Last, but not least, what did you learn about your destination? To answer this last question, you need to know where you went!

For your five reports, at least one of your destinations must be a Buddhist temple, at least one must be a Shinto shrine, and at least one must be a museum (the Kyoto National Museum is great, but you may choose to go to one of the several museums dedicated to textiles, woodblock prints, sake, handicrafts, dolls, manga, etc.). One of your visits **must** be to the nearby historical city of Nara (Tôdaiji, Kôfukuji, Kasuga Shrine, the Nara National Museum, etc.). **I will provide instructions for this trip, so please wait until I've given you a route to follow.** If you get an early start, your single trip to Nara can fulfill **all** of the above requirements, and you will be free to go anywhere you choose for your other four reports. We will go over further recommendations, based on students' experiences, in class, including day trips outside the Kyoto urban area.

Grades for these **one-page** reports (250-word minimum, 1000-word maximum) will be based on your interesting choice of destination, your thoughtful observations about your experience, your meaningful interaction with Japanese people, your effective use of Japanese in your adventure, and the quality of your writing, whether it is Japanese or English.

DUE DATES (tentative): April 9, April 16, April 23, [no assignments before or after Golden Week], May 14, May 28. Submit your report in your dropbox at our course website (JPN 15s, **not** QA 2015). PLEASE CONVERT YOUR PAPERS INTO PDF DOCUMENTS BEFORE UPLOADING. Dates subject to change with consultation.

3) *Term Paper*: Your term paper will be a 2-3 page report (500-word minimum, 1000-word maximum) on what you learned over your ten weeks in Japan. Include things you did for this class, how your language class went (how much your Japanese improved), the highlights of your adventures, and anything else that helped you better understand Japan. This paper is due at our final class session (June 4th). This paper must be in English.

*One final note: It may seem like a bother now, but you will be seeing and experiencing many things, and having even the broadest sense of historical context will make what you

experience more meaningful. Museums, temples and shrines, and other historical sites will usually mention historical periods, and if you commit this short list to memory, you will remember what happened and when much more easily.

Asuka 飛鳥 (593-710)

Heian 平安 (794-1185)

Muromachi 室町 (Ashikaga 足利, 1333-1573)

Edo 江戸 (or Tokugawa 徳川, 1603-1867)

Taishō 大正 (1912-1926)

Heisei 平成 (1989-)

Nara 奈良 (710-794)

Kamakura 鎌倉 (1185-1333)

Azuchi-Momoyama 安土桃山 (1573-1603)

Meiji 明治 (1868-1912)

Shōwa 昭和 (1926-1989)