

Think Globally, Act Locally: An Introduction to Cross-Cultural Studies

Last Updated: Thu, 07/31/2025

Course prefix: ML

Course number: 2500

Section: OL1

CRN (you may add up to five):

90099

Instructor First Name: Satomi

Instructor Last Name: Suzuki Chenoweth

Semester: Fall

Academic year: 2025

Course description:

Think Globally, Act Locally: An Introduction to Cross-Cultural Studies - Travel Japanese and World Cultural Heritage Sites in Japan for Engineers and Architects aims to develop an appreciation of Japanese history, art, culture, philosophy, and language through World Cultural Heritage (UNESCO) in Japan, and offers basic Japanese language skills essential for travelers. By exploring Eastern history, art, technology, sustainability, and global peace, students will gain valuable insights and develop balanced, diverse perspectives that encourage creativity and innovation in engineering and science, while fostering intercultural sensitivity to address global challenges. The course is designed to be enrolled for complete beginners in Japanese. If you have previously studied Japanese or lived in a Japanese-speaking environment, you are not allowed to take this course. Please consult with the instructor if you are not sure about your eligibility to take this course.

Course learning outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course student will be able to:

1. Develop the ability to critically reflect on one's own cultural identity while recognizing, and valuing the cultural differences of others. Students will build intercultural competence through comparative analysis of global traditions, using the lens of Japanese World Cultural Heritage sites recognized by UNESCO.
2. Understand how historical events and geopolitical contexts shape cultural heritage and global perspectives.
3. Analyze cultural artifacts and heritage sites through historical, aesthetic and Eastern philosophical frameworks.

4. Gain knowledge of traditional Japanese techniques in architecture, engineering, and craftsmanship, with attention to the historical, cultural and functional significance.
5. Cultivate an understanding of traditional Japanese sustainability practices and learn how these alternative methods can inspire innovative, well-balanced approaches to problem-solving in contemporary professional contexts.
6. Examine how global challenges such as climate change, urbanization, and tourism affect heritage sites, and explore how professional skills can support their sustainable protection for future generations.
7. Engage in meaningful academic dialogue with peers and instructors, drawing insights from course readings, films, guest lectures, and project-based learning to deepen their understanding and critical thinking.
8. Develop practical communication skills for traveling, including basic Japanese linguistic proficiency, cultural etiquette, and the ability to navigate Japan's geography and transportation systems.

Required course materials:

John Dougill (2019). Japan's World Heritage Sites: Unique Culture, Unique Nature, Tuttle Publishing.

Grading policy:

Evaluation Criteria

- Participation: 12%
- Online Quizzes on Lesson Content (4): 20%
- Movie reflections (4): 20%
- Guest speaker reflections (2): 12%
- Act-out! assignments (4): 12%
- Collaborative and/or Individual video projects (2): 24%

Description of Graded Components

Participation: (12%)

Attendance is required. Your participation in class activities and discussions is important for your learning. You are expected to ask questions during class, engage in group work, and do your homework.

You are required to:

1. Prepare the class contents before you come to class
2. Attend every class meeting and actively participate in all class activities
3. Review the materials you learned in each class meeting and engage in additional learning activities outside classroom
4. Complete all required assignments and submit them on time

Student performance will be rated on a 10-point scale based on the degrees of your active and collaborative participation and preparedness.

- **Active:** It is not enough to simply follow the instructor's direction and do classroom activities. You must regularly volunteer to share your ideas and thoughts when the instructor asks for questions.
- **Collaborative participation:** You must show cordial and cooperative attitude to maximize our limited time and maintain friendly relationship.
- **Preparedness:** You have read the materials in advance and for the language learning, you must practice new sentence structures and vocabulary before coming to class.
- **Additional considerations:** Punctuality, active participation, and attentiveness during class, all of which can significantly impact your grade.

Online Quizzes on Lesson Content: (20%)

Your understanding of the cultural heritage sites covered in class through lectures, readings, assignments, and other materials will be assessed via an online quiz. The quiz will evaluate your grasp of the historical and cultural significance of the sites discussed, including general facts about their heritage.

Movie and Guest Speaker Reflections: (32%)

No late homework will be accepted. To develop a solid reflective writing, you are highly encouraged to take notes during classes and do your own research.

Act-out Assignments: (12%)

You will be paired to perform a brief dialogue in Japanese with your classmates and the instructor. In order to receive full credits, you are required to internalize the material, demonstrating through fluent and accurate language use without reliance on written prompts during the performance. To prepare, students are expected to review relevant grammar, vocabulary, and dialogue materials introduced in the lessons. You are not allowed to "read" or "look at" the written dialogue during the performance. If you do, your grade will be substantially lowered.

Video Projects: (24%)

You will create an engaging video presentations on a cultural heritage. The goal is to create an informative and unique video that showcases the chosen property's cultural and historical significance and how it connects to the present and the future creations.

Attendance policy:

Attendance and/or Participation

You are required to attend **ALL CLASSES** during the semester. In case of unforeseen circumstances, including an emergency situation, you are allowed to miss classes up to two classes during the semester without questions.

No makeup work for missed classes will be allowed. If you will be absent because of participation in Institute approved activities such as athletic events or a long-term illness, you must submit written proof of your participation before the day of your absence. If you will be absent because of other legitimate reasons (e.g., jury duty), submit a document which can verify the circumstances as soon as possible. In any event, you must contact the instructor.

Although an online course offers greater flexibility, please remember that your timely participation and online engagement is key to your success in this course, as well as that of your classmates.

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. For information on Georgia Tech's Academic Honor Code, please visit

<http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/policies/honor-code/> or

<http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/18/>. Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing on an assignment, project or exam will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Humanities area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help students master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I interpret the human experience through creative, linguistic, and philosophical works?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will effectively analyze and interpret the meaning, cultural significance, and ethical implications of literary/philosophical texts or of works in the visual/performing arts.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Ethical Reasoning
- Information Literacy
- Intercultural Competence