Intercultural Seminar

Course prefix: JAPN

Course number: 4500/6500

Section: A

CRN (you may add up to five):
30270 30271

Instructor First Name: Kyoko

Instructor Last Name: Masuda

Semester: Spring

Academic year: 2026

Course description:

In the world of increasing globalization in business, economics, politics, international relations, education, media, etc., it is imperative for our graduates to be equipped with linguistic and cultural knowledge to function as a global citizen who can distinguish themselves by demonstrating intercultural communication competence across languages and culture. In order to reach that goal, this course provides students with opportunities to critically examine and analyze challenges that cultural collisions may produce through discussion, debate, team-based brainstorming, etc. The concept of UN's **Sustainable Development Goals**, *or* defined as goals that balances the need for growth against the need to protect the quality of life in natural, social and cultural environments, serves as a critical lens in fostering students' cultural sensitivity, which is the core of global citizenship: "Am I sensitive enough to recognize intercultural communication issues? Does my solution to the problem have enough room for development and yet is sustainable?" Concurrent with class activities, students will also individually engage in his/her/their own research/project to complete and present to the class at the end of the course. This course is designed to reintegrate students who have fulfilled the minimum IP (international Plan) requirement of a 26-week overseas experience with those practicing the discipline at Georgia Tech. This course is **required** for IP students as well as ALIS/GEML/IAML majors.

Course learning outcomes:

At the completion of the course, students will:

1. understand **major concepts and theories on culture**, which are useful in interpreting cultural variances at a profound level rather than at a mere behavioral level

2. recognize and understand **advanced aspects of Japanese culture and patterns of behavior**, which are intertwined deeply with its history, society, and religion (philosophy)
3. **relate** their understanding of Japanese culture through discussion of their own living and work/study experience (as designed under International Plan) as well as other guest speakers' similar experiences
4. **interpret and analyze** actual cases emerging from the collision of Japanese culture with others by using general concepts and theories
5. **apply** a cultural lens of *Sustainable Development* to come up with culture-specific problem solving (tentative) through simulation and games
6. **operate** professionally with persons of different cultures and in multicultural work environments
7. **apply** theoretical and applied knowledge that they learned in this class to their own research projects

Required course materials:

All required course materials—including class announcements, the syllabus, schedule, video files, and homework links—are available on **Canvas**.

Grading policy:

Course Requirements & Grading (for JPN 6500, the same weight has been applied), Class Participation Lecture and discussion, Analyses of case studies and discussion, Film and discussion 20%, **Homework** 20%, **2 Essays (7+8)** 15%, **2 Exams (10 in-person +5 take-home)** 15%, **3 Presentations (5+5+5)** 15%, **Final Research Project* including presentation** 15%, Make-up exams or quizzes will **not** be given unless you can provide written documentation of a legitimate emergency. If you must miss an exam due to a school-authorized, pre-approved obligation, you must notify the instructor at least one week in advance and provide the name, title, email address, and phone number of a contact person who can verify the situation. With timely notification, you will be allowed to reschedule. **Final Research Projec** The use of AI tools is *not* permitted for this assignment. If you feel you may need to use AI at any stage of your writing process, you must consult the instructor in advance.

Attendance policy:

I expect you to attend this course regularly. There is much that happens during class time that adds to your educational experience beyond what you can learn from just reading and writing in solitude! I also expect you to come to class fully prepared, having completed all assigned readings, and to participate actively in class activities.
If you have to miss a class for any reason, please e-mail me beforehand.
If you miss more than two class meetings, your course grade will be lowered by 0.5-1% for each class you miss from the 3rd absence on.

We will not do a formal class attendance check as we have a relatively small size class group, and it will be obvious if one does not show up for the class.

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.

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

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* such as 1)Ethical Reasoning, 2) Information Literacy, 3) Intercultural Competence.