Introduction to Japanese Society Through Language and Culture

Course prefix: ML

Course number: 2500

Section: B

CRN
35919

Instructor first name: Joy

Instructor last name: Maa

Semester: Spring

Academic year: 2026

Course description:

This course provides an overview of Japanese society, its key cultural values, socialization processes, and the role of language in expressing and maintaining social structure and cultural identity. Students will examine how people learn cultural norms, how schools and communities reinforce shared values, and how these forces influence behavior, identity, and decision-making. Through case studies, media examples, and hands-on analysis, the course connects big-picture cultural principles to real-world issues in contemporary Japan—from workplace dynamics and group communication to education, technology, and changing social expectations. The course consists of three major components: (a) learning core cultural concepts, (b) understanding how they operate in Japanese society, and (c) analyzing and explaining current social phenomena and concerns. By the end of the course, students will be able to interpret Japanese social phenomena through a cultural lens and compare them to practices in other societies, gaining tools for cross-cultural understanding useful in global engineering, business, and everyday interaction. This course is taught in English and can be used to fulfill the Humanities requirement or towards the Japanese minor.

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, including the use of GenAI unless otherwise specified, will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

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 master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

- This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:
    - How do cultural values, socialization processes, and language shape a society and cultural identity?
- Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:
    - Students will effectively analyze key cultural values and concepts as they operate and manifest in social practices and specific texts.
- Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:
    - Intercultural Competence
    - Critical Thinking