

**HURON UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**  
**DEPARTMENT OF FRENCH AND ASIAN STUDIES**  
**Japanese Program**  
**Japanese 1650F: Perspectives on Japan (8391)**  
**Fall 2018**

**Class Time:** Monday 12:30-2:30, Wednesday 12:30-1:30

**Place:** HC-V207

**Instructor:** Christopher White

**Office/Phone:** A18, Huron University College

**E-mail:** cwhite53@uwo.ca

**Office Hours:** F: 2:30-3:30, or by appointment.

**Course Description:**

A multi-disciplinary overview of Japan, including territory, people, language, religion, economy, popular culture, science and technology, among others

**Course Objectives:**

After successful completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate

- knowledge and understanding of the main parameters of Japan Studies and East Asian Studies;
- their ability and skills in discussing and analyzing topics related to Japan;
- critical reading and thinking skills on the subject matter;
- their ability to use modern research methods;
- their ability to evaluate the relevance and importance of different ideas.

**Class Methods:**

The course presupposes no knowledge of Japanese civilization. Students investigate – and formulate questions – on Japan and East Asia within today’s globalized world, identify their own cultural bias toward less familiar subjects, and critically evaluate diverse perspectives. Students are expected to prepare for each class by doing short (preliminary) research.

**Course Readings:** Required readings are available on OWL and will be posted each week.

**Evaluation:**

There are 3 short papers (1-2 pages each) (10x3=30) and two short essay proposals (10), the final paper (40=40), and class performance (20%).

**Short Papers:**

The due dates are absolute unless an extension is granted. The short papers are generally revised and resubmitted.



**The Appendix to Course Outlines is posted on the OWL course site.**

**(Tentative) Lecture and Discussion Topics:**

Fall Term 2018

**Week 1 (Sept 10/12) Course Introduction**

Elements of Japan Studies/East Asian Studies  
Importance of the critical evaluation of perspectives  
Researching topics

**Week 2 (Sept 17/19) Topics on Japan Studies**

Elements of Japan Studies/East Asian Studies  
Importance of the critical evaluation of perspectives  
Research methodology

**Week 3 (Sept 24/26) Conceptualizing Japan**

Concepts of Country, Nation, History and State  
Conceptions of “Facts of Life” in Japan

Proposal 1 (Due on Sept 26<sup>th</sup> (th)): On what you will investigate on Japan.

**Week 4 (Oct 1/Oct 3) On Pre-Modern History: Topics on Japan (Issue 1)**

Images of Pre-Modern Japanese History

**Week 5 (Oct 15/17) On Modern History: Topics on Japan (Issue 1)**

Images of Modern Japanese History

**Week 6 (Oct 22/24) On Japanese Religion, Language, and Societal Etiquette (Issue 2)**

Examining the role of religion and social etiquette  
in Japanese society  
How have images of Japan been shaped by religion and  
Social etiquette

Proposal 2 (Due Oct 24<sup>th</sup> (th)): Your Thesis Proposal and Annotated References

**Week 7 (Oct 29/Oct 31) On Japan in World War II (Issue 3)**

Examining the Japanese experience in World War II  
How have images of Japan been shaped by its role in  
WWII. How has it worked towards changing these  
images in the postwar period

**Week 8 (Nov 5/7) On Japanese Politics (Issue 4)**

Examining the Japanese political system, elections, and bureaucracy  
Discussing Right-wing and Left-wing politics in Japan and the images  
That it projects globally

**Week 9 (Nov 12/14) On Japanese Business Culture and the Economy (Issue 5)**

Examining Japanese business culture, the ‘bubble economy’,

The 'lost decades', and images of economic success and failure  
Why are these images projected and what are the realities?

3 Papers (Due anytime after instruction is given) Opinion Pieces

**Week 10 (Nov 19/21) On Japan's Relationship with Everything Nuclear (Issue 6)**

Examining the effects of the atomic bombs used on Japan  
Discussing the benefits and dangers of nuclear energy  
And Japan's uneasy relationship with it

**Week 11 (Nov 26/28) On Japanese Society: School System and Education (Issue 7)**

Discussing the merits and pitfalls of the Japanese education system.  
Examining the social and psychological effects that the Japanese  
Education system has on its youth

Final Paper (Due Nov 28<sup>th</sup> (th)):

**Week 12 (Dec 5/7) On Japanese Society: Anime and Pop Culture (Issue 8)**

How contemporary Japanese pop culture production has  
constructed a new image for Japan since the end of World War II  
How the world consumes Japanese pop culture and forms its own  
Images of Japan  
Wrap-Up