

HURON UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
Japanese Program: French and Asian Studies
FALL 2021

JPN2601A-550 (2026)
Cultural Foundation of Modern Japan:
An Introduction to Japanese Civilization

Instructor: Christopher White
Time: **Monday 08:30-11:30**
Place: **HC - H112**
Office: A20
Email: Cwhite53@uwo.ca
Office Hours: M: 11:30-12:30, or by appointment

Course Description:

A survey of the historical, artistic, philosophical, and religious factors that shape modern Japan. Taught in English.

Extra Information: 3 hours, 0.5 course.

Course Learning Objectives:

- To acquire a basic knowledge of Japanese history, cultural heritage, and other “cultural” elements of the modern Japan.
- To develop a critical (and comparative) view toward a “foreign” culture.
- To exercise modern research methods
- To formulate questions and discover the answers

Class Methods:

Introduction to Japanese civilization from historical, geo-political, and cultural perspectives. The course presupposes no knowledge of Japanese civilization. The course begins by listing the characteristics of modern Japanese culture. We will examine how these characteristics have evolved. The course will be conducted through lectures and classroom discussion based upon the reading materials, students’ individual (mini) research, and/or video and other materials. Students are expected to prepare for each class by doing short (preliminary) research.

Required Course Texts:

Varley, Paul. 1973/2000. *Japanese Culture Fourth Edition*. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press.

Other required reading materials will be posted in OWL.

Any supplementary reading on Japanese culture and history may be helpful.

Methods of Evaluation/Assessment:

- Four short (approx. 5-6 pages plus references) papers; they each constitute 20% of the final grade.

- The first short paper can be revised and resubmitted for re-evaluation.
- Participation will be 20% of the final grade.
- Due dates are absolute and late work will not be accepted without a prior approval.
- Plagiarism detection software may be used in this course. Assignments are electronically submitted.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

As a default case, a student will receive an F automatically, if the student misses more than 1/3 of the total class hours (without proper excuses). For those who have technical issues with Zoom, discuss the situation with the instructor. Given the exceptional situation of the 2020–2021 academic year, students should consult the instructor if unexpected difficulties arise due to the online format. Any rules regarding the online-course format will be outlined at the first two class meetings.

Policy on attendance:

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.

Special examination:

A special examination is any examination other than the regularly scheduled examination. Special exams will be allowed only on receipt of medical documentation verifying a serious illness that kept the student from writing the exam as originally scheduled. Such documentation is strictly confidential and kept in the student's file. In the case of missing a final exam for documented medical reasons, a special exam will be set within thirty days.

Special exams will not be granted for occasions such as employment interviews, weddings, bar mitzvahs, family reunions, vacations, misreading the exam timetable, or oversleeping. Neither will special exams be granted in order to facilitate transportation arrangements, such as booking flights for home for Christmas or summer vacations. It is the policy of Huron [University] College to discourage informal arrangements by faculty which circumvent this regulation"

Program and Academic Counselling:

Japanese students registered at Huron who require advice about modules and courses in JPN should contact:

Michiya Kawai, Coordinator for Japanese Program, the Department of French and Asian Studies, mkawai@huron.uwo.ca, A214, 519-438-7224 ext. 330.

Students should contact Academic Counselling on other academic matters. See the Academic Counselling website for information on services offered.

Tentative Schedule of Classes can be found below after FASS Appendix

Appendix to Course Outlines: Academic Policies & Regulations 2021 - 2022

Prerequisite and Antirequisite Information

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all course prerequisites and that they have not completed any course antirequisites. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Pandemic Contingency

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, all remaining course content will be delivered entirely online, typically using a combination of synchronous instruction (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) and asynchronous material (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online at the discretion of the course instructor. In the unlikely event that changes to the grading scheme are necessary, these changes will be clearly communicated as soon as possible.

Student Code of Conduct

Membership in the community of Huron University College and Western University implies acceptance by every student of the principle of respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study, work and live within it. Upon registration, students assume the responsibilities that such registration entails. While in the physical or online classroom, students are expected to behave in a manner that supports the learning environment of others. Please review the Student Code of Conduct at:

<https://huronatwestern.ca/sites/default/files/Res%20Life/Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20-%20Revised%20September%202019.pdf>.

Attendance Regulations for Examinations

A student is entitled to be examined in courses in which registration is maintained, subject to the following limitations:

- 1) A student may be debarred from writing the final examination for failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year.
- 2) Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of registration.

Review the policy on Attendance Regulations for Examinations here:
https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/attendance.pdf.

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website:
https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.
The appeals process is also outlined in this policy as well as more generally at the following website: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/appealsundergrad.pdf.

Turnitin.com

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

It is not appropriate to use electronic devices (such as, but not limited to, laptops, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.

Statement on Use of Personal Response Systems (“Clickers”)

Personal Response Systems (“clickers”) may be used in some classes. If clickers are to be used in a class, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the device is activated and functional. Students must see their instructor if they have any concerns about whether the clicker is malfunctioning. Students must use only their own clicker. If clicker records are used to compute a portion of the course grade:

- the use of somebody else’s clicker in class constitutes a scholastic offence
- the possession of a clicker belonging to another student will be interpreted as an attempt to commit a scholastic offence.

Academic Consideration for Missed Work

Students who are seeking academic consideration for missed work during the semester may submit a self-reported absence form online provided that the absence is **48 hours or less** and the other conditions specified in the Senate policy at

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf are met.

Students whose absences are expected to last **longer than 48 hours**, or where the other conditions detailed in the policy are not met (e.g., work is worth more than 30% of the final grade, the student has already used 2 self-reported absences, the absence is during the final exam period), may receive academic consideration by submitting a Student Medical Certificate (for illness) or other appropriate documentation (for compassionate grounds). The Student Medical Certificate is available online at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

All students pursuing academic consideration, regardless of type, must contact their instructors no less than 24 hours following the end of the period of absence to clarify how they will be expected to fulfill the

academic responsibilities missed during their absence. **Students are reminded that they should consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying submission of work, and are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances.**

Students who have conditions for which academic accommodation is appropriate, such as disabilities or ongoing or chronic health conditions, should work with Accessible Education Services to determine appropriate forms of accommodation. Further details concerning policies and procedures may be found at: <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>.

Policy on Academic Consideration for a Medical/ Non-Medical Absence

(a) Consideration on Medical Grounds for assignments worth *less than 10%* of final grade: Consult Instructor Directly and Contact Academic Advising

When seeking consideration on **medical grounds** for assignments worth *less than 10%* of the final course grade, and if the student has exceeded the maximum number of permissible Self-Reported absences, the student should contact the instructor directly. The student need only share broad outlines of the medical situation. The instructor **may** require the student to submit documentation to the academic advisors, in which case she or he will advise the student and inform the academic advisors to expect documentation. If documentation is requested, the student will need to complete and submit the [Student Medical Certificate](#). The instructor may **not** collect medical documentation. The advisors will contact the instructor when the medical documentation is received, and will outline the severity and duration of the medical challenge as expressed on the Student Medical Certificate and in any other supporting documentation. The student will be informed that the instructor has been notified of the presence of medical documentation, and will be instructed to work as quickly as possible with the instructor on an agreement for accommodation.

(b) Consideration on Non-Medical Grounds: Consult Huron Support Services/Academic Advising, or email huronsss@uwo.ca.

Students seeking academic consideration for a **non-medical** absence (e.g. varsity sports, religious, compassionate, or bereavement) will be required to provide appropriate documentation where the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence have not been met, including where the student has exceeded the maximum number of permissible Self-Reported. All consideration requests must include a completed [Consideration Request Form](#). Late penalties may apply at the discretion of the instructor.

Please review the full policy on Academic Consideration for medical and non-medical absence at: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf. Consult [Huron Academic Advising](#) at huronsss@uwo.ca for any further questions or information.

Support Services

For advice on course selections, degree requirements, and for assistance with requests for medical accommodation, students should email an Academic Advisor in Huron's Student Support Services at huronsss@uwo.ca. An outline of the range of services offered is found on the Huron website at: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/>.

Department Chairs, Program Directors and Coordinators are also able to answer questions about individual programs. Contact information can be found on the Huron website at:

<https://huronatwestern.ca/contact/faculty-staff-directory/>.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your workload is not manageable, you should consult your Academic Advisor. If you are considering reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines. Please refer to the Advising website, <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/academic-advising/> or review the list of official Sessional Dates on the Academic Calendar, available here: <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/SessionalDates.cfm>.

You should consult with the course instructor and the Academic Advisor who can help you consider alternatives to dropping one or more courses. Note that dropping a course may affect OSAP and/or Scholarship/Bursary eligibility.

Huron Student Support Services: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/>

Office of the Registrar: <https://registrar.uwo.ca/>

Student Quick Reference Guide: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/#1>

Academic Support & Engagement: <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>

Huron University College Student Council: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/beyond-classroom/hucsc/>

Western USC: <http://westernusc.ca/your-services/#studentservices>

Mental Health & Wellness Support at Huron and Western

University students may encounter setbacks from time to time that can impact academic performance. Huron offers a variety of services that are here to support your success and wellbeing. Please visit <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life-campus/student-services/wellness-safety> for more information or contact staff directly:

Wellness Services: huronwellness@huron.uwo.ca

Community Safety Office: safety@huron.uwo.ca

Chaplaincy: gthorne@huron.uwo.ca

Additional supports for Health and Wellness may be found and accessed at Western through, <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>.

JPN2601A Fall 2021 Tentative Schedule

I Introduction

September

- 13 Defining the questions. What is Japanese civilization/culture?
List and analyze characteristics of Japanese culture.
What are the repeatedly used expressions describing Japan, Japanese people, and their culture?
- 20 Methodological Considerations
What is Japanese civilization/culture?
Research methodology (Dr. Rachel Melis)
PV: 1–13

II Historical Overview

- 27 Early Japan: Chapter One: *Origin, Roots* among others (Craig (C)): pp. 1–12).
What was going on in the rest of the world?
Early Japan Neolithic to the *Yamato* Period (Chs 1 & 2). PV: 14–47
What are the characteristics of each period?

October

- 1 (Fri) *First short paper due:*
On characteristics (or stereotypes) of Japanese culture.
This topic is too general, so you have to narrow down your topic.
- 4 Early Japan to Yamato Period/Nara Period (Chs 3 & 4). PV: 48–89
What was happening in the rest of the world during this time?
What still survives today from these periods?
- 18 Heian Period and Kamakura Period. (Chs 4 & 5) PV: 48–89
What was happening in the rest of the world during this time?
What still survives today from these periods?
- 25 Middle Age: *Kamakura, and Muromachi* (Chs 5 & 6). PV: 91–163
Feudalism, Zen, Noh
What was happening in the rest of the world during this time?
What still survives today from these periods?
- 29 (Fri) *Second short paper due:*
Discuss cultural characteristics during the Nara–Kamakura period.
This question is too general; you need to pick one (narrower) topic of your choice.

November

<<Fall Study Break: November 1-7: No Class>>

8 Late Traditional Japan: Edo (Chs. 7 & 8). PV: 164–234

European Colonialism, Modernization, Cash Economy *Summarize the characteristics of this period.*

What was the implication of the “isolation” policy? Myths and Reality.

What was happening in the rest of the world during this time?

How does the textbook description differ from the class lecture, and why?

15 Emergence of Modern Japan and Wars (Chs. 9 & 10). PV: 235–303

What was happening in the rest of the world during this time?

Summarize the characteristics of each period covered in this segment.

What is the implication of modernization/westernization of Japan?

What are the implications of WWII?

What are the issues with the standard accounts of this period of the history?

19 (Fri) *Third short paper due:*

Discuss cultural characteristics during the Muromachi–Meiji period.

This question is too general; you need to pick one (narrower) topic of your choice.

22 Post-WWII /Contemporary Japan (Chs. 11) PV: 304–351

Describe the characteristics of the US Occupation policy

Describe the role of Cold War

III Elements of Japanese Culture

29 Post-WWII /Contemporary Japan (TBA)

Popular Culture

Japan and the World

Japonism/ Japonisme (Arts) (PPT)

Consider the cultural exports from Japan

December

6 Wrap-Up: Japan today

Japan today (TBA)

Find any relevant information on those topics

6 (Mon) *Fourth short paper due:*

Discuss cultural characteristics of contemporary Japan.