

**Japanese Conversation and Culture 213**  
**Fall 2007**

**Instructor:** Harumi Baxer, Scott Hall, Phone: (732)932-1665, email: hbaxer@rui.rutgers.edu  
Scott Hall Room 232

**Office Hours:** 1:30 – 2:30 p.m. Tuesday, 2:00- 2:30p.m. Thursday

**Course Objectives**

- To develop a basic understanding of Japan, its language and culture through readings, Video viewing, discussion, lectures and other course work
- To become aware of and critically examine cultural, historical, and linguistic differences between Japan and the United States (and other cultures) through the topics covered in the course. Our aim is to find similarities in apparent differences and differences in apparent similarities
- Students are encouraged to express their ideas in Japanese relevant to the topic selected for the semester.
- To develop further interest in aspects of Japanese life and culture

**Course Activities**

- Lecture, Discussion, Active Video Viewing, Student Reports, and Student Presentations will make up the course format.
- Class discussion will be in both English and Japanese. Students will practice conversation of formulaic expressions whenever applicable.
- Students are required to participate in various class activities which will include brainstorming, pair and group discussion, and question-answer interactions.

**Requirements and Expectations**

- Students are expected to attend all classes to do all assigned course work and to participate in all small/large group activities and discussions. All work must be submitted on time.

**Description of Evaluation**

1. Attendance (i.e., your physical presence) at each class session
2. Participation in Class Activities: The quality of your participation will be evaluated according to the following criteria: preparedness (on assigned readings), eagerness, thoughtfulness, willingness to cooperate and level of involvement, etc.
3. Presentation: You choose the various topics and conduct independent research  
Above 1 to 3 -- 30%
4. Writing Assignment 20%, Mid term (Oral Presentation) 20%, Final Presentation 30%

Tentative Schedule:

**Week 1** (9/4 T, 9/6 Th)    **Week 2** (9/11 T, 9/13 Th)

“Home Stay Simulation Program”

- Make own profile with introductory letter to the host family
- Students will discuss possible issues that they may face in Japan due to the cultural differences.
- Students will make an imaginary trip to a city in Japan, giving her/himself one week.
- We will also discuss the significance of Matsuri ( Summer/ Fall Festival in Japanese religion and Culture.

**Week3** (9/18T, 9/20 Th)    **Week 4** (9/25 T, 9/27 Th)

Japanese Concept : 美意識 (Aesthetics) ・ 侘 ・ 寂 ・ 無常 ・ もののあわれ  
自然観 (Concept of nature)

**Week 5** (10/2T, 10/4 Th)    **Week 6** (10/9 T, 10/11 Th)

**Japanese folk tale and one contemporary short story**

Students engage in reading different stories and will be asked questions on the story.

**Week 7** (10/16 T, 10/18 Th) Oral presentation (submit topic by Oct.3)

**Week 8** (10/23 T, 10/25 Th)    **Week9** (10/30 T, 11/1 Th)

Japanese Social Concept : たて社会 ・ 先輩 ・ 後輩

• Individualism and Group Concepts

- To explore and discuss similarities & differences among various cultures

**Week 10** (11/6 T, 11/8 Th)    **Week 11** (11/13 T, 11/15 Th)

Current topics:

Neet / Freeterers / Parasite singles/ Okatku/ 集団自殺(group suicide)

- You choose a topic and conduct independent research
  - a) description of the topic you are interested in,
  - b) why you are interested in the topic

**Week 12** (11/20 T,)    **Week13** (11/27 T, 11/29 Th)

Conversation Management / Practice

- Text chat/ Exchange e-mails / Telephone conversations
- Introduction to あいづちを打つ(brief responses in conversation)
- To explore and discuss similarities & differences among various cultures

**Week 14** (12/4 T, 12/6 Th)    12/11 T :

俳句 と 短歌

- Students learn how Kigo (seasonal words)used in haiku relate to Japanese perspective of nature

**12/17 (8:00 – 11:00 a.m.)** Final Exam: Oral presentation

