

# PIA2073: UNDERSTANDING CULTURE IN JAPAN AND CHINA THROUGH FILM

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## Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

## Part I Course Overview

### Course Title

Understanding Culture in Japan and China through Film

### Subject Code

PIA - Public and International Affairs

### Course Number

2073

### Academic Unit

Public and International Affairs (PIA)

### College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

### Course Duration

One Semester

### Credit Units

3

### Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

### Medium of Instruction

English

### Medium of Assessment

English

### Prerequisites

Nil

### Precursors

Nil

### Equivalent Courses

AIS2073 Understanding Culture in Japan and China through Film

### Exclusive Courses

Nil

## Part II Course Details

### Abstract

This course introduces students to culture in Japan and China from a comparative perspective through the medium of film. Five themes will be explored from historical and sociological angles: education, the youth, family and relationships, gender inequality, and urbanisation.

The course moreover encourages students to develop an interdisciplinary understanding of culture. Through selected films and themes, students will gain crucial tools and skills to better understand the dynamics between culture and society, and adopt an interdisciplinary approach in the examination of the two countries.

### Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

| CILOs |  | Weighting (if app.) | DEC-A1 | DEC-A2 | DEC-A3 |
|-------|--|---------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1     | Demonstrate an awareness of key social and cultural features of Japan and China.                 |                     | x      | x      |        |
| 2     | Identify and analyse prospective challenges and social issues in Japan and China.                |                     | x      | x      |        |
| 3     | Compare and contrast key concepts, ideas and norms within Japanese and Chinese culture.          |                     |        | x      | x      |
| 4     | Develop an interdisciplinary approach to examine the socio-cultural features of Japan and China. |                     |        | x      | x      |

#### A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

#### A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

#### A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

### Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

| LTAs |          | Brief Description  | CILO No.   | Hours/week (if applicable) |
|------|----------|--|------------|----------------------------|
| 1    | Lectures | Students will be introduced to key concepts and contexts for each of the five themes.  | 1, 2, 3, 4 |                            |
| 2    | Seminars | Students will apply what they have learnt in the lectures to the analysis of cultural matters and social issues relating to each of the five themes. | 1, 2, 3, 4 |                            |

|   |  |   |            |  |
|---|--|---|------------|--|
| 3 | Film Screening and Semi-Structured Discussions | Every other week, students will select and view a notable film related to each of the core themes. After the screening session, students will participate in semi-structured discussions. | 1, 2, 3, 4 |  |
|---|--|---|------------|--|

### Additional Information for LTAs

#### Themes 1 and 2: Education and the Youth

- Yìgè Dōu Bùnénɡ Shǎo (Not One Less 1999) – dir. Yimou Zhang, 106 mins.
- Kimi No Na Wa (Your Name 2016) – dir. Makoto Shinkai, 107 mins.
- Shàonián Dě Nǐ (Better Days 2019) – dir. Derek Tsang, 135 mins.

#### Theme 3: Family and Relationships

- Lost in Translation (2003) – dir. Sofia Coppola, 102 mins.
- The Farewell (2019) – dir. Lulu Wang, 100 mins.

#### Theme 4: Gender Inequality

- Wòhǔ Cánɡlónɡ (Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon 2000) – dir. Ang Lee, 120 mins.
- Gojira Mainasu Wan (Godzilla Minus One 2023) – dir. Takashi Yamazaki, 125 mins.

#### Theme 5: Urbanisation

- Tonari No Totoro (My Neighbor Totoro 1988) – dir. Hayao Miyazaki, 86 mins.
- Guītú Lièchē (Last Train Home 2009) – dir. Lixin Fan, 85 mins.

### Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

|   | ATs                 | CILO No.   | Weighting (%) | Remarks ("- for nil entry)  | Allow Use of GenAI? |
|---|---------------------|------------|---------------|---|---------------------|
| 1 | Class Participation | 1, 2, 3, 4 | 10            | Students will be assessed on their attendance and level of proactive participation during lectures, seminars, and semi-structured discussions.<br><br>Class participation is considered to be a formative assessment task. Thus, the use of GenAI tools is permitted. | Yes                 |

|   |                    |            |    |  |     |
|---|--------------------|------------|----|--|-----|
| 2 | Discussion Posts   | 1, 2, 3, 4 | 10 | <p>Students will write two short discussion posts based on the films studied in this course.</p> <p>Discussion posts are considered to be formative assessment tasks. Thus, the use of GenAI tools is permitted.</p>   | Yes |
| 3 | Quizzes            | 1, 2, 3, 4 | 30 | <p>Students will complete three quizzes. These quizzes will be based on lectures, the required readings, and the films studied in this course.</p> <p>Quizzes are considered to be formative assessment tasks. Thus, the use of GenAI tools is permitted.</p>            | Yes |
| 4 | Group Presentation | 1, 2, 3, 4 | 20 | <p>Students will deliver a 15-minute presentation on culture in Japan or China as depicted by one of the films studied in this course.</p> <p>The group presentation is considered to be a summative assessment task. Thus, the use of GenAI tools is not permitted.</p> | No  |

|   |             |            |    |  |    |
|---|-------------|------------|----|--|----|
| 5 | Group Video | 1, 2, 3, 4 | 30 | <p>Students will produce a 5-minute video on a key social issue in Japan or China, and critically reflect on the social issue with reference to at least one film studied in this course.</p> <p>The group video is considered to be a summative assessment task. Thus, the use of GenAI tools is not permitted.</p> | No |
|---|-------------|------------|----|--|----|

**Continuous Assessment (%)**

100

**Examination (%)**

0

**Assessment Rubrics (AR)****Assessment Task**

1. Class Participation

**Criterion**

Students will be assessed on their attendance and level of proactive participation during lectures, seminars, and semi-structured discussions.

**Excellent (A+, A, A-)**

Participate very proactively in class activities at all times.

**Good (B+, B, B-)**

Participate proactively in class activities from time to time.

**Fair (C+, C, C-)**

Satisfactory participation in class activities.

**Marginal (D)**

Barely satisfactory participation in class activities.

**Failure (F)**

Limited to no participation in class activities.

**Assessment Task**

2. Discussion Posts

**Criterion**

Students will write two short discussion posts based on the films studied in this course.

**Excellent (A+, A, A-)**

High-quality discussion posts that reflect an excellent understanding of the subject matter.

**Good (B+, B, B-)**

Good-quality discussion posts that reflect a sound understanding of the subject matter.

**Fair (C+, C, C-)**

Satisfactory discussion posts that reflect a patchy understanding of the subject matter.

**Marginal (D)**

Poorly conceived discussion posts that reflect a very limited understanding of the subject matter.

**Failure (F)**

No discussion posts submitted.

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**Assessment Task**

3. Quizzes

**Criterion**

Students will complete three quizzes. These quizzes will be based on lectures, the required readings, and the films studied in this course.

**Excellent (A+, A, A-)**

Critical capacity to analyse and synthesize; superior grasp of the subject matter; evidence of extensive knowledge base.

**Good (B+, B, B-)**

Evidence of some understanding of the subject matter; some evidence of critical capacity and analytical ability; reasonable understanding of issues; evidence of familiarity with literature/ films.

**Fair (C+, C, C-)**

Satisfactory understanding of the subject matter; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material.

**Marginal (D)**

Basic familiarity with the subject matter to enable the student to progress without repeating the course.

**Failure (F)**

Little to no evidence of familiarity with the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytical skills; limited, or irrelevant use of the literature/films.

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**Assessment Task**

4. Group Presentation

**Criterion**

Students will deliver a 15-minute presentation on culture in Japan or China as depicted by one of the films studied in this course.

**Excellent (A+, A, A-)**

Strong evidence of original thinking; good organisation and capacity to analyse.

**Good (B+, B, B-)**

Evidence of a good understanding of the subject matter; some evidence of critical capacity and analytical ability.

**Fair (C+, C, C-)**

Evidence of a patchy understanding of the subject matter.

**Marginal (D)**

Limited understanding of the subject matter.

**Failure (F)**

No understanding of the subject matter.

**Assessment Task**

5. Group Video

**Criterion**

Students will produce a 5-minute video on a key social issue in Japan or China, and critically reflect on the social issue with reference to at least one film studied in this course.

**Excellent (A+, A, A-)**

Strong evidence of original thinking; ability to compare and contrast Japanese and Chinese cultures; strong organisation and analytical skills; good collaboration between team members.

**Good (B+, B, B-)**

Evidence of original thinking; ability to compare and contrast Japanese and Chinese cultures; good organisation and analytical skills; good collaboration between team members.

**Fair (C+, C, C-)**

Satisfactory ability to compare and contrast Japanese and Chinese cultures; satisfactory organization and analytical skills; shown evidence in collaboration between team members.

**Marginal (D)**

Limited evidence of familiarity with the subject matter; barely satisfactory organisation and analytical skills; limited effort shown in collaborating with team members.

**Failure (F)**

Little to no evidence of familiarity with the subject matter; weak in organisation and analytical skills; little effort on collaboration between team members.

## Part III Other Information

**Keyword Syllabus**

Japanese culture, Chinese culture, youth, inequality, urbanisation, education, family and relationships, cultural representation in film, cultural studies, gender studies, film genre

**Reading List**

**Compulsory Readings**

| Title |  |
|-------|--|
| 1     | Befu, H. (2001). <i>Hegemony of Homogeneity: An Anthropological Analysis of Nihonjinron</i> . Melbourne, Australia: Trans-Pacific Press. |
| 2     | Bordwell, D. (1988). <i>Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema</i> . Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.                                   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 3 | Confucius: The Analects (D. C. Lau, Trans.). (1979). London: England: Penguin classics.   |
| 4 | De Vos, A. (1998). A Japanese Legacy of Confucian Thought, In W. Slote & A. De Vos (Eds.), Confucianism and the Family. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.   |
| 5 | DeVos, A. (1998). Confucian Family Socialization: The Religion, Morality, and Aesthetics of Propriety. In W. Slote & A. De Vos (Eds.), Confucianism and the Family. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press. |
| 6 | Suzanne, H. V. (2012). Japanese Society under Stress. Asian Survey, 52(4), 687-713.   |
| 7 | Freiberg, F. (2010). The Cinema of Naruse Mikio: Women and Japanese Modernity. Asian Studies Review, 34(3), 384-385.  |

### Additional Readings

| Title |   |
|-------|---|
| 1     | Anderson, J. & Richie, D. (1982). The Japanese Film: Art and Industry (Expanded ed.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.  |
| 2     | Braudy, L. & Cohen, M. (2009). Film theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings (7th ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.                                       |
| 3     | Desser, D. (Ed.) (1997). Ozu' s Tokyo Story. Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press.   |
| 4     | Ebrey, P. B. (2010). The Cambridge Illustrated History of China (2nd ed.). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.  |
| 5     | Mitsuyo, W. M. (2009). Contemporary Japanese Cinema in Transition. Canadian Journal of Film Studies, 18(1), 2-5.  |
| 6     | Kato, T. A., Shinfuku, N., Sartorius, N., & Kanba, S. (2011). Are Japan's hikikomori and Depression in Young People Spreading Abroad? The Lancet, 378(9796), 1070-1070. |
| 7     | Borovoy, A. (2008). Japan's Hidden Youths: Mainstreaming the Emotionally Distressed in Japan. Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry, 32(4), 552-76.                          |