

PIA2914: INTRODUCTION TO JAPANESE SOCIETY

Effective Term

Semester B 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Introduction to Japanese Society

Subject Code

PIA - Public and International Affairs

Course Number

2914

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

Other Languages

Other Languages for Medium of Instruction

English/Japanese

Medium of Assessment

Other Languages

Other Languages for Medium of Assessment

English/Japanese

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

AIS2914 Introduction to Japanese Society

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details**Abstract**

This course is designed to provide a general introduction to Japanese society. The primary focus is modern Japan and its historical heritage. Aspects of Japanese society, culture, economics and politics will be examined in both traditional and modern contexts. Students are expected to be able to understand and critically analyse key issues in postwar Japanese society, as well as some of the main approaches to studying them.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Identify the historical periods of Japan and describe important events in those periods.	20	x	x	
2	Analyze aspects of Japanese society that are related culture, economics, and politics.	20	x	x	
3	Compare and contrast some aspects of the Japanese and non-Japanese cultures.	20	x	x	x
4	Critically discuss important social phenomena in contemporary Japanese society.	40		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	Lecture	Different aspects of the society will be covered in lecture. The structure of the Japanese society will be explained with the help of daily life examples. Important periods in the history of Japan will be highlighted; The interrelationship between Japanese and non-Japanese cultures will be discussed; Social phenomena in contemporary Japanese society will be critically analyzed.	1, 2, 3, 4	1.5
2	Tutorial	Moving images on various aspects of modern Japanese society will be shown and students are required to discuss them in group and make conclusion after watching. Teacher will help facilitating the discussion and give feedback.	2, 4	0.75
3	Tutorial	Presentation (depending on the class size, it may be individual or as a group) on an assigned topic will help students to explore further and deepen their understanding on particular topic. They will be trained to analyze the contemporary society critically and be able to compare and contrast it with other societies.	2, 4	0.75

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

ATs		CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("-" for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Participation	1, 2, 3, 4	10	Students will be assessed on their contributions to class discussions	Yes

2	Group presentation	1, 2, 3, 4	20	Students will deliver a presentation drawing on key individuals, events and concepts covered in the course.	No
3	Group video project	1, 2, 3, 4	30	Students will have to produce a video on key aspects of Japanese society. They will be assessed on their familiarity of the subject matter. Their critical and analytical thinking will also be assessed.	Yes
4	Weekly in-class quizzes	1, 2, 3	10	Students will be assessed on their knowledge of key concepts, individuals and events from the course.	No
5	Final quiz	1, 2, 3, 4	30	Students will be assessed on how well they understand the topic and whether they have the ability to explain some social phenomena in contemporary Japanese society.	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

1.Participation

Criterion

Students will be assessed on their contributions to class discussions

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent contributions to class discussions

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good contributions to class discussions

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Fair contributions to class discussions

Marginal (D)

Marginal contributions to class discussions

Failure (F)

No contributions to class discussions

Assessment Task

2. Group presentation

Criterion

Students will deliver a presentation drawing on key individuals, events and concepts from the course.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Speak clearly and confidently, maintain regular eye-contact with the audience and display excellent knowledge of materials.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Speak reasonably well, maintain insufficient eye-contact with audience and display good knowledge of materials.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Speak poorly, maintain no eye-contact with audience and display fair knowledge of materials.

Marginal (D)

Speak incoherently, maintain no eye-contact with audience and display marginal knowledge of materials.

Failure (F)

Not participating in presentation.

Assessment Task

3. Group video project

Criterion

Students will produce a short video. They will be assessed on their familiarity of the subject matter. Their critical and analytical thinking will also be assessed.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Strong evidence of critical thinking; good organization and capacity to analyse; superior grasp of Japanese culture and society; very good collaboration between team members.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Evidence of grasp of the subject matter; some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of Japanese culture and society; good collaboration between team members.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Shown understanding of the subject matter; evidence of collaboration between team members shown.

Marginal (D)

Sufficient familiarity with the subject matter; shown effort on collaboration between team members.

Failure (F)

Little evidence of familiarity with the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytical skills; little effort on collaboration between team members.

Assessment Task

4. Weekly in-class quizzes

Criterion

Students will undertake short, in-class quizzes on weekly topics

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Display excellent knowledge of weekly topics

Good (B+, B, B-)

Display good knowledge of weekly topics

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Display fair knowledge of weekly topics

Marginal (D)

Display marginal knowledge of weekly topics

Failure (F)

Display poor knowledge of weekly topics

Assessment Task

5. Final quiz

Criterion

Students will have to complete short-answer questions and an essay during the 2-hour quiz. They will be assessed on how well they understand the topic and whether they have the ability to explain some social phenomena in contemporary Japanese society.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Strong evidence of originality and critical thinking; good organization and capacity to analyse; superior grasp of Japanese culture and society.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Evidence of grasp of the subject matter; some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of Japanese culture and society.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Shown understanding of the subject matter.

Marginal (D)

Sufficient familiarity with the subject matter.

Failure (F)

Little evidence of familiarity with the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytical skills.

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

The influence of Chinese culture on Japan; geography, ancient history and contemporary history; philosophy, religion, social customs, performing arts and architecture; government, diplomacy; development of modern economy; corporations, trade and industry; family and education, role of women, traditional marriage, changing concepts of marriage and family; environment and transportation; everyday life.

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Hendry, J. (2013). Understanding Japanese Society. New York: Routledge.
2	Sugimoto, Y. (2014). An Introduction to Japanese Society. New York: Cambridge University Press.
3	Izuhara, M. (2000). Family Change and Hosing in Post-war Japanese Society: the experiences of older women. Aldershot: Ashgate.
4	Wasawo, A. (1996). Modern Japanese Society, 1868-1994. New York: Oxford University Press,
5	Beauchamp, E. R. (1998). Japanese society since 1945. New York: Garland.

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Kristina, I. W. and Roman, R. eds. (2015) Visions of Precarity in Japanese Popular Culture and Literature. New York: Routledge.
2	Kumagai, F. (1996) Unmasking Japan Today: the Impact of Traditional Values on Modern Japanese society. Conn: Praeger.
3	Broadbent, J. and Brockman, V. (2010) East Asian Social Movements: Power, Protest, and Change in a Dynamic Region. New York: Springer.
4	Davies, R and Ikeno, O. (2002) The Japanese Mind: Understanding Contemporary Japanese Culture. Boston: Tuttle Pub.
5	Ebrey, P. and Walthall, A. (2014) East Asia: a Cultural, Social, and Political History. Boston: Wadsworth.