

Community Engagement

Middlebury School in Japan

Course Objectives:

To become someone who moves easily and effectively in the culture and society you're studying, by means of the language and cultural awareness. This will evolve as you use the language in developing friendships and lasting associations with people who live in that culture. For this to happen, you will need to develop a capacity to express yourself in a culturally coherent manner, and to understand the intentions of people who live there, as they express them.

Each of you will identify a group that consists of people who meet regularly for a specific purpose and become a member of that group by spending at least a total of 24 hours with them (6 hr/week, 4 weeks) at their office (common meeting space). In doing so, you will go through the process of becoming an in-group member, hopefully a member that contributes to the purpose and goal of that group in a meaningful way.

When you meet with a community organization, please be sure to explain the context for and duration of your participation. Strive to find a mutually beneficial arrangement—one where you can accomplish your goals while also identifying opportunities to contribute positively to the organization. Please be mindful of showing respect and appreciation in these interactions as you not only represent yourself, but also the school, as we strive to expand opportunities for these off-campus connections.

Participants in this course meet once a week as a group to reflect on the development of cultural proficiency in a contextualized and structured way to help you develop and integrate skills and knowledge of the Japanese language and culture.

As a result of participating in this course, you will:

- Gain hands-on experiences of adapting to a new and different social environment that may be greatly different from yours.
- Develop a deeper understanding of some of the communication strategies that are linguistically inherent in the Japanese language, such as in/out group, distal/casual speech styles, and choice of honorific expressions.
- Improve your ability to communicate effectively with people who are unfamiliar with your linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Grading:

Successful completion of Practicum	40%
Observation Report (5)	30%
Final Project	15%
Presentation	15%

Total	100%

We expect you to attend all scheduled sessions. You will lose 5% of your total grade for each absence starting at the 3rd absence.

A (93-100) A-(90-92.9) B+(87-89.9) B (83-86.9) B- (80-82.9)
C+(77-79.9) C (73-76.9) C- (70-72.9) D+(67-69.9) D (60-66.9) F(0-59.9)

Final Project

Consult with your practicum provider and identify one thing you can do for the benefit of the organization. Deliver the service/product by the last day of the final exams.

- * Include a 100 word description (in English) of your practicum.
- * Fill out a form and 1) describe your project, 2) explain how it benefited the organization, and 3) self-evaluate the outcome.

You may write a research paper (1.5 space, 5 pages) on a topic relevant to your practicum in place of a final project.