

Exploration of Contemporary Japan

Middlebury School in Japan

Course Objectives:

This course is designed to push you beyond the walls of the classroom. Let's explore Japan and examine how Japan works, and discover aspects of Japan that are not explained in your textbooks. This course uses a wide variety of activities (e.g., text analysis, field trips, interviewing, presentations, discussions, composition in Japanese, etc.) that are contextualized and structured to help you further develop and integrate skills and knowledge of the Japanese language and culture.

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

- Develop your ability to critically review scholarly publication and acquire skills to formulate research questions that can then be empirically tested.
- Gain deeper appreciation of the reality of contemporary Japan by having had direct exposure to and interactions with the society and the people.
- Improve your ability to develop coherent arguments on given topics by providing relevant supporting evidence and to write Japanese research papers using paragraph length-discourse.
- Improve your ability to write in Japanese on a wide variety of issues beyond daily activities and matters of personal interest.

Grading Criteria

Cultural Analysis Papers (5)*	50%
Quiz / HW	20%
Participation/Attendance	20%
Presentations (2)	10%

Total 100%

- You will have 6 assignments, and one worst score will be dropped.

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)

Papers will be evaluated on the following criteria:

	Language	Content
10 pts.	Excellent, with very few errors.	The writer analyzes the evidence in support of the argument. Interpretation is insightful and persuasive and displays extraordinary depth of thought. May pose original ideas.
9 pts.	Incorporates recently learned materials, goes well beyond the bare minimum. Errors are more nuanced.	The writer analyzes the evidence in support of the argument. Interpretation goes well beyond what has already been discussed in the sources.
8 pts.	Meets all the requirements. Errors are limited to predictable ones at the level.	Meets all the requirements; the discussion is focused and the flow of argument is coherent. Observations are exactly to the point.
7 pts.	Numerous, careless errors, eg. using hiragana for basic vocabulary, error on conjugation, length too short.	The writer fails to analyze the evidence in support of the argument. Interpretation is not fully persuasive or insightful.
6 pts.	Incomplete / Unacceptable	The analysis does not go beyond personal opinion that is not supported by the evidence or the source.