



Broad College of Business

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Department of Marketing

MKT 393: Business and Culture in Japan Study Abroad Program

Spring 2025 Syllabus

Instructor

Instructor: Stacy Clause
Office hours: I am happy to meet with you as needed. As I am based in Japan, there is a 12 -13-hour time difference, early mornings or evenings in Michigan are best. Email me with a few times and we can arrange to meet on ZOOM.
E-mail: clausest@msu.edu

Instructor Introduction:

Stacy has assisted the Business and Culture in Japan Program for two years. She has been an instructor in Education at a private university in Takasaki, Japan for over 20 years.

Course Information

Course Description and Overview:

This course is a key component of the Business in Japan study abroad experience. It forms the basis of your understanding and learning in Japan, providing you with the background knowledge and context to derive the most benefit from your visit to Japan.

This course is designed to provide you with a general understanding of global business topics, the cross-cultural study of business decisions, markets and institutions. It covers functional aspects of business operations that any organization tackles internationally and in locus. We will cover such topics as globalization, urbanization, and demographics with special attention to how these trends are impacting the Japanese business environment.

The course is a hybrid of in-class lectures, zoom and in-country site visits. The class materials and activities are designed for students to gain an understanding of how Japanese culture (and business culture) reflect the tensions of tradition and modernity, as well as what this experience can teach us about our own cultural practices and beliefs.

Course Materials:

1. Course Readings on Japan:
 - a. NYT articles available through student NYT accounts, select chapters (course packet)
Case study TBA
 - b. *Precarious Japan* by Anne Allison ISBN: 0822355620

2. CHOOSE ONE BOOK for the Book Review:

Borderless Economies: Chinese Sea Turtles, Indian Fridges and the New Fruits of Global Capitalism by Robert Guest ISBN-13: 978-0230342019

The Sushi Economy: Globalization and the Making of a Modern Delicacy by Sasha Issenberg
ISBN-13: 978-1592403639

The Travels of a T-Shirt in the Global Economy by Pietra Rivoli (2nd edition)
ISBN-13: 978- 1118950142

3. Films (available for rent online 3-4 dollars each)
 - *Jiro Dreams of Sushi (2011)* David Gelb.
 - *Salaryman (2021)* Allegra Pacheco.

Course Objectives:

This course will allow students to gain an understanding of business practices in Japan, including implications of culture on supply chains, strategy, marketing and other aspects of the business environment. After successfully completing this course, students will be able to:

- Articulate the unique opportunities and challenges of entering and operating a business in Japan.
- Understand the relationship between Japan's island geography, its homogeneous population, and its unique culture.
- Discuss the overall business environment in Japan today, including such areas as trade, demographics, and workplace attitudes.
- Appreciate the tensions between maintaining traditional cultural viewpoints and both global and internal pressures to adapt to a changing world.

Course objectives will be met through active and engaged participation, throughout the program, as well as the thoughtful completion of all course readings, assignments, and projects. This program includes no quizzes or examinations, but requires careful reflection of readings, lectures, and professional visits in the completion of course requirements.

Students will meet the course objectives through the following actions:

- Attending all class sessions and activities in East Lansing, online and in Tokyo.
- Completing all assigned readings/viewings prior to class, and all assignments by the due date.
- Participate in classroom discussions and actively engage with all professional visits in Japan.

Course Outline/Schedule

The table below describes the weekly activities including date, topic, readings, activities, and due date. The first column describes the week. The second column describes the topic. The third column describes the readings. The fourth column describes any assignments that are due. **All readings must be completed prior to class.**

Please note that site visits/readings are subject to change based on the availability of our partners in Japan.

Date	Topic	Reading discussion/Activities	Assignments Due
February 5 th (W) 6:30-9:00pm In person	Introduction and program information, assignment of site visit presentations Understanding culture	Personal Cultural Toolkit readings Study Abroad Orientation (online)	
February 12 th (W) 6:30-8:30pm ZOOM	Globalization and Japan		
February 26 th (W) 6:30-8:30pm In person	Economic growth in Japan: Post war to today	<i>Precarious Japan</i>	Personal Cultural Profile paper
February 19 th (W) 6:30-8:30 ZOOM	Cultural perspectives on the Japanese business environment today	NYT Readings/Course pack	Student presentations of site visits
Feb. 28 (F)	Depart for Japan!	Arrive March 1 (Sat)	
March 2 (Sun)	Cultural Visit: Kamakura		
March 3 (M)	Business Visits		
March 4 (T)	Business Visits		
March 5 (W)	Morning Business Visit		
March 6 (Th)	Business Visits		
March 7 (F)	Business Visits		
March 8 (Sa)	Cultural Visit to Zojoji Temple Tokyo Tower Afternoon: Depart for U.S. (Arrive same day)		Cultural observations of business in Japan portfolio (draft)
March 10 (M) OR March 18 (Tu) OR March 19 (W)	Business College Debriefing (online)	Choose ONE online session to participate in	

Date	Topic	Reading discussion/Activities	Assignments Due
March 12 (W)	Final online meeting	Presentations of cultural business observations	Due by 5:00pm: Corporate Site Visit Summary Book report

Grading Policy

Important note on grades: **You must complete the Office of Education Abroad online orientation prior to start of first class meeting.** Failure to do so will result in an automatic half-point reduction in the final grade (i.e., 4.0 to 3.5).

Unless otherwise discussed in class, all assignments are to be typed, double-spaced, with font no larger than 12-pt, and 1-inch margins. *No late work will be accepted.*

Grade Dissemination:

Pre-departure assignments will be returned at the class meeting following the due date. In Japan, I will do my best to grade and return all assignments within 24-48 hours of the due date. Final assignments will be evaluated and grades, for these assignments and final grades, emailed to each student by March 25. Students may contact me to discuss grades on any assignment at any point during the program.

Graded Course Activities:

The table below describes the graded course activities including points and activity description. The first column includes the points or possible, and the second column includes a description for each activity.
AI statement TBA (MSU)

Percentage of Final Grade	Total Points Possible	Description
One half letter grade		Office of Education Abroad online orientation completed before class
10	20	Personal Cultural Profile. Complete all <i>Cultural Analysis Toolkit</i> self-assessments (Behaviors & Attitudes section) and write 2-3 pages on what this tells you about yourself, what you expect to encounter in Japan based on your previous knowledge, what you've heard about the country, any readings you've done for class, etc. and in what ways you expect to be most similar to or different from Japanese culture. <u>Discuss at least 4 dimensions.</u>
10	20	Corporate visit leadership activities. 1. In pairs, students will prepare a 5-7-minute presentation with visuals for the class for each of the corporate visits predeparture. This presentation should include relevant business profiles, photos (if possible) where the visit will take place. 2. On the site visit day, students will give a 2-minute reminder briefing on the bus on the way to the venue. 3. Each student will write a 3-page paper describing the site visit incorporating pre and post visit thoughts, observations and relevant takeaways. 4. Students will also be in charge of a detailed thank you note.
10	20	Business Culture observations and presentation. Students will assemble and present about business cultural practices observed in Japan (see handout).
20	40	<p>Book Report. This should be a thoughtful discussion of the contents of the book, and the strengths and limitations of the author's arguments. The analysis should reflect your capacity as a reader to critically evaluate the contents, given what you have learned in Japan. The report should be three to five pages in length; the analysis and evaluation section should be the longest part of your report.</p> <p>Organizing the Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INTRODUCTION: In no more than two paragraphs, summarize the contents of the book. What topics did the book cover? What were the main themes of the book? • ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION: Describe the author's purpose in writing the book. What did the author want the reader to learn from reading this book? Did the author succeed? Why or why not? How is this book connected to the themes we are discussing in this program? What is the most important thing you learned from this book? Why? In what way, if any, did this book reflect what you experienced in Japan (this can be in terms of either business or cultural practices)? • CONCLUSION: How did this book further your learning about international business? Was it interesting and/or convincing? Is this a book you would recommend to other students? Why or why not? • CITATION: Cite the book in APA format at the end of your report. The exact format you should use is as follows: Author, A. A. (Year of publication). Title of work: Capital letter also for subtitle. Location: Publisher.

		Note: Each student may choose from one of the three books under bullet 3 of the Textbook & Course Materials section of this syllabus.
25	50	<p>Corporate Site Visits Summary. For this summary, you will need to select at least four of the corporate site visits from our time in Japan and prepare a paper (6-8 pages) comparing and contrasting what you learned at a particular site visit with what you learned at other site visits in Japan, as well as material from lectures and readings. This summary is a way for students to tie their learning at all of the site visits together. The following questions are examples of the questions you may wish to consider when preparing the summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did the practices of the company fit with your understanding of international business/marketing practices as described by our guest lecturers or the course readings? • In what ways do the company's practices seem to fit with particular elements of Japanese culture? • In what ways do their practices differ from elements of Japanese culture that you read or knew about? <p>Students may find it helpful to consult the Cultural Analysis Toolkit, readings, and lectures to answer these questions. See the writing rubric in this syllabus.</p>
25	50	<p>Attendance, Participation, and Comportment. Participation is extremely important. Attendance at ALL class meetings, cultural activities, and site visits is mandatory as these provide hands-on experience that make study abroad such a valuable education experience. This class will only succeed if everyone actively participates in the discussions. Please see the rubric below for more details on how this grade will be determined.</p>
100	200	

Grade Assignment (Grading Scale):

The table below describes the relationships between final course grade and total points earned. The first column is the final grade. The second column describes the point range associated with that grade.

Grade	Points
4.0	200-180
3.5	179-170
3.0	169-160
2.5	159-150
2.0	149-140
1.5	139-130

Attendance, Participation, and Comportment Rubric:

Excellent (46-50 points)	Good (31-45 points)	Satisfactory (21-30 points)	Unsatisfactory (20-0 points)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attends all program activities. Does not come late or leave early. - Always well prepared for class. It is evident all readings have been completed prior to class. - Exhibits positive attitude toward program activities and participants. - Consistently contributes to class discussions and activities in a meaningful way. - Exhibits proper engagement during all site visits. Takes notes and asks questions as appropriate. - Does not use electronic devices in class or during program activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation is almost as good as a student receiving an excellent but one or two elements are not quite up to excellent level. - For example, a student receiving "good" may miss 1-2 class sessions, arrive late for class or group activities or occasionally not participate actively in discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation is generally similar to one receiving an unsatisfactory rating, but there are one or two elements which are relatively well done. - For example, the student could participate in class activities, but because they arrive late and/or are not fully prepared, they are not able to participate at the same level as a student receiving an excellent or good rating. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Misses more than 3 classes or is habitually late/leaves early. - Usually not prepared for class. Evident that readings have not been completed prior to class. - Exhibits a negative attitude toward course, alumni or hosts, faculty, staff, or fellow students. - Does not contribute to discussions or in-class activities. - Misses ANY site visits in Japan, falls asleep or exhibits rude behavior toward hosts on ANY site visit. This includes using electronic devices (cell phone, ipad, ipod, etc.) during site visits. - Regularly/inappropriately uses electronic devices in class or during program activities.

Other Course Policies

The nature of education abroad particularly demands flexibility. To that end, the dates and assignments are tentative and can be changed at the discretion of the professor or to meet the needs of our corporate and alumni hosts in Japan. All changes will be communicated to students in class or via email. Students are responsible for checking email regularly throughout the program, as it will be our primary means of communication outside of class.

Attendance Policy:

You must participate in all required group activities in Japan unless you are ill (for reasons other than a “hangover” due to staying up extremely late or drinking).

Failure to attend any required session will result in the loss of points. Exceptions will be made only in the event of truly extenuating circumstances. If you are ill, contact Stacy or the program assistant as soon as possible.

Site visits: You must take pen-and-paper notes during sessions on campus and during all business and cultural site visits and guest lectures, while on site in Japan. Not taking notes during a guest lecture or a site visit results in a loss of participation points. Cell phones or other electronic devices are strictly prohibited and **MUST BE STOWED** in a pocket or bag for the duration of the class or visit. Site visits/cultural activities are the most important component of the participation grade. **If you do not consistently and appropriately engage during site visits, it will not be possible to earn all participation points.**

Tardiness: You must be on time. Even if you are only a few minutes late, you will lose points for class participation for each incident. This is particularly important when we are preparing to leave on group transportation while in Japan.

Students’ behavior reflects on Michigan State University. Therefore, **students must behave respectfully toward the host culture, its values, language, beliefs, and customs at all times.** Students must also be properly attired for all site visits. **For professional site visits**, proper, business professional attire for men includes a shirt and tie (jacket optional), dress pants and belt, dress shoes and socks. For women, business professional attire includes dress pants and blouse, skirt and blouse, or nice dress, with dress shoes (nylons/tights optional). Please pack your carryon with a suitable change of clothes for a site visit in case of lost or mishandled luggage.

Late Work Policy: No late work will be accepted.

Academic Honesty:

All students will abide by the Eli Broad College of Business Honor Code. Please go to the following website and read it carefully: <https://broad.msu.edu/masters/mba/student-life/honor-code/>

AI policy TBA /Writing evaluation

Throughout this course, we will examine different ways of presenting business ideas in written form, including personal narratives, news, narrative and case studies to further develop our understanding of “the business” of presenting business. As you examine each of these genres, you will have the opportunity to nurture your own writing skills by presenting your ideas both as visual presentations and longer written work.

4.0 Writing exhibits originality and specificity from site visits and quotes from guest speakers, explores in-depth the connections between cultural themes and practices observed. Makes unique and interesting connections between ideas, shows creative organization and spark.

3.5 Writing shows a good grasp of cultural themes but has only few general observations from the field. Although writing shows some insight, sometimes draws on bland generalizations to make one or two original points.

3.0 Relies heavily on generally available knowledge and shows little insight from experience.
Organizationally humdrum and shows little originality or understanding of cultural knowledge gained.

2.5 Writings addresses general themes from generally available knowledge and does not reflect an in-depth personal knowledge gained from site visits or attending lectures.
