



# J. F. Oberlin University

## ACADEMIC COURSE SYLLABUS

### COURSE NAME:

Japanese Culture in the Modern Era

### MEETING TIMES:

45 Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday (days may vary based on activity schedule)

Periods: 1 – 4 (periods and times may vary based on activity schedule)

### DESCRIPTION:

This course will provide a general overview of Japanese society and culture in the postwar period. This course will introduce students to the historical background and modern social implications of contemporary Japanese culture. We will explore a wide range of artistic mediums including music, art, manga, animation, fashion, advertising, and film. Topics will include *hikikomori* (shut-ins that refuse to leave the home for work or school), chronic over-work including *karoshi* (death from overworking), declining population and the population bomb, and extreme population density in cities. In addition, the concepts of *kaizen* (continuous improvement), and *wa* (social harmony) will be introduced and analyzed. The course meets for a minimum of 45 hours per two-week period. Students receive 4 Oberlin University credits and a Certificate of Completion for passing with a minimum grade of a D.

### COURSE LEVELS:

Classes are taught and conducted in English. No Japanese language level is required.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES/ OUTCOMES:

By the end of the session, students should be able to understand:

- 1) A basic understanding of contemporary challenges facing Japanese society
- 2) The major influences that have shaped postwar culture in Japan
- 3) How to view the positive attributes of modern Japanese society through an international perspective

### METHOD OF INSTRUCTION:

Lecture, participatory (dialogical, reciprocal learning), inquiry (research & inquiry, cooperative group, engage by generating questions), critical thinking and constructive thinking (analyzing and examining media, multiple alternative culture), creative future thinking (action agenda, root cause, exchange ideas).

### TEXTBOOK(S) AND/OR CLASS MATERIALS:

The instructor will provide class materials.

### GRADING, CERTIFICATE, GRADING PLAN & EVALUATION:

All students will get a grade for this academic course. You will also get a Certificate of Completion at the end of the course. Students who do not pass with a letter grade of D or above will not be awarded a Certificate of Completion.

Grading Scale:

90-100 = A    80-89 = B    79-70 = C    60-69 = D    50 and below = F

Breakdown:

- Class Participation: 25%
- Attendance: 25%
- Assignments: 20%
- Final Project: 30%

### COURSE POLICIES:

It is required for students to attend all classes and come to class on time. Students should refrain from using cell phones while in class and eating during class times.

### STUDENT CONDUCT:

Students are expected to conduct themselves well in the class. Disciplinary action may be taken for but not limited to dishonesty, cheating, or plagiarism.

# COURSE CONTENTS

## Daily Contents

- Introduction: structure, pedagogy, assignment and grading, forming groups.
- Postwar influences that shaped Japan today
- Takashi Murakami's Superflat movement
- Guest Lecture
- What does it mean to "become Japanese"?
- The modern Japanese man: A day in the life.
- The modern Japanese woman: A day in the life.
- What is hikikomori?
- What is karoshi?
- Japanese film screening
- The Population Bomb
- What is kaizen?
- What is wa?
- Student presentations