

COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

Academic School / Department:	Humanities and Social Sciences
Programme:	BA International History
FHEQ Level:	5
Course Title:	Reinventing Tradition: Japanese Culture and Society
Course Code:	HST 5720 (TP)
Student Engagement Hours:	120 (standard 3- credit BA course)
Lectures:	22.5
Seminar / Tutorials:	22.5
Independent / Guided Learning:	75
Credits:	12 UK CATS credits 6 ECTS credits 3 US credits

Course Description:

Japanese culture and society manifests itself as deeply traditional and conservative yet simultaneously innovative and futuristic when it comes to the latest technological trends. Traditional arts and craftsmanship continue while reinventing themselves: from wood block printing as manga and tea ceremony as technology, all within the paradox of collective conformity and individual resistance. This course provides a structured and contextual overview of change in Japanese material culture and society from the Heian period to the present. From visiting ancient temples and shrines, Geisha teahouse districts, and Samurai castles to observing teenager fashion, the neon lights of Tokyo's entertainment district, and the emblematic Shibuya Crossing; this course explores these contrasts while critically reviewing these processes in the social, political and economic context of Japan's contemporary world setting.

Prerequisites:

GEP 4180 or HST 3200

Aims and Objectives:

- To inspire students to understand Japan and Japanese culture beyond 'Oriental' tropes and Western stereotypes
- To introduce students to Japan's social, economic, and, political changes and how these have influenced its distinctive material culture across different periods of time
- To teach students to consider the complex relationship between tradition and collective conformity with innovation and individual resistance
- To promote both a theoretical understanding and practical application of the binary between tradition and innovation gained through interactive lectures and a series of informative cultural visits

Programme Outcomes:

International History: 5A(i); 5B(i); 5B (ii); 5B(iii); 5C(i); 5D(i)

A detailed list of the programme outcomes is found in the Programme Specification. This is maintained by Registry and located at:

<https://www.richmond.ac.uk/programme-and-course-specifications/>

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, successful students should be able to:

- Demonstrate the ability to critically assess and analyse sites visited during the Travel Programme, and understand the different ways in which these can be used to reflect on the themes of the course.
- Demonstrate detailed knowledge of the main theoretical and conceptual approaches to studying Japanese material culture.
- Demonstrate a detailed understanding of the key social, economic, and political dimensions of Japanese material culture across different periods of history.
- Demonstrate the ability to combine theory and practice in articulating arguments in written, oral or other forms.

Indicative Content:

- Place and Context: Japanese geographies and oriental tropes
- Religion, belief, and syncretism
- Material culture in key periods in Japanese history: Heian, the Tokugawa, the Meiji Restoration, Imperial Japan, the US Occupation

- Technology, industry, and the making of modern Japan
- Culture, the arts, and creative industries
- Society: collectivity and resistance; gender and generation

Assessment:

This course conforms to the University Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board and can be found at <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/university-policies/>

Teaching Methodology:

This course will be taught through a combination of lectures, student presentations, class discussions, and on-site visits as part of the extended travel programme. Themes and links between the literature and locations may be complemented with films and guest lectures where appropriate.

Indicative Text(s):

Bestor, Victoria, Bestor, Theodore C. and Yamagata Akiko (eds.) *Routledge Handbook of Japanese Culture and Society*, 1st ed., Routledge : 2011.

Goto-Jones, Chris, *Modern Japan: A Very Short Introduction*, 1st ed., Oxford University Press: 2009

Kingston, Jeff, *Japan*, 1st ed., Polity Press: 2018

Condry, Ian, *The Soul of Anime: Creativity and Japan's Media Success Story*, 1st ed, Duke University Press: 2013

Journals

Social Science Japan Journal

Japan Forum

The Journal of Japanese Studies

See syllabus for complete reading list

Change Log for this CSD:

Nature of Change	Date Approved & Approval Body (School or AB)	Change Actioned by Registry Services
Revision – annual update	May 2023	