

Keio University Syllabus and Timetable

JAPAN SEEN FROM OUTSIDE: JAPAN'S PERCEPTION IN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA OVER THE LAST 500 YEARS

Subtitle	Japan Seen from the Outside: An exploration of European and U.S. American perceptions of Japan's culture and society over the last 500 years
Lecturer(s)	RIESSLAND, ANDREAS K.
Credit(s)	2
Academic Year/Semester	2025 Spring
Day/Period	Mon.2
Campus	Mita
Classroom	462
Class Format	Face-to-face classes (conducted mainly in-person)
Registration Number	84017
Faculty/Graduate School	INTERNATIONAL CENTER
Year Level	2, 3, 4
Grade Type	S, A, B, C, D
K-Number	CIN-CO-00153-212-04

▼ Detail

Course Contents/Objectives/Teaching Method/Intended Learning Outcome

In this course, we will take a close look at the way Japan was, and continues to be, perceived in Europe and North America. Course members will analyze a series of historical documents from European and North American sources and investigate how the view of Japan has developed in these countries over time. At the center of this investigation are three questions:

- Which images and stereotypes about Japan can be found in these documents?
- How much did these images and stereotypes change with time?
- How much did they stay the same?

In addition, the course members will analyze and give group presentations about certain key periods in the history of Japan's encounter with Euroamerica.

Active Learning Methods ⓘ [Description](#)

Presentations
Discussions, Debates
Group work

Preparatory Study

For each lesson, you will have read the required text(s) thoroughly, and you will have developed a well informed understanding of the author's main argument.

Course Plan

Lesson 1

What is it all about? And where is paradise? - Introduction

Lesson 2

The Good People - pre-Edo and early Edo Japan in European documents

Lesson 3

The Odd People - pre-Edo and early Edo Japan in European documents

Lesson 4

Strange Encounters - late Edo and early Meiji Japan through to European and North American eyes

Lesson 5

Later Meiji Japan through to European and North American eyes

Lesson 6

Japan in the early 20th century

Lesson 7

Group work session for student presentations

Lesson 8

(student led session) Japonism

Lesson 9

(student led session) The Honorary Aryans - Japan and Germany before, during and after WWII

Lesson 10

(student led session) From Monsters to MacArthur's Children - Japan and the US before, during and after WWII

Lesson 11

(student led session) "The World Looks Upon Us" - The era of the 1964 Olympics

Lesson 12

(student led session) Economic Battlefields - Japan praise and Japan bashing

Lesson 13

(student led session) Films about Japan / Japan in popular culture

Lesson 14

Course review and follow-up discussion, if required.

Other

Assignments: The required reading and viewing will be announced in class and, together with supplementary readings, be uploaded to keio.jp prior to the first session.

Method of Evaluation

In-class discussion is the central component of the course, and at the beginning of each class, everyone is expected to be familiar with the relevant assigned readings. Class participation counts for 40% of the grade. Writing assignments count for 20%, the final project (presentation & paper) 40%. All written work should be 100% one's own words (with full reference and citation), submitted on time, of appropriate length, and on topic. Plagiarism is cheating, and you will fail the course if you copy more than 2 words from any source without correct citation, quotation and reference. Late work will be penalized or simply not accepted. About 2 hours of homework are expected each week. All written assignments (essays, power-points, self-introductions, etc) should be submitted through K-LMS. Details will be announced during the first lessons.

Textbooks

All reading materials will be distributed by the instructor or made available on the K-LMS website.

Reference Books

All necessary materials will be supplied on through Keio's online services.

Lecturer's Comments to Students

Because the course is based on group discussion and students' individual presentations, which requires active engagement on the part of every student, enrolment will be limited to 25 students. If more than 25 students seek to join, a lottery will be carried out by the administration.

Question/Comments

There are no set office hours, but students should feel free to contact me anytime by email or speak to me after class. I am happy to talk as long as there is time available.