

**HUNTER COLLEGE, CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK  
PROGRAM IN JAPANESE STUDIES**

*Note: For a current syllabus, contact the instructor in the current semester. Syllabus is subject to change.*

**JPN 251 – Japanese Culture Before 1600**

Prerequisite: ENGL 120 or equivalent

**Course Description:**

This course is designed for students who wish to become acquainted with Japanese history and culture. It will cover the periods from pre-historic to 1600 – a prelude to 300 years of national isolation. It will introduce a wide-range of topics. Slides will be shown in class. **Taught entirely in English.**

The goal is to provide students with a sense of Japan's history and the evolution of its culture. Covering many facets of Japanese culture, this course will focus on the various periods of Japanese history (Jomon, Yayoi, Kofun, and Heian – to name a few) and uncover how many aspects of Japanese culture were shaped. From the influence of nearby countries – most notably China – to its isolationist periods, its mythology, the evolution of its art, the deep-seated love of nature shared by many Japanese, and the co-existence of multiple belief systems, Japan has a truly unique history whose culture has gained in popularity within the United States.

**Course Requirements:**

- **Attendance** is strictly monitored. No more than 3 absences are permitted before being penalized.
- **Midterm Exam** will consist of two parts, taken in class. The first will be an identification of 10 slides shown in class (multiple choice questions) and the second part will be a single short essay.
- **Final Paper** will be a 5-page essay to be handed in on the final day of class. Students will be responsible for choosing their own topics but will need final approval, granted through appointments made during the instructor's office hours, before beginning their essays. Drawing from in-class lecture and locating external sources will be required.

**Required Readings:**

Course Packet (available at Shakespeare and Co.)

Material in course packet covers material for JPN 251 and JPN 252

**Method of Evaluation:**

1. Attendance ... 20%
2. Midterm Exam ... 30%
3. Final Paper ... 50%

### Sample Course Schedule:

Class generally meets twice a week. Course content is broken into weekly blocks for the sake of this sample syllabus.

	<b>Content</b>
Week One	<b>Course Introduction</b> <b>Nature and the Japanese People:</b> Geography, Climate, and the Four Seasons
Week Two	<b>Nature and the Japanese People:</b> Geography, Climate, and the Four Seasons <b>Culture of Hunting and Gathering Periods:</b> Jomon Period
Week Three	<b>Culture of Hunting and Gathering Periods:</b> Yayoi Period <b>Culture of Hunting and Gathering Periods:</b> Kofun (Old Mound) Period
Week Four	<b>Japanese Mythology:</b> Tales and Fables
Week Five	<b>Japanese Mythology:</b> Tales and Fables <b>Japanese Mythology:</b> The Imperial Household
Week Six	<b>Origins of the Japanese Shrine:</b> Shrines and their Deities and Ise and Izumo Shrines
Week Seven	<b>Asuka Period:</b> Emergence of Development of Buddhism in Japan <b>Asuka Period:</b> Prince Shotoku, Beginning of Law Enforcement, and Buddhist Art
Week Eight	<b>Asuka Period:</b> Buddhist Temples <b>Nara Period:</b> The Building of Temples and the Capital, Heijo-kyo
Week Nine	<b>Nara Period:</b> Todai-ji Temple <b>Heian Period:</b> Esoteric Buddhism and the Faith in Kannon
Week Ten	<b>Heian Period:</b> Art and Literature <b>Midterm Exam</b>
Week Eleven	<b>Heian Period:</b> Marriage and Family <b>Heian Period:</b> The Merging of Shinto and Buddhism
Week Twelve	<b>Kamakura Period:</b> Individualism, Religion, and the Mongolian Invasion <b>Muromachi Period:</b> Politics
Week Thirteen	<b>Muromachi Period:</b> Samurai and Folk Culture
Week Fourteen	<b>Japanese Gardens:</b> Japanese Gardens of Medieval Times <b>Azuchi-Momoyama Period:</b> An Age of Civil Wars
Finals Week	<b>Azuchi-Momoyama Period:</b> Emergence of Lords as a Result of Civil Wars <b>Course Review, Final Papers Due</b>