

NOTE: This is a SAMPLE syllabus/itinerary and may not be the most up-to-date version. Please contact the faculty leader of this course for more recent information.

**GBE 790
Japanese Culture and
Business Practice
May 12-May 26**

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Course Description

This course will examine the socio-cultural, political, and economic frameworks of modern Japan, the management practices of Japanese companies, and business issues for foreign companies operating in the country. The course involves a two-week study tour to Japan from May 12 to May 26 preceded by three orientation sessions.

During the orientation students will learn about Japan's political economy, culture, history, lifestyles and major aspects of its management practices. Students are expected to read the text book and the assigned articles before the orientation and write a book report and an integration paper that summarizes the articles and integrates major points of the readings.

During the first 10 days of the trip the group will stay in central Tokyo, where they will learn about Japan's economy and business practices and visit key historical and cultural sites. There will be presentations given by Japanese as well American business people in Japan. On Tuesday May 22, the group will travel to Kyoto and Hiroshima for sightseeing and other cultural activities.

Course objectives

Knowledge

- To provide students an understanding of Japan's culture, demography, political economy and its current position in the global economy
- To learn about emerging entrepreneurial companies in Japan and their business practices
- To examine the impact of the environmental factors on the business practices of Japanese and foreign companies in the country
- To provide an opportunity for Bentley students to interact with Japanese and become sensitive to the cultural differences and similarities between Americans and Japanese

Skills

- To gain an appreciation and hopefully a genuine passion for a unique and complex business environment in today's world
- To learn about critical success factors for operating a business in Japan
- To learn and practice culturally appropriate behavior in a business setting
- To translate the knowledge from study of Japan's business environment into recommendations to improve

Factors in Grading

Course grade for each student will be determined on the basis of several elements, grouped as:

1. Preparation (summary paper) and participation in class activities and discussions during the orientation sessions (15%)
2. Attendance in scheduled activities and active participation in the question and answer period of the business-related visits. (30%)
3. Research paper on a subject of interest to the student, related to his/her major area of study, which will integrate the observations made in Japan with library research (30%)
4. Two book reviews (15% each)

Research paper

The paper is on a topic of your choice that integrates observations made in Japan with library research. You are encouraged to approach this research from an applied, practical perspective and to collect much of the information in Japan through company publications, personal interviews, and field observations. You may also take a comparative perspective, examining a particular practice in Japan and another country. The paper should be 15-20 pages in length, not counting references and exhibits. You are expected to deliver a high quality, analytical paper with clear documentation of your sources. Please send your outline before finalizing your topic. **Outline is due on June 10.**

Book review

The book review should be 4-6 pages in length. The paper is not intended to be a summary of the book. Rather, it should communicate your thoughts and opinion about the book, the extent it has some utility for you as a business student, and a manager. The review should address the following:

- What is the basic theme of the book?
- Do you agree or disagree with the basic theme of the book? Why?
- What are the key conclusions of the book?
- What are the major concepts discussed in each chapter/section?
- What implications do these ideas pose for business organizations and management in the United States?
- What are some of the major similarities/differences between your personal observations during the trip and the major theme of the book?

It is absolutely imperative for the book review to be your original work. Make sure that you communicate information about the book with me before finalizing your choice. Finally, the review should be comprehensive and analytical as opposed to a summary report of the chapters. **Please note that there will be no incomplete grades for the course.**

Note about attendance and active participation

We will use public transportation while we are in Japan. In order to be on time for our visits, we will leave our hotel, the Asia Center of Japan, at the exact time as indicated in the itinerary. You should be present at the lobby of the hotel on time and properly dressed. During the meetings, you are expected to be **alert, respectful of the speaker, and actively involved in the question and answer period**. Participation in all of the scheduled activities is mandatory.

Partial list of articles*

1. A Historical Review of Japanese Management Theories (Asian Business and Management, 2002)
2. Japanese Keiretsu (Investopedia, December 2009)
3. Whither Japan? Economy, Management and Society (Asia Pacific Business Review, 17 (1) 2011)
4. Japan's Latest Economic Transfusion (The New York Times, January 13, 2013)
5. CIA Fact book
6. Entrepreneurs in Japan: Time to get started - The Economist, August 31, 2013

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*Please note that the list of articles will be updated at the time of orientation sessions in 2018.

Academic Honesty

Please note that all assignments in this class should be your original work. Any case of violation will be subjected to the Bentley College Academic Honesty Code. Examples of violating the College's Academic Honesty Code include, but not limited to, sharing homework assignments with other students, receiving help from other individuals unless stated otherwise, copying material without due reference to the source, and cheating in exams.

Students with Disability

Bentley University abides by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 which stipulate no student shall be denied the benefits of an education solely by reason of a disability. If you have a hidden or visible disability which may require classroom accommodations, please make an appointment with the Coordinator of Disability Services, Stephanie S. Brodeur, within the first 4 weeks of the semester. The Office of Disability Services is located in the Office of Counseling and Student Development (CSD), POL 104 Dispatcher, 781.891.2274. For more information please contact Stephanie S. Brodeur, CRC, and LRC, the senior assistant director of disability services at 781.891.2004 or sbrodeur@bentley.edu.

