

***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 13-May 27  
2017**

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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 14 to May 28 preceded by two orientation sessions.

The purpose of the first orientation is to meet the participants and provide information about the logistics of the trip. During the second orientation on April 23 students will learn about Japan's political economy, culture, history, lifestyles and major aspects of its management practices. Students are expected to read the assigned articles before the orientation and write 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 and American business people. On Wednesday May 24, 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 will be determined on the basis of several elements, grouped as:

1. Preparation (integration 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 (35%)
4. Book review (20%)

### **Integration paper**

The integration paper is based on the reading assignments posted on Blackboard. The articles cover several important aspects of Japan's political, economic, and cultural environments. The paper should include a summary of each reading and a final section that integrates your overall reflection on the concepts and information from the articles. It should be around 5-6 pages.

The book review is due on Saturday April 15, the date of the second orientation.

### **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 by June 14.

**The research paper is due on Friday July 28.**

### **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.

**The book review is due on Friday July 28.**

#### **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.