

Sophia University –Summer Session 2026

July 1 – July 22, 2026 *July 1: Orientation. *July 3: No class day

Date: December 2025

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| Course Title | Japanese Performing Arts, from past to present |
| Course Code | ARZ301 |
| Instructor | BRINDEAU Véronique |
| Class Period | 3rd Period (13:30–15:10) |
| Course Format | In-Person |
| Language of Instruction | English |
| Maximum class size | 20 |
| Course Description | <p>The traditional performing arts of Noh, Kabuki, and Bunraku puppet theatre have had a profound influence on contemporary Japanese culture. Manga, Anime films, television dramas draw heavily on this repertoire of traditional theatre as well as on the founding myths of Japan. “Demon Slayer,” the best-selling manga in Japan, was adapted in 2022 for the traditional theatre genres of Noh and Kyogen (a comic form of traditional Japanese theatre) and performed on stage in Tokyo and Osaka. The director of the production, Mansai Nomura, is a famous Kyogen performer, and the writer for the stage adaptation is Yuichi Kinoshita, head of a Kabuki troupe.</p> <p>We will analyse these different performing arts in detail by describing their various components: stage design, acting, music, librettos, dance, masks, puppetry, makeup, and costumes. We will analyse numerous excerpts from performances, accessible via internet links, and we will watch testimonials from actors and musicians. We will focus on amateur practices of these different artistic expressions, from religious ritual to popular entertainment, as well as the status of traditional performing arts in contemporary society and their role in education.</p> <p>Prior knowledge of Japanese culture and language is helpful but not required. All readings and discussions will be in English.</p> |
| Course Objectives | Learn about Japanese classical culture and its diversity, experience the aesthetics of traditional performing arts as a way of grasping social and aesthetic values in Japanese society, from classical 14th century to modern times, develop personal appreciation of performances, understand of the links between past traditional culture and modern popular culture. |
| Expected work outside of class | Read assigned texts, prepare assignments, study for tests. Around 1 hour per day |
| Course Materials | PDFs, PowerPoints and other materials on Moodle, suggested textbooks |
| | Purchase of textbook: optional |

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| | e-book: acceptable |
| Moodle | The day-to-day syllabus, readings, class outlines, assignment sheets and other course materials will be posted on Moodle. Students can also reach the professor through Moodle. |
| Contact Instructor | via Moodle message or email (both are okay) *The email address will be informed by the instructor in the first class if needed. |
| Evaluation (Attendance, Class participation, in-class assignments, final exam, quizzes, etc.) | Tentative Grade Breakdown: (Total of 159 points.) 2 Tests (each 50 points, total of 100 points) Short report (20 points) Attendance and Engagement Exercises (3 points per class, total of 39 points) |
| Other comments | The following syllabus is tentative. The final syllabus will be provided to registered students before the Summer Session begins. |
| Class schedule | *July 1: Orientation |
| | *July 3: No-Class Day |
| | [DAY 1] The Noh Stage: a Symbolic Architecture |
| | [DAY 2] The Noh Dance: Kata and martial art (Karate) |
| | [DAY 3] Noh Music, Taiko Drums and “matsuri” festivals |
| | [DAY 4] Noh Masks and costumes, adaptation into the world of “manga” |
| | [DAY 5] Kyogen Comic Theater |
| | [DAY 6] Noh and Samurai, mysterious profundity of yûgen |
| | [DAY 7] Genesis of Kabuki Theater, Cross-Dressed Female Roles; Takarazuka, a Japanese all-female theater troupe |
| | [DAY 8] The "Rough" style: makeup and stylised Combats. Portraits of Kabuki actors in ukiyo-e prints |
| | [DAY 9] Kabuki Dance |
| | [DAY 10] Kabuki Music on stage and backstage |
| | [DAY 11] Puppetry in Japan, from exorcism to artistic show |
| | [DAY 12] The Art of Recitation accompanied by musical instruments |
| | [DAY 13] Influence of Noh and Kabuki in cinema |
| | [DAY 14] Final examination |

*Course format, evaluation methods and class schedule may be subject to change.

[Important Note Regarding Class Capacity]

Course enrollment in each course is on a first-come, first-served basis. Please be aware that once the maximum capacity is reached, you will no longer be able to select that course.

If you plan to transfer the credits to your home university, please consider alternative courses as well when making your study plan, in case the courses you want to take are full.