

Sophia University –Summer Session 2026

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

Date: January 2026

Course Title	Traditional & Avant-Garde Japanese Performance and Storytelling
Course Code	CUZ301
Instructor	You-Ri Yamanaka
Class Period	2nd Period (10:55-12:35)
Course Format	In-Person
Language of Instruction	English
Maximum class size	16
Course Description	<p>The purpose of this course is to learn the process of constructing and transmitting one's own story using the body and voice through rehearsal techniques used in the classical Japanese art form of Kabuki Dance (Nihon Buyo) and in the contemporary dance form of Butoh. Although Japanese dance and modern dance may appear to be a completely different dance form at first glance, they are fundamentally connected and are art forms that embody the essence of traditional Japanese arts and culture. This course provides the opportunity to learn about the essence of Japanese culture through movement, while also learning about the historical and cultural background within which these arts developed and thrived.</p> <p>We will examine the historical background of Japanese dance, as well as the birth and development of avant-garde butoh, from both theoretical and experiential perspectives. In each class, we will view video clips from classical performances and undergo physical movement exercises to connect their own inner and outer worlds. In the latter half of the class, students will work in small groups to create their own original stories, and express and present their storytelling using the theater techniques they have learned throughout the course.</p>
Course Objectives	<p>The aim of the class is to learn about the history of Japanese theater and dance as well as to develop the ability to use our body to express ourselves. The objective is to deepen students' understanding of traditional Japanese culture and art through the body. By engaging in exercises using our entire body, mind, voice, and thought—a rare experience in our daily lives—students can expect to awaken what has been dormant in their subconscious and connect them with the essential parts of themselves. It is also intended to help people discover the joy of creating, and to experience being completely absorbed in exploration within a supporting learning community.</p>
Expected work outside of	This course consists of a lecture-based first day, followed by practical

class	<p>sessions without desks or chairs from the second day onwards. We will use elements of Kabuki dance, butoh, and acting exercises to develop practical storytelling skills.</p> <p>Each day, you will be given preparation tasks for the following day. The time required for these tasks will vary from person to person, ranging from 45 minutes to an hour or more.</p>
Course Materials	<p>Below are some readings if you're interested. All of them are available at Sophia University Library.</p> <p>① The Kabuki Theatre (East West Center Book) Reissued Edition (1974) Author: Earle Ernst; University of Hawaii Press ISBN 10: 0824803191 ISBN 13: 9780824803193</p> <p>② The Kabuki Theatre of Japan (2012) Author: A. C. Scott; Dover Publications ISBN-10: 0486406458. ISBN-13: 978-0486406459</p> <p>③ Dancing Into Darkness: Butoh, Zen, and Japan (1999) Author: Sondra Horton Fraleigh; University of Pittsburgh Press ISBN-10: 0822940981 ISBN-13: 978-0822940982</p>
	Purchase of textbook: not necessary
	e-book: not applicable
Moodle	We won't be using Moodle extensively other than for course materials and contact purposes.
Contact Instructor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • via Moodle message • via Email <p>*The email address will be informed by the instructor in the first class if needed.</p>
Evaluation (Attendance, Class participation, in-class assignments, final exam, quizzes, etc.)	<p>Attendance (40.0%): Since it is a prerequisite that students are able to attend all classes, up to one absence will be allowed only for legitimate reasons.</p> <p>Class participation (40.0%)</p> <p>Short report (10%)</p> <p>Final presentation (10%)</p>
Other comments	
Class schedule	*July 1: Orientation
	*July 3: No-Class Day
	[DAY 1] History and Development of Japanese Traditional (Nihon Buyo) and Contemporary (Butoh) Arts
	[DAY 2] Exercises with body and voice - connecting inside and outside of oneself
	[DAY 3] Japanese Dance Movement Exercises
	[DAY 4]

	Japanese Dance Movement Exercises
	[DAY 5] Exercises for Storytelling
	[DAY 6] Exercises for Storytelling
	[DAY 7] Butoh Exercises
	[DAY 8] Butoh Exercises
	[DAY 9] Exercises Developed from Japanese Dance
	[DAY 10] Exercises Developed from Japanese Dance
	[DAY 11] Exercises for Storytelling, including Japanese Dance and Butoh
	[DAY 12] Exercises for Storytelling, including Butoh and Japanese Dance
	[DAY 13] Storytelling Preparation
	[DAY 14] Storytelling Presentation and Feedback

*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.