

Sophia University –January Session 2027

January 7 – January 29, 2027 *January 7: Orientation

Date: August 2026

Course Title	Contemporary Japanese Culture and Society
Course Code	SOZ202
Instructor	FURUKAWA, Gavin (Coordinator) GALBRAITH, Patrick W. KUNIEDA, Tomoki LEE, Heidi NISHIMURA, Keiko
Class Period	1st Period (9:00-10:40)
Course Format	In-Person
Language of Instruction	English
Maximum class size	40
Course Description	This course introduces students to a contemporary view of Japanese culture and society from the perspectives of pop culture, intercultural communications, media, business, and the environment. The course is taught by five instructors who will focus on the following subtopics: 1. Japanese Popular Culture: Understanding contemporary Japanese society through the lens of Japanese music, television dramas, social media, and other cultural phenomena. 2. Japanese Corporate Culture and Media: Focus on corporate management and culture, media and cultural industry, and strategic communication in Japan. 3. Japanese Culture and Gender: This section will focus on the basics of how gender is understood within traditional and modern Japanese society and how these aspects relate to the Japanese language and culture. 4. Japanese Technological Popular Culture: This section of the course will familiarize students with the historical and socio-cultural context of technology in Japan, focusing particularly on the popular culture figures and the actual machinery of communicating humanoid robots. 5. Japanese Culture and Music: These modules focus on the cultural dynamics of Japanese music. The first half examines cultural imaginaries both local and global through the examples of enka and rap in Japan to learn about nationalism and cultural change. The second half moves on to idols, which are described in the two major modes of analysis in cultural studies: the cultural industry and culturalism. Please enroll yourself on the Moodle page of this course to find further information about the course.

Course Objectives	Students will gain an understanding of Japanese history, gender, popular culture, corporate culture, and popular media from various academic approaches.
Expected work outside of class	Students will be expected to: • Watch videos and video lectures. • Read material for class. • Write regular reaction papers.
Course Materials	Links to course materials, online forum discussions, and readings will be available on Moodle.
	Purchase of textbook: not necessary
	e-book: not applicable
Moodle	Moodle will be used for online discussions, some readings and handouts, and some assignment submissions.
Contact Instructor	• via Email *The email address of the instructor will be informed on the first day of class.
Evaluation (Attendance, Class participation, in-class assignments, final exam, quizzes, etc.)	Attendance: percentage (30) % Four absences is an automatic “Fail” Reaction papers: percentage (45) % Daily reaction papers required Final report: percentage (25) % There will be a final in-class essay exam
Other comments	
Class schedule	*January 7: Orientation
	*January 11, January 22: No-Class Day
	[DAY 1] 1/8 Instructor: Furukawa Introduction to Course
	[DAY 2] 1/12 Instructor: Galbraith National Cultural Imaginaries: Enka
	[DAY 3] 1/13 Instructor: Nishimura Culture, Technology, Japan, and Robots
	[DAY 4] 1/14 Instructor: Kunieda Japanese Culture and Media Industry
	[DAY 5] 1/15 Instructor: Lee Gender, Sexuality, and Theater
	[DAY 6] 1/18 Instructor: Galbraith Transnational Cultural Imaginaries: J-Rap
	[DAY 7] 1/19 Instructor: Kunieda Japanese Advertisement Culture
	[DAY 8] 1/20 Instructor: Nishimura Pre-war Robots and Tezuka Osamu
	[DAY 9] 1/21 Instructor: Kunieda Japanese PR and Public Diplomacy
	[DAY 10] 1/25 Instructor: Galbraith

	The Culture Industry: Idols
	[DAY 11] 1/26 Instructor: Galbraith Cultural Studies: Idols
	[DAY 12] 1/27 Instructor: Lee Gender Representations in Film and Television
	[DAY 13] 1/28 Instructor: Nishimura Post-war Popular Culture and Technological Robots
	[DAY 14] 1/29 Instructor: Furukawa Final In-Class Essay Exam & Course Reflections

*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.