

Kyushu University  
A Core Course of Japan in Today's World Program(JTW)

## **Value and Spirituality in Japan**

### **Course Information**

Semester & Year: Spring – Summer 2019

Credits Earned: 2 Credit Hours

Prerequisite: None

Course Location: Room 1308, Center Zone 1 at Ito Campus

Class Meeting Time: Wednesdays, 16:40am-18:10pm (Period 5)

### **Instructor**

Name: Hiroko Ikuta, Ph.D.

Office hr: by appointment

Office: Room 5616, Center Zone 5 at Ito Campus

Email: [ikuta.hiroko.953@m.kyushu-u.ac.jp](mailto:ikuta.hiroko.953@m.kyushu-u.ac.jp)

Phone: 092-802-6545

### **Course Description**

This course explores Japanese spirituality and how they influence people's lives throughout history. The Japanese religious tradition consists of several major components, including Shinto, Japan's earliest religion, Buddhism, Confucianism, folk religions, Christianity, and new religions. We aim to approach these issues with both sympathy and a critical eye, affirming the very human element behind the supernatural.

### **Student Outcomes**

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Contextualize topics and traditions within their ethnographic setting in Japan.
- Recognize the social aspects of spiritual life.
- Make connections between specifics of different religious traditions, and broader concerns in the study of religion.

### **Course Materials**

Students are not required to purchase any textbook. Instead, the instructor will distribute reading assignments in class.

### **Course Policies**

- Lateness: Assignments not handed in by their due dates will be marked off a full letter grade each day late.
- Electronic Devices: All phones and electronic devices must be silent during our class period. I strongly encourage you to turn off all phones during class.
- Respect your peers: Even though it is a boring class for you, others may be interested in it.

### **Course Assessment**

Class Participation	20%
Mid-Term Paper	20%
Final Paper	20%
Presentation x2	40%

### **Course Schedule**

Week 1 (April 3): Introduction

Week 2 (April 10): Major Characteristics of Japanese Religion and Spirituality

\*April 16 is the final registration deadline for JTW students

Week 3 (April 17): Prehistory – Animism & Shamanism

Week 4 (April 24): Fold Religions

\*May 1: no class (National Holiday)

Week 5 (May 8): Early Buddhism

Week 6 (May 15): Ancestors and Souls, Death and Afterlife

Week 7 (May 22): Arrival of Christianity

Week 8 (May 29): Student Presentations

Mid-term paper due

Week 9 (June 5): Celebrations and Festivals

Week 10 (June 12): Religions in the Japanese Sports and Daily Life

Week 11 (June 19): Religions in the Japanese Animation

Week 12 (June 26): New Religions in the Contemporary Japanese Society

Week 13 (July 3): Fieldtrip to the YAMAKASA Festival

Week 14 (July 10): Student Presentations

*YAMAKASA Festival will be held in Hakata on July 1-15. We will have a fieldtrip.  
The schedule will be informed in the late June, and the classes on July 3 and 10 will  
be subject to change.*

Week 15 (July 17): Student Presentations

Final Paper due