



MANAGEMENT IN JAPANESE CORPORATIONS ACADEMIC COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE NAME:

Business Topics - Management in Japanese Corporations

CREDITS:

The course meets for a minimum of 45 hours per two week period. Students receive 4 Oberlin University credits with a minimum grade of a D.

MEETING TIMES:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday (days may vary based on activity schedule)

Periods: 1 – 4 (periods and times may vary based on activity schedule)

DESCRIPTION:

This course provides a comprehensive exploration of the intricate interplay between various forces that shape Japanese management and business practices. Students will delve into the social, economic, technological, and ethical factors influencing decision-making in Japanese organizations. By examining cultural dimensions and influences on behavior within Japanese companies, participants will gain a deeper understanding of how values and norms impact organizational dynamics.

Additionally, the course will equip students with strategic insights for Western organizations seeking to navigate the complexities of operating in Japan and engaging with Japanese stakeholders both domestically and globally. Through case studies and real-world examples, learners will develop practical approaches for managing cross-cultural interactions and fostering productive relationships.

Moreover, the course emphasizes the development of intercultural communication and negotiation skills essential for effective collaboration in a global business environment. By honing their capabilities in navigating differences and finding common ground, students will be prepared to succeed in intercultural settings and drive positive outcomes in diverse business contexts.

COURSE LEVELS:

Classes are taught and conducted in English. No Japanese language level is required.

COURSE OBJECTIVES/ OUTCOMES:

By the end of the session, students should be able to understand:

- 1) The political, economic, technological, legal and ethical forces that influence Japanese management practices
- 2) Cultural dimensions and cultural influences on behavior in Japanese organizations.
- 3) Strategic considerations for Western organizations operating in Japan as well as dealing with Japanese investors in their domestic market and globally.

Also this course trains students in developing international communication and negotiation skills.

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION:

Lecture, participatory (dialogical, reciprocal learning), inquiry (research & inquiry, cooperative group, engage by generating questions), critical thinking and constructive thinking (analyzing and examining media, multiple alternative culture), creative future thinking (action agenda, root cause, exchange ideas).

TEXTBOOK(S) AND/OR CLASS MATERIALS:

The instructor will provide class materials.

GRADING, CERTIFICATE, GRADING PLAN & EVALUATION:

All students will get a grade for this academic course. You will also get a Certificate of Completion at the end of the course. Students who do not pass with a letter grade of D or above will not be awarded a Certificate of Completion.



Grading Scale:

- 100–90% = A (Excellent)
- 89–80% = B (Good)
- 79–70% = C (Satisfactory)
- 69–60% = D (Passing but Needs Improvement)
- 59% and below = F (Failing)

Grade Breakdown:

- Participation – 25%
Active involvement in classroom drills, discussions, and activities.
Punctuality and consistent preparedness.

Attendance - 25%

Assignments – 20%

Final Project – 30%

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS:

- Due to the intensive 9-day structure, attendance is mandatory. Each class represents a significant portion of instruction, and missing even one session may impact overall progress.
- Punctuality is required. Arriving late disrupts the learning environment and diminishes student progress.
- Arrivals 5 minutes or more after class begins will be marked as late (0.5 deduction).
- Arrivals 30 minutes or more after class begins will be considered an absence (0).
- Absences must be communicated to the instructor in advance whenever possible. Excused absences may be granted only in cases of illness or emergency, at the discretion of the instructor.
- Impact on Grades – Excessive lateness or absences will significantly lower the participation grade, which constitutes 30% of the final grade. More than two absences may place a student at risk of failing the course.

COURSE POLICIES:

It is required for students to attend all classes and come to class on time. Students should refrain from using cell phones while in class and eating during class times.

STUDENT CONDUCT:

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful and responsible manner that contributes to a positive learning environment. This includes:

- Respect for Others – Listening attentively, not interrupting, and valuing diverse cultural perspectives in discussions.
- Classroom Etiquette – Refraining from disruptive behaviors such as side conversations, excessive phone use, or distracting activities.
- Preparedness and Participation – Bringing necessary materials, completing assignments, and actively engaging in class activities.
- Professionalism – Arriving on time, observing deadlines, and demonstrating commitment to the short yet intensive format of the course.

Failure to adhere to expected standards of conduct may affect participation grades and, in serious cases, may lead to disciplinary measures in accordance with university policies.



Course Schedule (Subject to Change)

Class Day	Topic	Class Day	Topic
1	1) Introduction of the course, sharing business experiences in cross-cultural environment. 2) Nation's culture and Japan's cultural characters which impact business practices	6	How Japanese companies manage quality and lead time during the product development. Case Study 2/ Dealing with Cross-Cultural Stress. Experience the uncomfortable situations under the cultural gaps.
2	Communication style in Japan. Field work: To go field to observe behaviors of local Japanese people.	7	Role Play to experience business negotiation with a virtual Japanese company. Role Play / a case of "a Japanese company wishes to obtain promising technology from a small European start-up company". Class Field Trip/ in the afternoon
3	Japan's social concepts: There are 10 social concepts which can explain business practices and Japanese behaviors and ways of thinking. Group discussions. Japan modernization history from "Shogun" era.	8	Factory Visit/ To see operations in a small company in Japan.
4	How the entrepreneurs in Japan developed Japan way of manufacturing capabilities. How Japan's social concepts worked there.	9	Summary of the course.
5	Toyota Production Systems: Just-in-Time, zero defect, etc. How foreign companies develop business with Japanese car makers. Case Study 1/ Dealing with Cross-Cultural Stress. Experience the uncomfortable situations under the cultural gaps.		