



VIDEO GAMES, MEDIA AND CULTURE ACADEMIC COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE NAME:

Business Topics - Video Games, Media and Culture

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:

Video games have emerged as a significant form of media and entertainment, shaping contemporary culture and influencing various aspects of society. This course explores the dynamic and multifaceted relationship between video games, media, and culture. Through critical analysis and discussion, students will gain a comprehensive understanding of the cultural, social, and artistic dimensions of video games and their impact on individuals and communities. During their time in Japan, students will explore the cultural roots of the birthplace of video games, and experience the modern nuances of video games in Japanese culture. The course allows students to explore the differences between two media-centric countries, whose relationship to video games is quite different.

COURSE LEVELS:

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

COURSE OBJECTIVES/ OUTCOMES:

By the end of this study abroad course, students will have developed a comprehensive understanding of the role of video games, media, and culture in Japan. They will be able to critically analyze the historical and cultural significance of Japanese video games, evaluating their impact on global gaming culture and their intersection with other forms of media, such as anime and manga. Students will also gain insight into the technological innovations that have shaped Japanese gaming and media industries. Through hands-on experiences and visits to relevant cultural sites, students will deepen their understanding of Japanese language, culture, and society. They will be able to create multimedia projects that demonstrate a nuanced understanding of Japanese video games, media, and culture, and engage in discussions about their impact on contemporary society. Through reflection, students will integrate personal experiences and insights gained from their study abroad experience, fostering a deeper appreciation for Japanese culture and its influence on global popular culture.

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.

HOMEWORK

Daily homework will focus on study and fieldwork for development of the final presentation project test.

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:

Class Participation: 33.3%
Active involvement in classroom drills, discussions, and activities.
Punctuality and consistent preparedness.

Attendance: 33.3%
Attendance policy applies:
5 minutes late = marked late (0.5 deduction)
30 minutes late or more = counted as absent (0)

Final Exam and Presentation: 33.3%

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.

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.

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 1:

Introduction to Video Games and Japanese Culture:

Course orientation and overview of objectives.

Lecture on the history of video games in Japan, including key milestones and influential titles.

Group discussion on personal experiences with video games and initial perceptions of Japanese gaming culture.

CLASS DAY 2:

Exploring Japanese Video Game Culture:

Lecture: Historical Roots of Video Games in Japan.

Guest Speaker: The Evolution of Japanese Gaming Culture.

Field Visit: Visit to a Video Game Museum/Arcade in Japan.

Reflection Session: Observations and Insights from the Visit.

CLASS DAY 3:

Video Games as Media and Entertainment:

Lecture: Video Games as a Form of Media and Entertainment.

Critical Analysis: The Cultural Impact of Video Games.

Group Discussion: Social and Artistic Dimensions of Video Games.

CLASS DAY 4:

Intersection of Video Games, Anime, and Manga in Japan:

Lecture: The Intersection of Video Games, Anime, and Manga in Japan.

Case Study: Iconic Japanese Video Games and Their Global Influence.

Interactive Session: Analyzing Japanese Video Games.

Group Discussion: Technological Innovations in Japanese Gaming.

CLASS DAY 5:

Technological Innovations in Japanese Gaming:

Overview of technological advancements in the gaming industry (VR, AR, mobile gaming).

Visit to a gaming studio or tech company to see innovations in action.

Q&A session with industry professionals discussing the future of gaming technology in Japan.

CLASS DAY 6:

Hands-On Multimedia projects for presentations:

Lab Period: Working on Multimedia project presentations.

Individual Consultations: Feedback and Guidance on project presentations.

CLASS DAY 7:

Hands-On Gaming Experience:

Workshop on game design principles, where students create a small game concept or design element.

Collaborative group activities to share and critique each other's designs.

Fieldwork to explore local gaming cafes.

CLASS DAY 8:

Finalizing Multimedia Project presentations:

Lab Period: Finalizing Multimedia Project presentations.

Group Activity: Peer Review and Feedback.

Assignment: Preparing Final Portfolio for Presentations.

CLASS DAY 9

Presentations and Course Reflection:

Student Presentations

Group Discussion: Reflections on the Study Abroad Experience