

DISCOVER CONTEMPORARY JAPAN

WINTER SCHOOL 2027

Language, Culture, Industry and Pop Culture

Program Period	January 13-28, 2027
Format	Short-term intensive winter school
Primary Language of Instruction	English. Japanese is used only in the optional courses.
Target Participants	Undergraduate students from overseas partner institutions
Japanese-Language Prerequisite	None

1. Course Overview

Contemporary Japan Winter School 2027 is an interdisciplinary, short-term program designed to introduce students to present-day Japan through integrated study of language, culture, society, industry, and creative expression.

Students develop practical intercultural and communication skills through cultural experiences, interactive lectures, student engagement, excursions, and [survival Japanese](#)*. Academic sessions explore food and washoku, Japanese industries, music and idol culture, anime in Japan and abroad, and Japanese popular culture. Together, these topics enable participants to examine how tradition, innovation, everyday life, and global cultural circulation intersect in contemporary Japan.

The program culminates in a final presentation in which students integrate insights from classroom learning, field observation, intercultural interaction, and personal reflection.

*Survival Japanese Language with Cultural Experience is offered as an optional course. This course is an introductory Japanese language course designed for students who have never studied Japanese before or who have a very basic understanding, such as knowledge of greetings, hiragana and katakana. Students will learn essential expressions and phrases needed to “survive” during a short stay in Japan.

2. Course Objectives

- Develop a broad and interdisciplinary understanding of contemporary Japanese society, culture, and industry.
- Examine the relationship between traditional cultural practices and contemporary creative expression.
- Explore how Japanese food, anime, music, idol culture, and other forms of popular culture are produced, circulated, and interpreted in Japan and abroad.
- Strengthen students' intercultural communication, collaboration, observation, and reflection skills.
- Connect classroom-based learning with experiential learning through student sessions, cultural activities, and excursions.
- Support students in synthesizing and presenting their learning in a clear, evidence-based final presentation.

- Build foundational Japanese-language skills for everyday communication during the program. (Optional Course)

3. Learning Outcomes

By the end of the program, students will be able to:

- Describe major characteristics of contemporary Japanese culture, society, and industry.
- Analyze selected examples of continuity and change between traditional and contemporary Japan.
- Discuss how Japanese cultural products and practices are adapted, localized, or reinterpreted across national and cultural contexts.
- Explain connections among cultural values, creativity, industry, media, and globalization.
- Engage constructively with students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- Compare aspects of Japanese society with those of their own countries or regions.
- Communicate key findings and reflections through an organized oral presentation.
- Use basic Japanese expressions for greetings, self-introduction, shopping, transportation, dining, and simple inquiries. (Optional Course)

4. Course Components

Component	Focus
Food and Washoku	An introduction to Japanese food culture, including history, regional diversity, cultural meaning, global diffusion, and localization.
Japanese Industries	Exploration of Japanese industries, organizational practices, manufacturing and service traditions, innovation, and changing global roles.
Japanese Music and Idol Culture	Study of contemporary music, idol production, fandom, media, digital platforms, and youth culture.
Anime in Japan and Abroad	Examination of anime as a cultural form and global industry, including production, circulation, translation, reception, and cultural influence.
Japanese Popular Culture	Analysis of selected areas such as manga, games, fashion, characters, media, and online culture in relation to Japanese society.
Student Sessions and Excursions	Opportunities to learn with Kansai University students and to connect course themes with places, institutions, and everyday life in Japan.
Final Project and Presentation	A structured synthesis of academic learning, field observation, intercultural exchange, and reflection, presented individually or in a group.
Survival Japanese Language with Cultural Experience (Optional Course)	Practical Japanese for everyday situations, combined with activities that connect language use to social and cultural conventions.

5. Teaching and Learning Methods

- Interactive lectures and guided discussion
- Small-group work and collaborative inquiry
- Cultural-experience activities

- Student-to-student intercultural exchange
- Excursions and structured field observation
- Reflection activities and learning synthesis
- Final presentation with instructor and peer feedback
- Practical Japanese-language activities (Optional Course)

6. Assessment

Assessment emphasizes active engagement, intercultural learning, synthesis, and communication rather than language accuracy alone.

Participation in classes, cultural activities, student sessions, and excursions	30%
Reflection activities and in-class assignments	30%
Final project and presentation	40%
Total	100%

7. Final Project and Presentation

Students select a topic connected to the program and develop a short analytical presentation. The project should move beyond a simple activity report and address the following:

- What did the student or group observe, discover, or come to understand?
- How does the selected topic compare with the student's own country, region, or cultural context?
- What social, historical, economic, cultural, or technological factors may explain the similarities and differences?
- How did classroom learning, field experience, and intercultural interaction contribute to the analysis?

The presentation format, group size, and required length will be confirmed by the program coordinators.

8. Participation Expectations

- Attend all scheduled classes and program activities punctually.
- Participate actively and respectfully in discussions, group work, and intercultural exchange.
- Complete assigned preparation and reflection tasks.
- Observe appropriate conduct during university activities and excursions.
- Demonstrate openness to unfamiliar perspectives, practices, and forms of expression.
- Contribute fairly to collaborative work and the final presentation.

Note: The program schedule and individual session content are subject to adjustment.

Syllabus (Survival Japanese Language with Cultural Experience)

1	Subject	Survival Japanese Language with Cultural Experience
2	Language	Japanese
3	Key words	Zero beginner, Grammar, Communication, Conversation
4	Lecturer	TBA
5	Lecture style	In-person
6	Evaluation Criteria	Excellent(S) 90-100%; Very good(A) 80-89%; Good(B) 70-79%; Pass(C) 60-69%; Fail(D) 0-59%
7	Evaluation methods	Attendance and Participation 60%, Assignments 20%, Review Quizzes 20%
8	Prerequisites	● Students who have had less than 300 hours of Japanese classes. ● This course is aimed for complete beginners with no previous knowledge of the Japanese language. ● Restrictions may apply to intermediate level students or above due to class size limitations (Priority will be given to beginners).
9	Course Description	This course is an introductory Japanese language course for students who have never learned Japanese before, or have a very basic knowledge of Japanese greetings, such as hiragana and katakana. Students are taught fundamental expressions and phrases necessary to “survive” during a short stay in Japan. Additionally, they can experience Japanese culture through food sample making, which originates in Osaka. (Contents are subject to change.) By the end of the course, students will be able to use basic Japanese conversation expressions and phrases in daily life and understand a part of Japanese traditional culture.
10	Course Objectives	The aim of this course is to provide international students who are beginner with useful Japanese phrases and vocabulary necessary to deal with their situations in daily communication, and to have them learn a part of Japanese culture. Students who successfully complete this course will be able to learn the following: • Useful expressions: greetings, self-introduction, etc. • Basic words and phrases: indicating time, prices, etc. • Basic conversation in daily life: shopping, having a meal, etc.
11	Course Schedule	[Session 1: Self introduction] Goal: You can tell others your name, country, and jobs, and ask others about theirs. Items: Expressions for greetings, Noun sentences [Session 2: Japanese Cultural Studies1] Goal: You can understand a part of Japanese Culture. Items: Introduction to Japanese culture and Talking with Japanese students [Session 3: Shopping] Goal: You can ask the location and the price of things you want to buy. Items: 'N des ka?', 'arimaska?', Number (up to 10,000), Counting money etc. [Session 4: Restaurant] Goal: You can order food in a restaurant. Items: vocabulary about Food, “N no N”, “kore/sore/are”, etc. [Session 5: Daily Life] Goal: You can talk and ask about daily life. Items: Verb sentences, Day of the week, Time word (days) etc. [Session 6: My Country/Hometown] Goal: You can describe your country/hometown to others, can ask others about theirs. Items: Adjective sentences, “Donna~tokoro desuka?” etc. [Session 7: Japanese Cultural Studies2] Goal: You can understand a part of Japanese Culture. Items: Japanese archery or Japanese Tea ceremony experience. * The schedule is subject to change.
12	Assignments	Students are required to complete a worksheet provided every day (1-2 pages). Students must expect to spend about one hour every day for reviewing the day's lesson.
13	Text books	Students will be provided with learning materials and original handouts throughout the course from the lecturer.
14	References	Students will be provided with details of a range of internet-based resources.
15	Notes on Taking the Course	/