**Project Summary – Hugh Jo, Dept. of Political Science, Westfield State University**

Westfield State University in western Massachusetts has a small population of Asian students and is developing an Asian Studies minor. My participation in the Japan Studies Institute program at SDSU will help me develop and teach Introduction to Asian Studies, a required course for the minor.

In order to stimulate students’ interest in the Asian Studies minor, Intro Asian Studies will be designed to appeal a broad student audience across various fields. This introductory course will be co-taught by three regional specialists: a China specialist teaching Chinese society, an India specialist teaching contemporary culture in India and Southwest Asia, and I teaching Japanese modern history and politics. As it covers contemporary cultures, societies, and politics of many Asian countries, the new course is expected to generate interest among students and draw more students to the minor.

In the five weeks set aside for Japan, I plan to use popular films, documentaries, and readings to teach Japanese history and politics. I will start the course with *The Twilight Samurai* to introduce students to Japan’s transition from feudalism to the modern era. I will develop lectures on the Meiji Restoration and Japan’s foreign relations in the early 20th century from Andrew Gordon’s *A Modern History of Japan* and PBS video, *Japan – Past & Present*. Finally I will rely on seminar notes and additional research to teach contemporary Japanese culture and society.