

## Japan Studies Institute 2019

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### Incorporating Japanese Studies Into My Curriculum

#### Course Information

I will integrate information I learned from the various lectures/seminars at the Japan Studies Institute into the curriculum of the courses I teach in both the short-term and over the long-term. Short-term implementation of Japanese Studies will begin immediately with my ANTH 121: Cultural Anthropology course that I am teaching during the Summer 3 academic session and during the Fall 2019 semester. My Cultural Anthropology course is required for all anthropology majors and minors, and is a required course for all International Studies majors. Furthermore, the course fulfills 3.0 social science credits for Millersville University's general education curriculum. I regularly teaching 35-40 students per section in this course, and I teach 1-2 sections of this course each semester (including two sections during the summer). As such, a large number of students will be exposed to scholarly information about Japan through taking Cultural Anthropology.

My long-term goal is to develop a semester-long, 200-level "Topics in Anthropology" Course that focuses specifically on Japan. I am thinking of titling this course "Introduction to Japanese Society." This course would consist of various units – including Geography, Basic Language Introduction, Historical Overview from Ancient Times to the Present, Physical Anthropology/Genetics Research on the Population of Japan, Marriage/Family Life in Japan, Japanese Popular Culture (Anime, Sports, Music), and the Japanese Diaspora in the United States.

#### Immediate Course Integration

##### ANTH 121: Cultural Anthropology

- Approximately one month into the semester, I have a unit on globalization. I have been thinking of ways to significantly expand this globalization unit over the past year, and I now plan on including a segment on "Japanese Hip Hop as a Product of Late 20<sup>th</sup>/Early 21<sup>st</sup> Century Globalization." Many of my students are hip hop fans, so this topic will be sure to be of special interest to them. The rise of hip hop culture's popularity among Japanese youth is one of the most powerful example's of the globalization of popular culture in recent decades. Anthropologist Ian Condry's ethnography *Hip-Hop Japan: Rap and the Paths of Cultural Globalization* (Duke University Press, 2006) provides outstanding material for assigned readings for this portion of the course, and there is a documentary titled *Planet B-Boy* that focuses on a five-member Japanese break dancing crew from Tokyo named Ichigeki as they train for and compete at the International B-Boy Competition. This film also provides ethnographic information on each member's personal/family life, and how their relationship with their parents and/or wives has been affected by their involvement with hip hop.
  - For this unit in my course, I will assign students chapters from Condry's book, for which they will be quizzed to ensure that they have read (I quiz almost daily in each of my courses). In addition, I will show the film *Planet B-Boy* and issue students a film guide with students questions to focus on and answer while they are watching the film. Lastly, I will require students to produce a typed three-page analysis paper in which they reflect upon the unit on Japanese Hip Hop (what they have learned, how learning about hip hop's popularity in Japan has changed their pre-existing assumptions about both hip hop and Japan, and the paper will also require students to analyze the rise of Japanese hip hop in terms of anthropological discourse/concepts by relating Condry's readings and *Planet B-Boy* to the other theoretical anthropological concepts they have learned throughout the larger course (such as globalization, cultural diffusion, cultural essentialism, culture change, marriage/family life, etc.)

### **ANTH 122: Physical Anthropology**

- My Physical Anthropology course examines the biological diversity of human beings, including how physical variation and genetic diversity exists *within* groups (among the Japanese, for example) and not just *between* groups (such as between the Japanese and the Irish). Students are often very surprised to learn that there is a greater amount of total genetic variation within population groups today than between groups – this is a very eye-opening concept for students, but it is a basic fundamental concept in studies of human biology; my ANTH 122 course explains why this is the case. In recent years, Japanese anthropologists have conducted genetic studies on the population of Japan, and they have discovered the population of Japan today primarily has genetic ancestry from two different groups (the Jōmon and Yayoi peoples) – and although most Japanese have genetic ancestry from both, the proportions/ratios of this ancestry varies widely among people living in different regions of Japan today: modern Japanese living in Hokkaido, northern Honshu and in Okinawa have much higher percentages of Jōmon genetic ancestry than Japanese living in other regions of the country. I have discovered this information from Japanese anthropological websites, produced by Japanese anthropologists who have translated their research into English which will enable me to assign these research reports/websites to my students as required reading. These Japanese-produced websites and news articles also contain writings by Japanese anthropologists who openly challenge the commonly-held notion (by some Japanese conservatives, but also particularly by Westerners) that Japan is a “genetically homogenous” society. I feel that this information from Japanese anthropologists is of extreme importance for my students, because many of them are very unaware of just how genetically diverse Asians (in general) and Japanese (specifically) actually are. I plan on using these websites and newspaper articles as assigned readings in my ANTH 122 course that I will be teaching in the Spring 2020 semester (students will be quizzed on these readings), and I will conduct an in-class lecture unit on the peopling/settlement of Japan over the past 30,000 years and how the migrations and blending of the Jōmon and Yayoi shaped patterns of genetic diversity throughout Japan today. I am, at present, searching for a documentary film or YouTube videos that can accompany this unit.