

JSI PROJECT ABSTRACT: Creation of a New Course

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I wish to use Japanese literature and film as tools to gain insight into Japanese culture, to better understand the Japanese sensibility and world view. USF Sarasota-Manatee students are required to take an upper-level course that focuses on human diversity through global or community engagement. This course will qualify as a “diversity engagement” course that explores Japanese culture through its literature and film, enriched by engagement with Japanese students via technology. The course will focus on post-war literature and film (1947-2013). Students will read approximately 5 texts and view approximately 8 films. Since the importance of family, both personally and societally, is relatively universal, the course will focus on stories about family. The students’ grades will result from a variety of assignments in which they explore insights into Japanese family concerns, as they are treated in contemporary Japanese narrative fiction (literature and film). Their global engagement, however, will not just be with the artifacts; through technology, they will engage in conversations with Japanese students on relevant topics. I am collaborating with a Japanese university instructor of English language to connect his students and my American students as “e-pals,” to converse about the course content via technology, such as email, AV teleconferencing, and video clips. Interaction with Japanese peers to learn about Japanese family life in the 21st century, as well as to engage their response to important contemporary Japanese literature and film will lead to a deep and rich understanding of both Japanese culture and its artifacts of literature and film.