

BRIDGES TO JAPAN: Internationalizing the Curriculum at Virginia State University
(Summary)

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Consistent with our university's mission to increase students' cross-cultural competence and promote global learning, this project involves curricular and co-curricular infusion of content on Japan and its culture to achieve the following three goals: (1) increase students' global awareness of Japanese society and culture, including an understanding of Japan's importance in both a regional and global context; (2) promote Japan as a site for education abroad immersion experiences for the study of Japanese language and culture; and (3) expand campus cultural programming to provide university-wide opportunities for exposure to Japanese society and culture, both traditional and modern. These goals can be met by successfully completing three objectives. One objective will be to internationalize an existing course in the English major—*ENGL 314: Readings in Multi-Cultural Literature*--by infusing content on Japanese literature and culture. A course syllabus is being designed with the theme of "Contemporary Japanese Literature and Film," drawing upon recommended readings and films shared by JSI lecturers. The JSI lectures on art and architecture, religion, aesthetics, government, pop culture, economics, and key historic events have provided topics through which students can undertake supplementary research presentations that provide contexts for the literary representation of Japan. Additionally, the project seeks to internationalize the curriculum across disciplines by hosting visiting scholars and exchange visitors from Japan for teaching, research collaboration and other academic activities. A second objective is to develop a faculty-led study abroad program in Japan beginning in summer 2013. Efforts will also include encouraging both short-term and long-term immersion programs that include beginning Japanese language study and involve service learning opportunities. A third objective will be to offer at least one Japan-focused international program each semester. An application will be made to the NEAC Distinguished Speakers Bureau to host a Japanese Studies scholar for activities for the annual International Education Week observance (November 12-16, 2012). The plan is to involve academic departments and student organizations to plan an international forum, film presentation, festival or performing arts presentation or other activities whose focus is Japan. Thus, many of the resources provided during the JSI lectures and program activities along with resources at area universities with Japanese Studies programs, the Japan Foundation, and other organizations that promote the study of Japanese culture will be tapped to enable the VSU campus to connect culturally with Japan and more broadly to foster global learning across the campus community.