

NIGEL DOBEREINER: INCORPORATING JAPANESE STUDIES INTO COMMUNICATION COURSES

Three courses I teach regularly come immediately to mind, and I am determined to create at least one new course. I also plan to arrange a student trip to Japan, possibly during the less expensive winter break season.

COMM 101: Introduction to Mass Communication

I teach at least one section of this course almost every semester. In addition to being required for our Communication major, it is part of the University's "Common Core" electives in the area of Social Understanding. The enrollment in this course is from across University majors.

In my section on globalization of corporate media, I already include representations of pop music videos from Ghana, Russia and Japan. I now plan to more fully expand this section to a very full investigation of how pop music differs, where we can find commonalities, what the music suggests about the culture of Japan (and what ours says about us), and why we don't see more Japanese pop stars in America.

COMM 221: Communication Theory

In reviewing the material I currently use in my Communication Theory course, I was shocked to realize for the first time that ALL the theories we cover are American-based, with some small additions from Western Europe. That will now change. This topic was not specifically covered in our fellowship, but I have already begun doing research that will bring other culture's theories into the mix, particularly Japan's, now that I have Institute experiences to help inform my broader explanations of the cultural background in which the theory was created.

COMM 223: Introduction to Web Site Design and Instruction

I have taught this course almost every year for the last decade. While I have been able to ably teach the technologies involved in building a website, and developed an understanding in students of how to design for an audience, I have often been disappointed in the aesthetic results of the technically correct products created. This may be due to my own limitations as a designer (I know what looks good when I see it, but I can't always create it). After my experiences at JSI, I have come to believe that an artful eye and aesthetic sensitivity can be taught, even in a technology course. My goal will be to introduce Japanese artistic practices such as sumi-e painting and Ikenobo flower arranging or Ikebana, and to examine Japanese uses of color and space in both traditional and modern applications (the web, Anime, etc.).

COMM 213: Global Film Studies (existing) or COMM 3XX: Japanese Film (to propose)

My goal will be to introduce a new course focused only on Japanese film into the Film Studies minor (with the generous help of the "How to Plan a Japanese Film Course" document created by Aki Hirota and provided by the JSI).

