

San Diego State University

2018 AASCU Japan Studies Institute

Project Summary

Fellow: Barbara Zuck, Montana State University-Northern

I will incorporate Japan Studies into an upper-division international business course. I am delighted to focus 5 weeks of content on Japan Studies. The content comes primarily from what I was exposed to and learned at the 2018 AASCU Japan Studies Institute, San Diego State University.

During Week 1, students will learn the physical geography and social geography of Japan, followed by four areas of culture: Economic Philosophy, Social Structure, Religion and Education. Additionally, students will play a simulation game, Barnga. Barnga is a game which is designed to encourage students to critically consider normative assumptions and challenges with cross-cultural communication and rules.

Content presented in Week 2 builds on what students learned during Week 1. Students will watch and discuss the film, Departures.

A change in content occurs during Week 3 and Week 4. Students will explore elements of World War II in a comparative manner. Students will read and discuss the book, *A Rise from the Ashes*, by Dr. Akiko Mikamo. I was moved by the San Diego-Worldwide Initiative to Safeguard Humanity and its annual August 6th International Peace & Humanity Day. Although this activity will occur in November, during fall semester, each student will write a "Wish for Peace and Humanity" on a card. As a class, we will walk in a silent and reflective way to the pond on campus. Each student will place his/her wish on the display board located near the pond. Then, to gain another perspective on WW II, students will watch and discuss the film, Only the Brave.

During Week 5, the content areas about Japan Studies will focus on business and pop culture. Students will gather and analyze data on Japan, Russia, South Korea, Taiwan, China, and India. For this comparative analysis, students will use globalEDGE. GlobalEDGE, funded in part by the U.S. Department of Education Title VI B grant, delivers a comprehensive research tool for academics, students and businesspeople. The analysis encourages critical thinking as students will compare various risk factors and business indicators, including the ease of doing business, freedom of the press, the corruption perceptions index, market potential index, and foreign direct investment.

The last day of class will be a celebration of pop culture in Japan. Students will watch a short video, Gatebox, a virtual home robot. Then, they will analyze the animated video in three areas: textual, ethnographic, and political/historical/economic.

Hopefully, by learning about the culture and diversity within Japan, students will be motivated to explore and participate in a Study Abroad Program with Montana State University – Bozeman and a Partner University in Japan. Finally, I will end the class with a poem from the 1600's, Haiku.