

## 2019 JAPAN STUDIES INSTITUTE

### Project Summary

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My participation in the JSI program has helped me broaden my comprehension and appreciation of Japanese culture and society. The high-quality learning experiences have helped me become more globally literate. For example, I have learned a lot about Buddhism and Shintoism. Particularly, our visit to the Buddhist Temple was a fascinating eye opener. I learned a lot about the origin of Shintoism and Buddhism and how the two religions can coexist with each other. Among other things, I teach World Religion at Fayetteville State University. While the course catalogue description for my World Religion class lists Shintoism, alongside other World Religions, I have always avoided discussing Shintoism because of my lack of knowledge about the tenets of that religion.

Thus, the knowledge that I have acquired about the Japanese culture and Religion from the JSI Institute will be useful in terms of development of my World Religion class. Consequently, I intend to restructure my World Religion class by incorporating Shintoism and Buddhism into the course syllabus. In the second half of the semester, Japan will be the focal point of the discussions of Asian Religions with students. Among other things, we will examine the impact of Shintoism and Buddhism on the Japanese culture, politics, and society. Further, we will discuss the similarities and differences between Shintoism and Buddhism in Japan and religions in America. Students will be required to make presentations on how the Shinto traditions and customs have contributed to Japanese culture and development. The Japanese culture, unlike the American culture, is said to be community-oriented (where the group comes before the individual). In their term paper, students will be required to write on how the Japanese “group-centeredness” is reflected in Shinto and their religious practices. To bring our discussion on Shintoism and Buddhism life to students, we will discuss what these Japanese religions and philosophies have to offer the American culture. In sum, through the JSI program, I hope to develop new teaching strategies to integrate global theme, including Japanese religions and culture, into the classroom.