

JAPN 4900
Special Problems
Japanese, Advanced level, Anime Pilgrimage in Japan

Instructor: Dr. Kaori Furuya Email: kaori.furuya@unt.edu Office: Lang 405G

Phone Number: 940-565-2404 (main office)

Class Hour: 10:00-11:00 am on Monday

On zoom or in person

Office Hour: 8:20-9:20 am on Tuesdays and
Thursdays or by appointment

Course Description & Objectives:

This course examines *seichi junrei* (pilgrimage to places associated with popular media) as a cultural and economic phenomenon in contemporary Japan. Using authentic Japanese-language sources and selected case studies, students will explore the history of *seichi junrei*, how fans engage with these places and what these experiences mean to them, and how host communities—especially rural communities—respond to and make use of this phenomenon.

This course has three main goals:

- a. **Content Knowledge:** Understand *seichi junrei* as a cultural and economic phenomenon, including its history, fan engagement, and the responses of host communities.
- b. **Japanese Language Skills:** Develop the ability to read authentic Japanese sources on the topic and use topic-specific vocabulary productively, rather than simply recognizing it.
- c. **Research Skills / Graduate School Preparation:** Practice key academic research skills, including framing research questions, conducting a literature review, and analyzing case studies. These skills will help students prepare for graduate school applications, including statements of purpose and writing samples.

Method: This course relies exclusively on secondary and documentary sources. Students will analyze academic articles, local government and tourism-board materials (自治体資料・観光協会資料), news coverage, and publicly available fan commentary, such as blogs and SNS posts. No surveys or questionnaires will be conducted. This approach emphasizes document and discourse analysis rather than primary data collection.

Learning Outcomes

- a. By the end of the course, students will be able to:
- b. Explain the history and cultural and economic significance of *seichi junrei* in contemporary Japan.
- c. Read and interpret authentic Japanese-language sources and use topic-specific vocabulary appropriately in speaking and writing.
- d. Analyze a selected *seichi junrei* case using documentary and discourse analysis of academic, governmental, tourism, media, and publicly available fan sources.
- e. Develop and present a focused research project that demonstrates basic academic research skills, including research-question formulation, literature review, and case-study analysis, in preparation for graduate-level study.

Readings

- Okamoto, T. (2015). "Otaku tourism and the anime pilgrimage phenomenon in Japan." *Japan Forum*, 27(1), 12–36.
- Yamamura, T. (2015). "Contents Tourism and Local Community Response: *Lucky Star* and collaborative anime-induced tourism in Washimiya." *Japan Forum*, 27(1).
- Seaton, P. & Yamamura, T. (Eds.) (2017). *Japanese Popular Culture and Contents Tourism*. Routledge. (Collects the two articles above plus two more case studies — good as a shared course text if you want one book.)
- Optional deeper dive: Seaton, Yamamura, Sugawa-Shimada & Jang (2017), *Contents Tourism in Japan: Pilgrimages to "Sacred Sites" of Popular Culture*, Cambria Press.

Video Materials

- Matsuko's Unknown World (マツコの知らない世界): "The World of Location Pilgrimages" (ロケ地巡礼の世界) — November 17, 2020
- Matsuko's Unknown World (マツコの知らない世界): "The Surprising Economic Impact of Anime Pilgrimages" (驚き経済効果！アニメ聖地巡礼) — August 2, 2022

Grading scales

Weekly Reading Responses — 20%
 Quizzes — 15%
 Case Study Report — 20%
 Presentation — 20%
 Final Research Paper — 30%

A: 90–100 B: 80–89 C: 70–79 D: 60–69 F: Below 60

- Weekly Reading Responses — 20%
Students will submit a short response each week to demonstrate their understanding of the assigned reading or video. Responses may be written in English, with a few simple Japanese sentences using the week's target vocabulary.
- Quizzes — 15%
Short quizzes will check students' understanding of key course concepts, readings, and Japanese vocabulary covered in class.
- Case Study Report — 20%
Students will write a short report analyzing a specific *seichi junrei* / contents tourism case using secondary sources. This assignment will help students develop the research question and evidence base for the final paper.
- Presentation — 20%
Students will give a short presentation on their case study, explaining the main case, evidence, findings, and significance. Simple Japanese may be incorporated when appropriate.
- Final Research Paper — 30%
Students will complete a research paper based on their case study. The paper will use secondary sources only and will include an English-language analysis and a short Japanese vocabulary component.

Grading Scale

- A: 90–100

- B: 80–89
- C: 70–79
- D: 60–69
- F: Below 60

Weekly Schedule

Week	Topic	Main Activity
1	Introduction to <i>Seichi Junrei</i>	Watch <i>Matsuko's Unknown World</i> and learn key vocabulary.
2	History of Anime Pilgrimage	Read Yamamura (2009) and discuss the Washimiya case.
3	Anime Pilgrimage and Tourism	Read Okamoto (2009) and discuss tourism impacts and research methods.
4	Otaku Tourism	Read Okamoto (2015) and introduce key concepts and theories.
5	Economic Impact	Watch <i>Matsuko's Unknown World</i> and discuss economic impact and regional revitalization.
6	Fan Engagement and Practices	Revisit Okamoto (2015) and discuss fan activities and pilgrimage practices.
7	Fan-Generated Content	Examine a public fan blog or tourism website related to the case study.
8	Case Study Selection	Choose a case and develop a research question.
9	Local Community Response	Read Yamamura (2015) and discuss community responses to anime tourism.
10	Media vs. Academic Perspectives	Revisit the Week 5 video and compare it with academic research.
11	Research and Source Gathering	Collect and evaluate secondary sources for the case study.
12	Graduate School Preparation	Draft an SOP/research-interest paragraph based on the project.
13	Research Paper Workshop	Submit and discuss a full draft of the research paper.
14	Revision and Editing	Revise the paper and finalize the Japanese vocabulary component.
15	Final Presentation and Wrap-Up	Present the case study and reflect on research and graduate-school goals.

ADA Accommodation Statement:

The most current statement regarding disability accommodation is provided on the ODA website <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access/faculty/faculty-guide/syllabus-statement.html>

The University of North Texas makes reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities. Students needing a reasonable academic accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the student will request their letter of accommodation. ODA will provide faculty with a reasonable accommodation letter via email to begin a private discussion regarding a student's specific needs in a course. Students may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to meet with faculty regarding their accommodation during office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the Office of Disability Access website.

Guidelines on Resolving Student Concerns in the WLLC Department:

When a student has a course-related concern about their instructor (e.g., appeal a grade, disagreement about attendance record, interpretation of a class assignment, assigned grades, etc.), the following steps should be taken to resolve the issue:

1. The student should first attempt to informally resolve their concern by speaking directly with their instructor.
2. If there is no satisfactory resolution to their concern, the student should email a description of the issue to Dr. Christoph Weber, chair of the WLLC department (christoph.weber@unt.edu).
3. The department chair will contact the assistant/associate chair of the WLLC department. They will meet with the student and instructor separately to resolve the issue.
4. The department chair will inform the student about the resolution of their concern.

Guidelines on Grade Appeals in the WLLC Department:

Students should attempt to resolve the grade dispute with their instructor first. If there is no satisfactory resolution, the student can initiate a grade appeal with the instructor based on the following criteria:

1. The grade is based on unfair treatment during the regularly scheduled class period.
2. The instructor deviated from the guidelines outlined in the course syllabus without providing a valid academic reason, or

3. An error occurred in calculating the grade, including the failure to factor in an assignment, project, quiz, or examination.

UNT CARE Team:

The mission of the [CARE Team](#) is to:

- Assist in protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the students and members of the UNT community.
- Support student success.
- Provide a comprehensive response to students whose behavior could be harmful to themselves or others.

Students will be notified by Eagle Alert if there is a campus closing that will impact a class. The calendar is subject to change. Additional details can be found in the Emergency Notifications and Procedures Policy.

Course Evaluation:

The Student Evaluation, SPOT, will be available at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on this class. The SPOT is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT, and responses are used by the department in evaluating the faculty. We work to continually improve our courses, so we appreciate your feedback!

Mission of the World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures: Representing many world languages, literatures and cultures, our dedicated faculty promote excellence in research, teaching and professional service. Committed to cultural diversity and inclusivity, we teach our undergraduate and graduate students communication, critical thinking and research skills for competitive employment around the world.

Vision: We strive to establish a reputation both nationally and internationally in research, teaching and professional service. Seeking harmony in diversity, we foster global literacy, responsible citizenship and interdisciplinarity.

Japanese National Honor Society:

UNT has a chapter of the Japanese National Honor Society (JNHS). The mission of the society is to recognize our outstanding students and encourage their scholastic achievement and excellence in the study of Japanese language. In addition, we aim to promote ways for students to use Japanese on campus and in the community. Certificates of Excellence and red-and-white cords to wear at graduation will be given to students who are granted membership in the society.

Criteria for JNHS membership:

- Completion of 5 semester courses of Japanese language study at the college level ^{{}L}_{{}SEP}
- GPA of 3.5 in Japanese language courses
- Overall GPA of 3.0