



EPS3524 Made in Japan: Culture and Opportunities

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is built on two major themes:

1. Cultural excursion

Provide students to have an in-depth look and a chance to experience Japan's culture, in other words, its institutional environment (i.e., formal and informal rules of the game).

- Students will have opportunities to examine this through various dimensions that constitute the diversity and complexity of the country's cultural/institutional environment today:
 - Metropolitan vs. suburban
 - Modern-contemporary vs. old-fashioned
 - Young-emerging vs. mature-established
 - High vs. low tech, etc.

2. Entrepreneurial opportunities

Encourage students to practice Entrepreneurial Thought and Action (ET&A) within the cultural/institutional environment in Japan.

- Students will work in teams to conduct observations, identify problems and opportunities, design an entrepreneurial initiative, and assess its impact (including stakeholder analysis) and feasibility – in various contexts/perspectives:
 - Location-based
 - Industry-based
 - Interest/theme-based, etc.

The entire course is designed on the concept of interactive learning through site visits, mini projects, and individual/group research.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

After successfully completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Express an in-depth understanding of the workings of modern Japan's cultural/institutional environment;
2. Identify entrepreneurial opportunities relevant to the Japanese context by appreciating cultural differences, thinking critically about the problems of others (with a particular focus on the institutional influences on the problem space);
3. Design an entrepreneurial initiative (e.g., beyond a simple product/service idea – by developing a solution that involves social, political, cultural aspect of a country's institutional environment), and assess its impact (e.g., aligning stakeholder interests) and feasibility, risks, and the steps to implement;
4. Apply to various contexts (e.g., other countries) the framework gained in Japan how the institutional environment affects entrepreneurship development;
5. Demonstrate leadership and teamwork skills gained from group work in an unfamiliar and challenging situation

COURSE PLAN – See attachment for preliminary itinerary

Pre-departure Sessions* (in Fall 2019): Oct. 19th (Sat) 1-5pm and Nov. 16th (Sat) 9am-2pm

Travel Dates*: Jan. 4th (Sat) – Jan. 14th (Tue) 2020 [10 days in Japan]

City Locations: Scheduled for Tokyo (and the surrounding area)

Visits (TBD): Digital Garage, School of Animation, Waseda University, etc.

DIY Cultural Experiences (TBD): Calligraphy, drums, making food samples, glass art, sushi, etc.

***No partial participation is allowed for the entire course. Admitted students must attend and participate in ALL program activities.**

COURSEWORK

The course consists of 3 major phases: (1) Pre-departure, (2) In-country, and (3) Reflection.

Phase 1. Pre-departure: Learning through Research, Reading, and Discussion

Students will prepare for the trip by researching and discussing both classic and current articles on the nature of culture and entrepreneurship in Japan. These include scholarly journal articles, newspaper articles, cases, books, company reports, and any other pertinent materials.

There will be two mandatory pre-departure sessions – first session on “culture (institutional environment) in Japan” and second session on “entrepreneurial opportunities in Japan.” There will be writing assignments, report-outs, and discussions for each session.

[Pre-departure Session One: Culture (Institutional environment)] Students will engage in research and discussion on the common customs and practices that will apply to any interaction or situation that they might encounter while in Japan (e.g., how entrepreneurship is perceived, what to do/not to do in a cultural setting). Students will be responsible for developing a PowerPoint (PPT) presentation on: (a) a summary of any article of their choice on Japan's culture (institutional environment)*, (b)

why they think it is interesting, (c) what they expect to observe, study and learn while in Japan, (d) self-introduction (about themselves – e.g., passion, something that most others don't know about), and be ready to report out (3 minutes, 3 slides) in class. *See reference at the end of syllabus

[Pre-departure Session Two: Entrepreneurial Opportunities] Students will apply the tools, methods, and techniques of identifying/creating an entrepreneurial opportunity, designing an entrepreneurial initiative, evaluating its feasibility and impact, identifying risk factors and the next step of action. The focus will be on institutional influences on the problems that involve social, political, and cultural dimensions. Students will identify and report out their specific areas of interest – opportunity themes to observe while in Japan (1-minute presentation, 1 PPT slide). Students will also be responsible for developing a PPT presentation on: (a) summary of their assigned visit – both qualitatively (e.g., what about it?) and quantitatively (e.g., highlights in stats/numbers?) and (b) list of interesting questions to be asked at the time of visit (2 minutes, 2 slides) to discuss in class.

Phase 2. In-country: Learning through Careful Observations, Interactions, and Mini Projects

Acting as ambassadors of Babson College, students will apply their pre-departure knowledge and understanding to what they actually observe/experience in Japan. There will be a number of in-country activities, a few of which are outlined here:

- (a) **Company/DIY visits.** Students will visit companies and engage in activities to gain insights from careful observations and interactions with representatives.
- (b) **Mini (cultural excursion) projects.** Students will visit historically significant landmarks while working (in teams) on mini projects.
- (c) **ET&A.** Students in teams will be tasked with observing different aspects of Japan's institutional environment from various perspectives (e.g., by location, industry, interest) that may differ from its U.S. counterpart, to find seeds for entrepreneurial opportunities, to design an entrepreneurial initiative, and to conduct a preliminary evaluation of its feasibility, impact, and risk factors.

Phase 3. Reflection: Learning through Crystallizing Experiences and Memories

Once back in the U.S. (or while in Japan), students will apply their newly gained knowledge and understanding of Japan's culture (institutional environment) and entrepreneurial opportunities, and reflect on the experience (in conjunction with their pre-departure research).

Students (up to 2 members in a team) will pick a specific topic on which to focus their attention (based on an "observed" problem/need), design an entrepreneurial initiative, evaluate its feasibility and impact, identify risk factors and next step of action – **DELIVERABLE 1. ENTREPRENEURIAL INITIATIVE*** (PPT slides w/notes – including observation report, opportunity storyboard, feasibility assessment, impact analysis, success factors and critical risks, action steps and future directions).

*Focus will need to be on the "institutional difference" (i.e., what difference does it make to create /execute this entrepreneurial initiative in Japan vs. other countries? Why Japan? What's so unique?)

e.g., How can we re-design the city of Tokyo to improve its transportation systems for hosting 2020 Olympics?

REF. Problems to solve with the entrepreneurial initiative (American Chamber of Commerce):

- Q. How can we harness Entrepreneurship and create businesses (and employment) in Japan?
- Q. How can we improve legal structure (e.g., immigration policies) to promote investments to stimulate growth in Japan?
- Q. How can we enhance education across generations to promote the knowledge economy in Japan?

Finally, each student will take and select 3 pictures every day that provide a cultural/entrepreneurial meaning, take note of the learning (e.g., what's interesting?), and at the end of the course compile them into a handbook that will be shared and read by the cohort as well as the next group of students taking the course – **DELIVERABLE 2. HANDBOOK OF JAPAN** (PPT slides w/notes).

Both deliverables are generally due within a week after the final day of the course.

EVALUATION

15% = Pre-departure sessions: Contributions (e.g., assignments) to class discussions*

20% = In-country: Team projects including reflection papers and/or Brainshark presentations (10%), contributions to activities and professionalism (10%)**

65% = Reflection: Entrepreneurial initiative (45%), handbook (20%), and peer evaluation***

*Active participation is expected and encouraged. Faculty will do everything possible to involve each student in course discussions but it is **each student's** responsibility to actively contribute to the discussion. Faculty will value consistency (and improvement) over time, rather than uneven levels of participation. To be clear, participation/contribution includes (among others):

- Generating ideas and questions, initiating discussion
- Presenting a different perspective
- Analyzing concepts, weighing the advantages/disadvantages of alternatives
- Sharing experiences, providing examples that illustrate or refute concepts
- Helping other students make their point
- Summarizing key points, reaching conclusions

**Professionalism includes but is not limited to:

- Being prompt, respectful and courteous at all times
- Obeying rules/requests of many guides, hosts, and helpful individuals who make this trip possible
- Taking seriously your role as an ambassador of Babson College abroad
- Giving your best effort to make the trip a positive learning experience for all

***See final part of the syllabus for details on peer evaluation.

CALL TO ACTION

Up to 18 students will be admitted to this action-packed and fast-paced 4-credit course.

No partial participation is allowed. Admitted students must participate in ALL program activities.

Program fee: TBD

Includes accommodations, ground transportation, breakfast, and program-planned meals. Does **NOT** include tuition fee and flight cost. A recommended international flight itinerary (US/Tokyo/US) and travel agent information will be provided to students registered for the course.

Application deadline: Late April, 2018 (acceptance on rolling basis thereafter)

REFERENCE/READING LIST

Books/Reports

- Freeman, R. E. 2010. Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach. Cambridge University Press.
- García, H. 2011. A Geek in Japan: Discovering the Land of Manga, Anime, Zen, and the Tea Ceremony. Tokyo: Tuttle Publishing.
- Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2013 Global Report.
<http://www.gemconsortium.org/docs/download/2645>
- Haghirian, P. 2010. Understanding Japanese Management Practices. New York, NY: Business Expert Press.
- Kelley, T., & Littman, J. 2001. The Art of Innovation: Lessons in Creativity from IDEO, America's Leading Design Firm. New York, NY: Crown Business.

Book Chapter

- Hwang, H., & Powell, W. W. 2005. Institutions and entrepreneurship. In Alvarez, S., Agarwal, R., & Sorenson, O. (eds.), Handbook of Entrepreneurship Research, 179-210.
- Yamakawa, Y. 2009. Bankruptcy and social stigma in Japan. In Peng, M.W. Global Strategy, 2nd edition, South-Western Cengage Learning.

Articles

- Brown, T. 2008. Design thinking. Harvard Business Review, June: 85-92.
- Eberhart, R., & Eesley, C. 2012. Failure is an option: Institutional reform, bankruptcy, and new firm performance.
- Fackler, M. 2013. Start-up spirit emerges in Japan. The New York Times. Dec. 25.
- Hamori, M. 2010. Who gets headhunted – and who gets ahead? The impact of search firms on executive careers. Academy of Management Perspectives, 24(4): 46-59.
- Karlin, A.R. 2013. The entrepreneurship vacuum in Japan: Why it matters and how to address it. Knowledge@Wharton. Wharton School.
- Lam, R., & Shin, J. 2012. What role can financial policies play in revitalizing SMEs in Japan? Working paper, International Monetary Fund, Asia and Pacific Department.
- Liker, J.K., & Morgan, J.M. 2006. The Toyota way in services: The case of lean product development. Academy of Management, 20(2): 5-21.
- Makino, S., & Roehl, T. 2010. Learning from Japan: A commentary. Academy of Management Perspectives, 24(4): 38-45.
- Neck, H., Brush, C., & Allen, E. 2009. The landscape of social entrepreneurship. Business Horizons, 52(1): 13-19.
- Numagami, T., Karube, M., & Kato, T. 2010. Organizational deadweight: Learning from Japan. Academy of Management Perspectives, 24(4): 25-37.
- Onishi, T. 2007. Japanese fundraising: A comparative study of the United States and Japan. International Journal of Educational Advancement, 7(3): 205-225.

Peng, M.W., Yamakawa, Y., & Lee, S-H. 2010. Bankruptcy laws and entrepreneur-friendliness. *Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice*, 34(3): 517-530.

Skloot, G. 2012. Student startup dilemma.

Spinelli, S., Neck, H.M., & Timmons, J.A. 2006. The Timmons model of the entrepreneurial process. In Zacharakis, A., & Spinelli, S. (eds.), *Entrepreneurship: The Engine of Growth*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing.

Yamakawa, Y., Peng, M.W., & Deeds, D.L. 2013. Rising from the ashes: Cognitive determinants of venture growth after entrepreneurial failure. *Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice*, in print.

Websites

Japan Factsheet (overview with quick facts on many topics related to Japan) <http://web-japan.org/factsheet/index.html>

Country Study: Japan (comprehensive study on Japan's history and culture conducted by the Library of Congress) <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/jptoc.html>

BABSON POLICIES

Academic Honesty and Integrity

The standards and expectation of the Babson's academic honesty and integrity policies apply to this course as well as to any other course you are taking here. The policy is articulated in your Student Handbook. Failure of any student to take appropriate steps to fully understand it will not be an acceptable nor tolerated excuse for any violations.

Accommodations and Disabilities

Any student who feels he or she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately and in a timely fashion to discuss his or her specific needs. Students must also contact the Director of Disability Services at 781-239-5509 or in Hollister Hall 122 to coordinate reasonable academic accommodations.

Religious Observances

Any student who faces a conflict between the requirements of a course and the observance of his or her religious faith should contact the instructor as early in the semester as possible. In such event, the instructor will provide reasonable accommodations that do not unduly disadvantage the student.

GRADING POLICIES

The nature of this course does not lend itself to objective questions; generally there are no right or wrong answers. There are, however, different levels of quality. Grading is a measure of performance (not effort) and is based on the following scale:

Grade	Score	Evaluation
A	4.00	Superior Performance
A-	3.67	
B+	3.33	
B	3.00	Clearly Above Satisfactory Performance
B-	2.67	
C+	2.33	
C	2.00	Satisfactory Performance
C-	1.67	
D+	1.33	
D	1.00	Very Poor Performance (Marginally Passing)
D-	0.67	
F	0.00	Failure

Each assignment will be graded on this scale. Grades will be available through Blackboard.

The quality (and grade) on the assignments is at the instructor's discretion. It is a question of how well I understand your arguments and whether they are logically conveyed. You will find that managers and investors will judge your work and ideas on their interpretation of your work, not what you may have intended. It is up to you to ensure that your writing is clear and unambiguous.

The grading of assignments is done in relation to the rest of the class. In other words, a B+ is considered to be slightly higher quality than papers receiving a B and slightly lower quality than those receiving an A-. Occasionally, I am asked to reconsider a grade on an assignment. While I am open to such requests, assuming there is a compelling argument for review, please be aware that reconsidered grades can go down as well as up. All requests will be handled in person so that you

can explain your concern. However, in order to most efficiently handle such concerns, you must submit your argument in writing with a clear explanation as to why you feel the grade should be reconsidered. I will then schedule a time for a face-to-face discussion. Furthermore, I will not entertain grading discussions within 48 hours of receiving a grade – this is to ensure that you have had adequate time to reflect on the grade and my comments so that any subsequent discussion of the grade will be more productive.

Because of the importance of effective communication in business, all written assignments are expected to be double-checked for spelling and grammatical errors. While I realize that mistakes can and will happen, you will be penalized for any errors that would be caught by using the spelling and grammar check available in today's word processing software. I believe that this reflects a lack of interest in the quality of your work and it will result in an automatic ½ letter grade deduction.

Deadlines are important. All assignments will be turned in electronically unless otherwise indicated. As such, the time they are received will be based on the electronic time stamp indicating when the assignment was sent or posted. It is your responsibility to ensure that submissions are sent on time and delivered. Late assignments will be reduced ½ letter grade for each day late.

Peer Evaluation

Because of the magnitude of the impact of team grades on individual grades, students working in teams will complete a confidential peer appraisal (download from Blackboard) reviewing member's contribution to the team assignments. The peer appraisal is meant to discourage free-riding by any member of the team, and encourage sharing the significant workload of these assignments fairly. I reserve the right to reduce an individual's grade in the course based on the feedback. The peer appraisal will concentrate on evaluating whether each team member did his/her share of the work conscientiously on a timely basis and with a positive outlook. A final course grade will not be given until all peer appraisals have been submitted.

A Note on Team Conflict

Just like real entrepreneurial teams, occasionally stress and conflict develop within a team during the duration of the course. I expect you to work diligently to communicate openly with each other and to attempt to resolve your problems independently. In extreme circumstances, I am willing to try to mediate if you feel it would be helpful; however I expect you to try to approach the conflict directly with your team members.

If a team decides that one of its members is not pulling his/her weight, they may, only after consulting me, recommend, "firing" that member. A "fired" team member will have to complete all assignments individually (there will be no concessions with regards to grading this in relation to team papers). I will make the final decision about any firings.