



Exploring Japan's Geography

(preliminary research workshop)

Keywords: **Study abroad, Higher education, Pre-departure preparation, Japan, Geography, Online learning.**

Sachiyo Kawai'ae'a

LTEC Master's Online program, University of Hawai'i at Manoa



PROJECT OVERVIEW

Current State

OPEN DOORS U.S. STUDY ABROAD SURVEY

Leading Destinations

FROM THE 2023 OPEN DOORS® REPORT

Academic Year:

2018/19

opendoors®

Rank	Destination	Number of Students	% of Total	% of Change
2	Italy	39,043	11.2	5.7
3	Spain	33,849	9.8	4.4
4	France	18,465	5.3	7.4
5	Germany	12,029	3.5	-1.8
6	Ireland	11,777	3.4	-1.6
7	China	11,639	3.4	0.2
8	Australia	10,665	3.1	3.2
9	Japan	8,928	2.6	5.4



Study Abroad has a significant impact on academic success, personal growth, and future career progression in the long term.



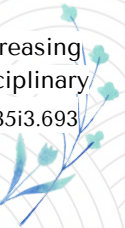
The number of U.S. students studying abroad in **Japan** has been on the rise since 2011, reaching a peak of almost **9,000** U.S. students in 2018-2019*.



Limited understanding and research on the effectiveness of the language-focused logistical-oriented pre-departure preparation for study abroad programs. (Lemmons, 23)**

**Lemmons, K. (2023). Study Abroad Academic Pre-Departure Course: Increasing Student's Intercultural Competence Pre-Sojourns. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 35(3), 128–150. <https://doi.org/10.36366/frontiers.v35i3.693>

*Institute of International Education's Open Doors Data



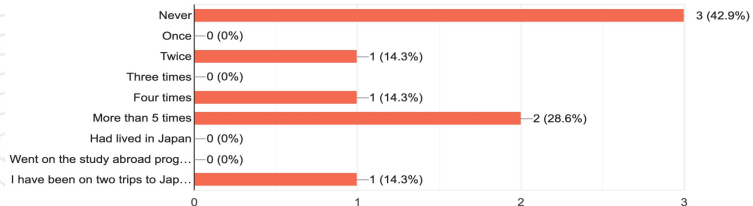


TARGET AUDIENCE

Undergraduate students living in the Northeastern US who are interested in the Study Abroad program or plan to visit Japan on their own.

Q3. How many times have you visited Japan?

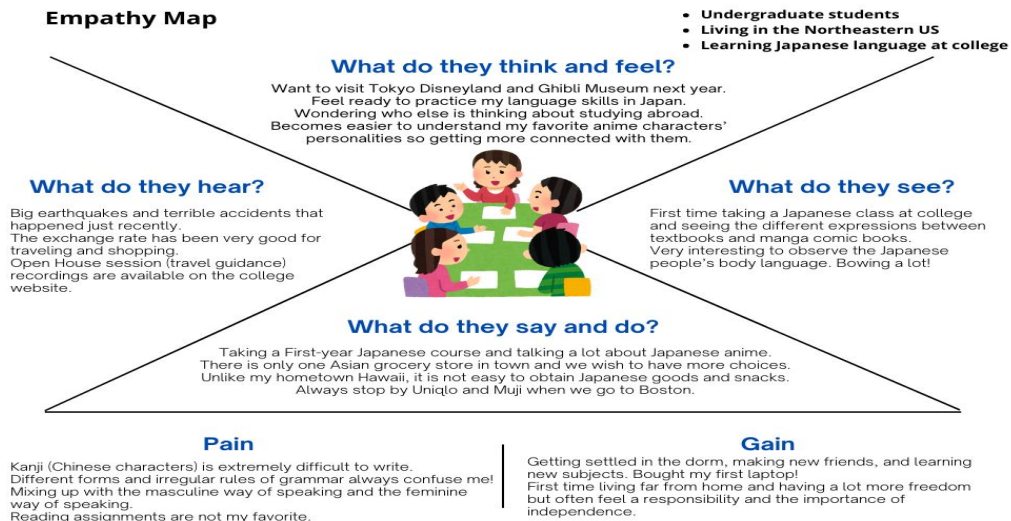
7 responses



DESIGN THINKING: Empathize

Interviews (Facetime) & Survey (Google Forms)

Empathy Map

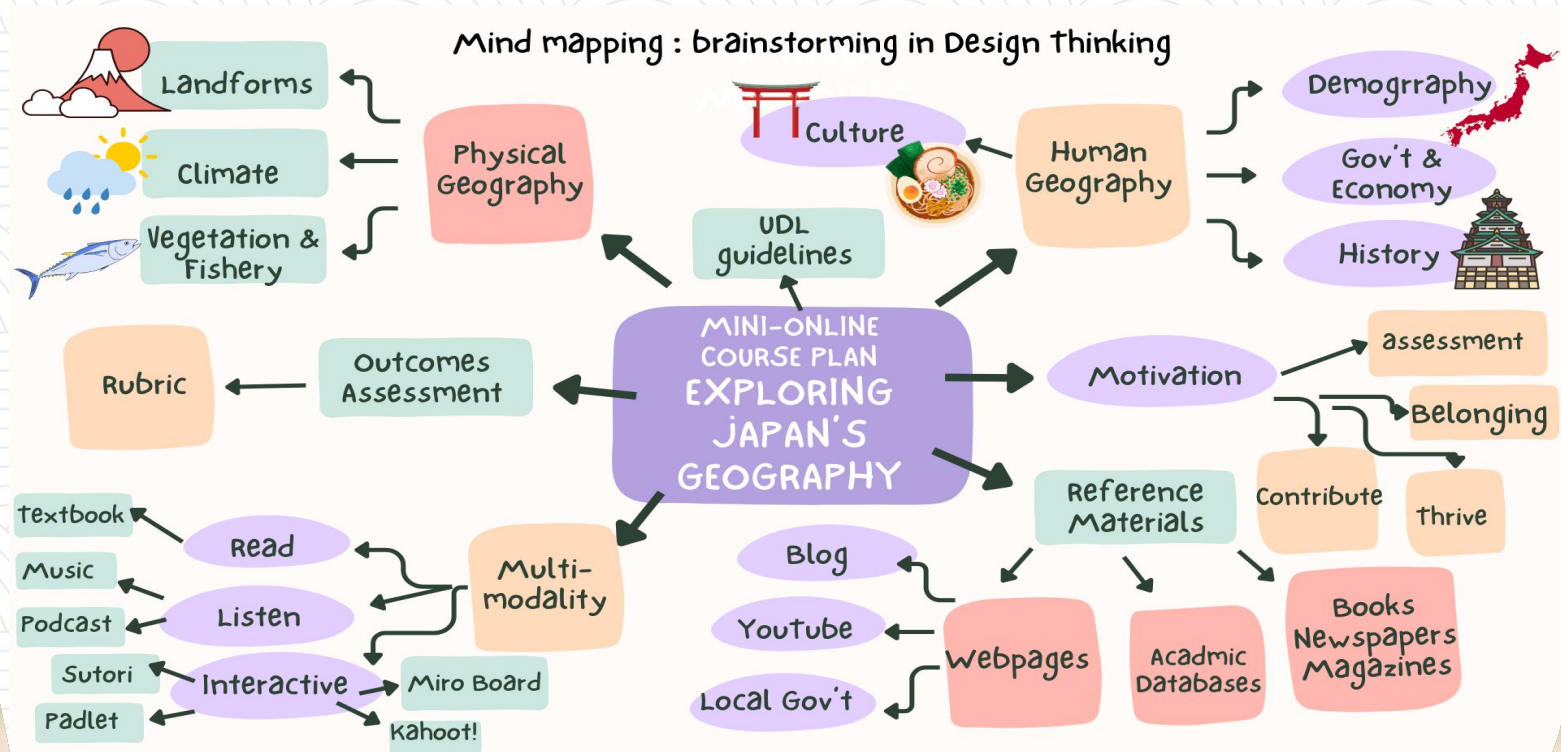


Q6. Can you tell us any places you would be interested in visiting while staying in Japan? *

I don't know a ton about Japan yet (hence the relevance of this course, I suppose.) I will be living in Osaka this summer, so I will definitely visit Osaka Castle. A friend told me that Nara Park is really cool so I would like to go there at some point. I would definitely like to go to Tokyo and go to Akihabara. I definitely plan to do a bunch of research before I go to make the most out of my trip.

DESIGN THINKING: Divergent Thinking

Problem Statement - *How might we make it more meaningful and enjoyable study abroad for the participants while traveling in Japan?*





INSTRUCTIONAL GOAL

- Students will build **geographical awareness** by analyzing how these features affect Japanese culture and modern development.
- Students will learn a geographical approach to the county and apply these principles to research tools, integrating relevant information into their existing knowledge before the field trip.



PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH

- **Student-Centered:** Students are not simply the object of assessment, but rather the primary beneficiaries.
- There is no such thing as failure in this online course. All are learning and making discoveries about unique geographical characteristics and regional stories behind. Assessment here is about a **reflective and engaged process** in which students learn about themselves as learners.

Dashboard



Canvas LMS



Exploring Japan's Geography
Elective - Japanese

Notification icon, Document icon, Comment icon, Folder icon

A course card from Canvas LMS. The top half features a scenic illustration of a Japanese town with traditional wooden buildings and a boat on a river. Below the image, the course title "Exploring Japan's Geography Elective - Japanese" is displayed. At the bottom, there are four icons: a bell for notifications, a document for documents, a speech bubble for comments, and a folder for folders.

Tools



Miro Board



Sutori



Adobe Express



Padlet



H5P



MyMaps
Slides • YouTube



Spotify



Canva



Slidesgo



Exploring Japan's Geography
Elective - Japanese



▶ Pre-Lesson: Hajimemashite (はじめまして)

▶ Lesson 1. Physical Geography (1)

▶ Lesson 2. Physical Geography (2)

▶ Lesson 3. Human Geography

▶ Lesson 4. Cultural Geography

▶ Lesson 5. Excursion Planning

▼ Pre-Lesson: Hajimemashite (はじめまして)

Home - welcome & syllabus

Let's say Hello to everyone!

Let's say Hello to everyone! Gr
10 pts

What's on your bucket list?

Bonus Track: "matcha smoothie"



Home
Announcements
Assignments
Discussions
Grades
People
Pages
Files
Syllabus
Outcomes
Rubrics
Quizzes
Modules
BigBlueButton
Collaborations
Attendance
New Analytics
Settings

Home - welcome & syllabus

こんにちはようこそ！

Welcome to Exploring Japan's Geography

This is an entirely asynchronous course and we will not have mandatory meetings. However, you may be participating in small group activities and may have face-to-face or web-based consultation sessions with the instructor. If you have questions please don't hesitate to reach out to the instructor (sachiyof@hawaii.edu) any time. You will get a response within 24 hours 7 days a week.

Requirements

- 1) Internet and Technology: This course requires consistent access to a computer or mobile device with a reliable high-speed internet connection. **Canvas** is your main channel; most interactions and communication will occur via the **Canvas Course Site**. If you need additional technical assistance please contact the instructor. ([Canvas Support FAQ](#))
- 2) Textbooks: No textbook is used in this course and purchasing course materials is not required.
- 3) Japanese Language skills: This is an elective course and has no particular prerequisite, such as Japanese language skills and previous experience visiting the country. The students are encouraged to **practice Japanese writing (typing) or speaking** when completing the assignments. **No points will be deducted** for typos in Japanese (ひらがな・カタカナ・漢字) as well as mispronunciations in audio submissions.

Contact information



Instructor: Sachi Kawaiaea

Email: sachiyof@hawaii.edu

**Hawaii Time Zone is 5 hours behind the MidWest.

Course Syllabus

The purpose of the course is to address the fundamentals of Japan's geography and to introduce a wide variety of geographical features that can be used for field study opportunities such as the Study Abroad programs. Course contents will be presented mainly through Sutori and some other media as well as activities, and all of the components will support your learning and update your knowledge of your study abroad destination.

- Students will learn a geographical approach to the county and apply these principles to research tools, integrating relevant information into their existing knowledge before the field trip.
- Students will build geographical awareness by analyzing how these features affect Japanese culture and modern development.





Exploring Japan's Geography
Elective - Japanese



Discover Tokyo 東京

Go directly to [Sutori Lesson](#)



Sutori

Discover Tokyo 東京とうきょう

Tokyo continues to attract people from all over the world. There must be something truly special about this city. It's important to note that there were

◀ Previous

Next ▶

Lesson 3. Human Geography

47 Prefectures 都道府県 (とどうふけん)

Discover Tokyo 東京

Kansai 関西 (presentation & quiz)

Okinawa おきなわ

What's on your bucket list? Part 2

10 pts

miro



What's on you bucket list?



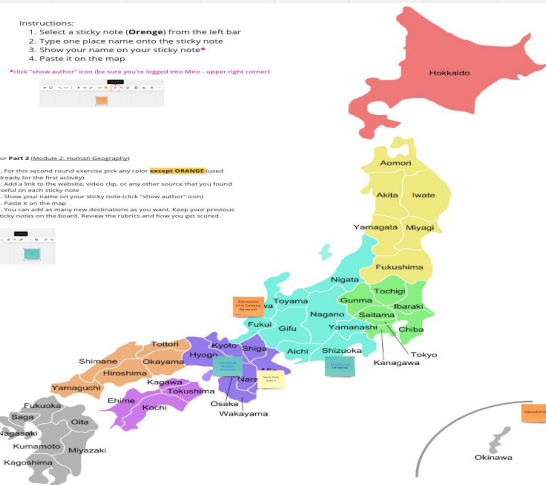
Instructions:

1. Select a sticky note (orange) from the left bar
2. Type one place name onto the sticky note
3. Show your name on your sticky note*
4. Paste it on the map

*Stick "show author" icon (be sure you're logged into Miro; upper right corner)

For Part 2 (Module 2, Human Geography)

1. For this second round exercise pick any color **EXCEPT ORANGE** (used already for the first activity)
2. Add a link to the website, video clip, or any other source that you found useful to learn more
3. Show your name on your sticky note (stick "show author" icon)
4. Paste it on the map
5. You can add as many more destinations as you want. Keep your previous sticky notes on the board. Repeat the exercise and have you get scored.



Kansai (2023, November 21), Wikivoyage.

Lesson 3. Human Geography



Kansai 関西



Listen

H5P

Listen

Osaka 大阪



Kyoto 京都



Nara 奈良



Jump to the official site

REVIEW - Fill in the missing words

1. Kansai region has prefectures.
2. Japan's oldest capital was in prefecture.
3. The largest prefecture in Kansai is , where the Himeji Castle, one of the Japan's first UNESCO World Heritage Sites, is located.
4. Kansai region is also known as district.
5. Kansai metropolis is the second largest city in Japan which offers everything from delicious food to the Universal Studios Japan (USJ), in addition to historically significant places such as castle built by Hideyoshi Toyotomi .

Check

1. Kansai region has 7 prefectures.
2. Japan's oldest capital was in なら prefecture.
3. The largest prefecture in Kansai is Hyogo , where the Himeji UNESCO World Heritage Sites, is located.
4. Kansai region is also known as きんぎ district.
5. Kansai metropolis 大阪 is the second largest city in Japan, delicious food to the Universal Studios Japan (USJ), in addition to his castle built by Hideyoshi Toyotomi .

Fill in the blank

★ 5/5

Lesson 3. Human Geography



Known as White Heron Castle, Shirasagijo is widely considered as Japan's most spectacular castle for its imposing size and beauty and it is the largest and most visited castle in Japan. What is the name of the castle and where is it?

Osaka castle in Osaka prefecture

Himeji castle in Kyoto prefecture

Himeji castle in Hyogo prefecture

Azuchi castle in Shiga prefecture



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Himeji castle in Kyoto prefecture

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Check this [Himeji Castle](#) for more details



- Account
- Dashboard
- Courses
- Calendar
- Inbox
- History
- Help

- Home
- Announcements
- Assignments
- Discussions
- Grades
- People
- Pages
- Files
- Syllabus
- Modules
- Collaborations

Choice Two: Hanami 花見 (Sakura Blossom Viewing) - forecast and trip itinerary

Due No Due Date **Points** 30 **Submitting** a text entry box, a website url, a media recording, or a file upload

Let's make your "**Hanami**" trip plan in 2024. Based on what you have learned, you will coordinate and conduct a special **Ha** Your trip plan should include answers to the following questions.

Q1 "Where would you go?"

Pick a place and write a paragraph about your choice of the location. You should explain at least two reasons why you cho select from the **Hanami List** or find your own. You are more than welcome to select multiple places on your itinerary.

Note: **Hanami List** contains the cherry blossom predicted dates in 2023, provided by **Japan Meteorological Corporati**

Q2 "When is the best time to visit?"

The **Sakura** season is different each year, so you need to estimate the best timing for flower viewing. In general, the blossoms move north. It also varies from the east coast to the west coast. Your itinerary should include a statement of forecast, such as what elements you consider and how you estimate the best possible time to go.

You can add your own **Sakura** forecast map or itinerary map if you visit multiple locations.

Q3 "Who and what will be your company for the Hanami trip?"

Hanami is such a special event that happens only a few days a year. Let's plan a fun trip and celebrate the Japanese tradition. Your itinerary can include the participants, food menu, landmarks in the same area, or other 'fun' activities that could make your special.

Useful (additional) Resources: [Sutori page "Sakura Cherry Blossom"](#)



Sakura Cherry Blossom

Another significant cultural symbol

Additional resources - the unique interrelationship between landforms, climate, and people's lives.

No. 191 (April 2024) • VARIOUS VARIETIES OF CHERRY BLOSSOMS IN JAPAN (PART 1) • Direct link (index) - <https://www.gov-online.go.jp/eng/publicity/book/hj/20240401.html>

Sakura Navi contains the most up-to-date information about cherry blossoms.

Video: Predicting cherry tree bloom timing at the UW

Cherry trees on the University of Washington's Seattle campus are waking up and getting ready to say hello. For the 29 iconic Yoshino cherry trees in the UW Quad, peak bloom will likely begin after...

WWW.WASHINGTON.EDU

SAKURA - Trails to Oishi Tokyo | NHK WORLD-JAPAN

Sakura—the beloved cherry blossoms that

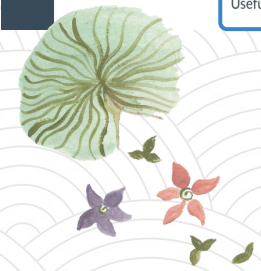
Japan Times articles

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#1 The art and science behind forecasting cherry blossom. Japan Times. February 16, 2019.

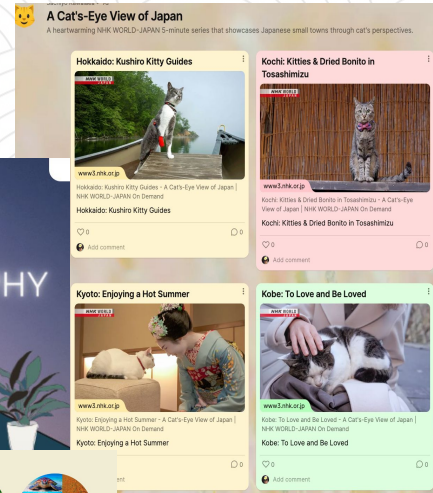
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#2 Cherry blossoms to bloom earlier in Tokyo, Japan Times. January 16, 2021.



Achievements

- Variations = **broaden** the range of learners' perspectives
 - Instructional materials
 - Learning activities
 - Options for output
- Visual communication strategies
 - Interactive presentation
 - Infographics



Challenges

- ASSESSMENT:** Design & Construct Best formative assessment tools for helping students self-reflect and assess?
- Challenging but not overwhelming assessment - how to determine?



Lessons I learned

Developing a detailed **syllabus**: connecting each learner to content as well as instructor

Behind the scenes responsibilities with:

- Effective communication skills
- Knowledge of the need to constantly update instructional design skills
- Ability to apply current research and theory
- Ability to identify and resolve ethical and legal issues

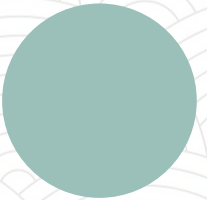
Next Step...

Collecting data: Obtain actual data on student learning through formative assessment and the course evaluation, and use that data to improve the course content, instructional flow, and any technical issues caused difficulties.

Tracking the progress: Encourage to set goals for themselves, and create additional functions that will be able to track their accomplishments.

Exploring Japan's Geography

Mahalo!



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