

Department	International College of Liberal Arts		
Semester	Fall 2026	Year Offered (Odd/Even/Every Year)	Even Years
Course Number	PART/JPNA351		
Course Title	Japanese Traditional Theater		
Prerequisites	SOC1/JPNA270 Japan: Case Studies in Society & Culture OR PART/JPNA150 Japanese Film & Theater OR SOC1/JPNA160 The Anthropology of Japan		
Course Instructor	ASHMORE Darren	Year Available (Grade Level)	2
Subject Area	Interdisciplinary Arts: Performing Arts	Number of Credits	3
Class Style	Lecture	Language of instruction	English

(NOTE 1) Depending on the class size and the capacity of the facility, we may not be able to accommodate all students who wish to register for the course

Course Description	<p>Course Description The purpose of this course is to provide an introduction to both classical and modern aspects of traditions Japanese performing arts. We will study selected aspects of Japanese religion, possession, the personification of the Other and the various arts of the stage.</p> <p>The focus will be on significant individuals and important works. As you work through this class, always consider the following questions: What value do we place on stories? How do different arts represent different ages or social groups? How are such arts still relevant, if at all?</p> <p>After completing this course, you should be able to better recognize and interpret some of the most important elements of the Japanese stage. You will also be prepared for further study of Japan at iCLA and beyond. This is a 3-credit course. You should therefore expect to devote proportionately more time on readings and coursework.</p> <p>Lectures are not a rehash or paraphrase of the readings. For the most part, they will present case studies, recontextualizing of data and a challenge for you to go beyond the mere perception.</p> <p>Classes will be comprised of lecture and discussion, the latter of which will be carried out in groups which are also associated with your class presentation.</p>
Class plan based on course evaluation from previous academic year	A series of lectures and performance screenings on the four main arts of Japan with greater emphasis placed in examples and discussion, as requested,
Course related to the instructor's practical experience (Summary of experience)	Darren Jon Ashmore – Cultural Anthropologist – with research interests in Japanese society, performing arts, media, film and animation.
Learning Goals	<p>Over the course of the program, student will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an understanding of some of the more important aspects of Classical Japanese theater. • Be able differentiate between the important different aspects of possession and deviance represented by the Japanese stage. • Recognize unique and borrowed social forms that are found in Japan arts. • Be able to place The main types of theater in their historical context. • Understand the nature and purpose of Theater. <p>Students Should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possess high communication skills in both Japanese and English. • Possess Critical, Creative, Independent and Global thinking skills. • Possess an inter-cultural understanding and be open-minded towards other cultures.

iCLA Diploma Policy	DP1/DP4
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iCLA Diploma Policy

(DP1) To Value Knowledge – Having high oral and written communication skills to be able to both comprehend and transfer knowledge

(DP2) To Be Able to Adapt to a Changing World – Having critical, creative, problem-solving, intercultural skills, global and independent mindset to adopt to a changing world

(DP3) To Believe in Collaboration – Having a disposition to work effectively and inclusively in teams

(DP4) To Act from a Sense of Personal and Social Responsibility – Having good ethical and moral values to make positive impacts in the world

Active Learning Methods	Problem-Based Learning/Flipped Classroom/Discussion, Debate/Group Work/Presentation				
More details/supplemental information on Active Learning Methods	(DP1) To Value Knowledge – Having high oral and written communication skills to be able to both comprehend and transfer knowledge (DP4) To Act from a Sense of Personal and Social Responsibility – Having good ethical and moral values to make positive impacts in the world				
Use of ICT	Unipa Clicker and Google survey.				
Contents of class preparation and review	Preparation expectations will vary, week to week, depending on assigned readings and/or project work. It is expected that all materials which are assigned should be diligently worked on prior to the class, for both testing and discussion. In terms of review, each item of prep will also have reflection work associated with it, both in class and beyond. The reflection work is to consolidate each lesson and will be discussed with the class Each session, questions based on the assigned readings will be given at the end of the lecture. These questions will be used to guide your discussion. You will be given a daily grade ranging from 1-5 for day in class. This will be based on the following scale: 5 - Thoughtful, engaged & prepared; facilitating/encouraging classmates' participation. 4 - Adequate preparation and good participation 2 to 3 - Inadequate preparation and/or inadequate participation 1 - The spirit has flown 0 - Absent, or present but disruptive.	Hours expected to be spent preparing for class (hours per week)	3 hours	Hours expected to be spent on class review (hours per week)	3 hours
Feedback Methods	Feedback will be made available during and after each grading session. As the assessment for the course is ongoing, regular feedback is essential. Moreover, at any time a student may consult on the course during office hours, or by appointment. Seeking feedback on performance and giving feedback on the course is a valuable part of the course progress. The instrument of feedback itself will depend on class size, and we shall discuss this in class one				

Grading Criteria		
Grading Methods	Grading Weights	Grading Content
Biweekly tests (5 tests @5% each)	25%	Theatre concepts
Mid Term Exam	20%	Early Theater Forms
Studentship	20%	Participation in class
Final Project	35%	Research Paper

Required Textbook(s)	Japanese Performing Arts, Benito Ortolani (to be provided to the class)
Other Reading Materials/URL	Further readings will be provided as required at the due time via the learning management system.
Plagiarism Policy	<p>iCLA ACADEMIC DISHONESTY POLICY</p> <p>Acts of Academic Dishonesty: In accord with University policies and good practices in higher education, acts of academic dishonesty such as plagiarism, cheating, forgery (on a paper, examination, test, or other assignment) will result in the failure of the course at a minimum. An act of academic dishonesty during the final examination or assignment in lieu of the final examination will result in failure of all courses registered in the relevant academic term. Cases of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Academic Affairs for relevant action.</p>
Other Additional Notes (Outline crucial policies and info not mentioned above)	<p>Class Policies in Addition to iCLA Policies</p> <p>1. Group Workload: Any student unfairly burdening their fellows will be actioned appropriately.</p> <p>2. Use of devices in class: Phones are banned. Laptops, tablets and other devices may only be used during class tests, or assigned tasks.</p> <p>3. Test Proctoring: If proctors detect any suspect activity during tests, the student will be withdrawn from the test and actioned by Admin.</p> <p>4: Attendance is a given, naturally, as a consequence absences will be considered demerits. If you accrue 5-7 absences, you will lose -1 letter grade from your final score at the end of the semester; 8-9 absences -2 letter grades; 10 absences - 3 letter grades; 11 or more and you fail automatically in line with iCLA attendance policy.</p> <p>5: Being more than 10 minutes late to class will be considered absent.</p> <p>Exceptions to participation rule are documented evidence of illness from a clinic or hospital; these must be presented within one week of the missed class. Documented official family emergencies, requiring leaving campus; notify before or just after missed class session.</p>

(NOTE 2) Class schedule is subject to change

Class Schedule	
Class Number	Content
Class 1	<p>Week One: Introduction to Japanese Traditional Theatre</p> <p>Overview of Japanese traditional performing arts</p> <p>Historical background: Origins and development</p> <p>Key characteristics and elements of Japanese theatre</p> <p>Introduction to major theatrical forms: Noh, Kabuki, and Bunraku</p>
Class 2	<p>Week One: Introduction to Japanese Traditional Theatre</p> <p>Overview of Japanese traditional performing arts</p> <p>Historical background: Origins and development</p> <p>Key characteristics and elements of Japanese theatre</p> <p>Introduction to major theatrical forms: Noh, Kabuki, and Bunraku</p> <p>Reading for Class Three: Ortolani Chapter 2 - "Religious Theatre"</p>
Class 3	<p>Week Two - Kagura</p> <p>Lecture: Arguably the forms from which all the three grand traditional forms of Kabuki, Bunraku and Noh evolved. This session we will look at the forms and ritual significance of this family of arts and explore the ritual landscape of ancient Japan.</p> <p>Screening One - Kagura and Gagaku</p>
Class 4	<p>Week Two - Kagura</p> <p>Lecture: Arguably the forms from which all the three grand traditional forms of Kabuki, Bunraku and Noh evolved. This session we will look at the forms and ritual significance of this family of arts and explore the ritual landscape of ancient Japan.</p> <p>Screening One - Kagura and Gagaku</p> <p>Reading for Class 5: Ortolani Chapter Four - Bunraku</p>

Class 5	<p>Week three Bunraku (Puppet Theatre) History and development of Bunraku Puppetry techniques and manipulation The role of chanters and shamisen players in Bunraku performances Notable Bunraku playwrights and plays Demonstration and analysis of a Bunraku performance</p>
Class 6	<p>Week three: Bunraku (Puppet Theatre) History and development of Bunraku Puppetry techniques and manipulation The role of chanters and shamisen players in Bunraku performances Notable Bunraku playwrights and plays Demonstration and analysis of a Bunraku performance</p> <p>Reading for Class Seven: Law, Chapter Eight – Folk Puppet Art (to be provided)</p>
Class 7	<p>Week four: Bunraku (Puppet Theatre) History and development of Bunraku Puppetry techniques and manipulation The role of chanters and shamisen players in Bunraku performances Notable Bunraku playwrights and plays Demonstration and analysis of a Bunraku performance</p>
Class 8	<p>Week four: Bunraku (Puppet Theatre) History and development of Bunraku Puppetry techniques and manipulation The role of chanters and shamisen players in Bunraku performances Notable Bunraku playwrights and plays Demonstration and analysis of a Bunraku performance</p> <p>Reading for Class Nine: Ortolani Chapter Six Izumo No Okuni</p>
Class 9	<p>Week 5–6: Kabuki Theatre Origins and evolution of Kabuki Characteristics of Kabuki performances: stylized acting, elaborate costumes, and makeup Different types of Kabuki plays: historical, domestic, and dance-drama The role of gender in Kabuki: the history of onnagata (male actors playing female roles) Famous Kabuki actors and playwrights</p>
Class 10	<p>Week 5–6: Kabuki Theatre Origins and evolution of Kabuki Characteristics of Kabuki performances: stylized acting, elaborate costumes, and makeup Different types of Kabuki plays: historical, domestic, and dance-drama The role of gender in Kabuki: the history of onnagata (male actors playing female roles) Famous Kabuki actors and playwrights</p> <p>Reading for class Eleven: Ashmore, Flowers of Edo. (to be provided)</p>
Class 11	<p>Week 5–6: Kabuki Theatre Origins and evolution of Kabuki Characteristics of Kabuki performances: stylized acting, elaborate costumes, and makeup Different types of Kabuki plays: historical, domestic, and dance-drama The role of gender in Kabuki: the history of onnagata (male actors playing female roles) Famous Kabuki actors and playwrights</p>
Class 12	<p>Week 5–6: Kabuki Theatre Origins and evolution of Kabuki Characteristics of Kabuki performances: stylized acting, elaborate costumes, and makeup Different types of Kabuki plays: historical, domestic, and dance-drama The role of gender in Kabuki: the history of onnagata (male actors playing female roles) Famous Kabuki actors and playwrights</p> <p>Reading for Class Thirteen: Ortolani Chapter Three Nogaku</p>
Class 13	<p>Week seven: Noh Theatre Origins and development of Noh Structure and components of a Noh play Themes and motifs in Noh theatre Notable playwrights and performers Demonstration and analysis of a Noh performance</p>
Class 14	<p>Week Seven: Noh Theatre Origins and development of Noh Structure and components of a Noh play Themes and motifs in Noh theatre Notable playwrights and performers Demonstration and analysis of a Noh performance</p> <p>Reading for Class fifteen: Ashmore, The Candle and the Star (to be provided)</p>

Class 15	<p>Week eight: Noh Theatre Origins and development of Noh Structure and components of a Noh play Themes and motifs in Noh theatre Notable playwrights and performers Demonstration and analysis of a Noh performance</p>
Class 16	<p>Week eight: Noh Theatre Origins and development of Noh Structure and components of a Noh play Themes and motifs in Noh theatre Notable playwrights and performers Demonstration and analysis of a Noh performance</p> <p>Reading for Class 17: McCarthy, Women of Yoshiwara (to be provided)</p>
Class 17	<p>Week Nine: Otome Bunraku and Women's Theatre Okuni and the Yoshiwara Kiritake Masako Themes and motifs in Noh theatre Demonstration and analysis of a performance</p>
Class 18	<p>Week Nine: Otome Bunraku and Women's Theatre Okuni and the Yoshiwara Kiritake Masako Themes and motifs in Noh theatre Demonstration and analysis of a performance</p> <p>Reading for Class nineteen: Thorn, Meiji and Taisho Women and Art</p>
Class 19	<p>Week Ten: Takarazuka Theatre All Girl Revue Ayaki nao Themes and motifs in Takarazuka theatre Demonstration and analysis of a performance</p>
Class 20	<p>Week Ten: Takarazuka Theatre All Girl Revue Ayaki nao Themes and motifs in Takarazuka theatre Demonstration and analysis of a performance</p> <p>Reading for class 21: (TBA)</p>
Class 21	<p>Week Eleven: Notable Playwrights and Works Study of significant playwrights and their contributions to Japanese theatre Analysis of selected plays from the pre-1935 period Exploration of themes, symbolism, and cultural contexts in these works</p>
Class 22	<p>Week Eleven: Notable Playwrights and Works Study of significant playwrights and their contributions to Japanese theatre Analysis of selected plays from the pre-1935 period Exploration of themes, symbolism, and cultural contexts in these works</p> <p>Reading for class 21: (TBA)</p>
Class 23	<p>Week Twelve Introduction to Kabuki Mie Objective: Understanding the basics of Kabuki Mie and practicing simple poses.</p> <p>Introduction to Kabuki Mie</p> <p>Brief explanation of Kabuki theatre and the significance of Mie poses. Definition of Mie and its role in Kabuki storytelling. Demonstration and Analysis</p> <p>Watch video clips showcasing iconic Mie poses. Analyze the key elements of a Mie pose: posture, facial expression, hand gestures, and gaze. Basic Mie Poses Practice</p> <p>Instructor-led demonstration of simple Mie poses. Guided practice for students to try out basic Mie poses individually.</p>

Class 24	<p>Week Twelve Introduction to Kabuki Mie Objective: Understanding the basics of Kabuki Mie and practicing simple poses.</p> <p>Introduction to Kabuki Mie</p> <p>Brief explanation of Kabuki theatre and the significance of Mie poses. Definition of Mie and its role in Kabuki storytelling. Demonstration and Analysis</p> <p>Watch video clips showcasing iconic Mie poses. Analyze the key elements of a Mie pose: posture, facial expression, hand gestures, and gaze. Basic Mie Poses Practice</p> <p>Instructor-led demonstration of simple Mie poses. Guided practice for students to try out basic Mie poses individually.</p>
Class 25	<p>Week Thirteen: Intermediate Mie Techniques Objective: Refining Mie poses and exploring the expression of emotions.</p> <p>Refining Mie Poses</p> <p>Techniques for achieving clarity and impact in Mie poses. Practice session with feedback from the instructor on students' Mie poses. Expressing Emotions through Mie</p> <p>Discussion on how different emotions are conveyed through Mie poses. Analysis of specific Mie poses representing emotions such as anger, sadness, joy, and determination. Group Exercise</p> <p>Group exercises to explore and embody various emotional Mie poses. Role-playing exercises to depict characters and scenes using Mie.</p>
Class 26	<p>Intermediate Mie Techniques Objective: Refining Mie poses and exploring the expression of emotions.</p> <p>Refining Mie Poses</p> <p>Techniques for achieving clarity and impact in Mie poses. Practice session with feedback from the instructor on students' Mie poses. Expressing Emotions through Mie</p> <p>Discussion on how different emotions are conveyed through Mie poses. Analysis of specific Mie poses representing emotions such as anger, sadness, joy, and determination. Group Exercise</p> <p>Group exercises to explore and embody various emotional Mie poses. Role-playing exercises to depict characters and scenes using Mie.</p>
Class 27	<p>Week Fourteen Advanced Mie Techniques and Performance Preparation Objective: Mastering advanced Mie techniques and preparing for a final performance.</p> <p>Advanced Mie Poses</p> <p>Study of advanced Mie poses and their variations. Exploration of subtleties in expression and gesture to enhance Mie performance. Choreographing Mie Sequences</p> <p>Techniques for choreographing Mie sequences within a performance. Practice session for students to create and rehearse their own Mie sequences. Final Performance and Evaluation</p> <p>Preparation for a final performance showcase where students present their Mie sequences. Performance showcase with each student or group performing their choreographed Mie sequence. Feedback and evaluation from the instructor and peers on Mie performance skills and creativity.</p>
Class 28	<p>Week Fourteen Advanced Mie Techniques and Performance Preparation Objective: Mastering advanced Mie techniques and preparing for a final performance.</p> <p>Advanced Mie Poses</p> <p>Study of advanced Mie poses and their variations. Exploration of subtleties in expression and gesture to enhance Mie performance. Choreographing Mie Sequences</p> <p>Techniques for choreographing Mie sequences within a performance. Practice session for students to create and rehearse their own Mie sequences. Final Performance and Evaluation</p> <p>Preparation for a final performance showcase where students present their Mie sequences. Performance showcase with each student or group performing their choreographed Mie sequence. Feedback and evaluation from the instructor and peers on Mie performance skills and creativity.</p>
Class 29	Media Screening for Review Test
Class 30	Wrap up and Review.