

JAPANESE BUSINESS CULTURE AND SYSTEMS

Instructor: Richard Dasher (rdasher@stanford.edu)

Sponsored by the US-Asia Technology Management Center

Syllabus, Winter Quarter 2016 – 17

Course number

JAPAN Course 151 or 251

- **Registration is variable:** 3 – 5 units. (4 units recommended). See “Requirements for Credit” for details. Attendance at all classes and all readings are expected of all students. Students who take the course for 5 units must arrange a special study project with Prof. Dasher. The special project will entail additional meetings in a small group or one-to-one with Prof. Dasher.
- **251-level students** are responsible for a few extra homework problems and extra readings, but the biggest difference from 151 is that 251 students are graded more stringently on homework and also the final book report. Specifically, students at the 251 level are expected to provide more sophisticated analysis, as is commensurate with graduate level classes. Details are given on each assignment.

Purpose: This course examines patterns of institutional organization / structure and dynamics, culture, and communication that characterize the business world of Japan, including:

- Socio-cultural concepts that underlie Japanese business systems (group, harmony, etc.)
- Organizational structures and dynamics of Japanese industries and firms
- New developments and trends in Japanese business: entrepreneurship
- Decision-making processes; patterns and flow of negotiations
- The process of identifying and evaluating market and business opportunities in Japan
- Crisis management in Japanese business
- The presentation of a business idea to potential Japanese partners
- Other issues relevant to business and business practices in present-day Japan.

“Japanese Business Culture and Systems” emphasizes intercultural understanding and strategies for interacting productively as a non-Japanese person in Japanese business environments.

Grading: For letter grade, with optional credit/no-credit. Grades are based on:

Final Project:	25% (see below)
Other written work:	25% (includes assignments, market research report)
In-class Project:	25% (includes participation in team presentation / mock negotiations)
Class Participation:	25% (attendance, in-class evidence that student is engaged in topic and developing a mastery of course content)

In-class Project: Students identify new business ideas to take to Japan and then, in a role play exercise, divide into teams, prepare, and present a business proposal to potential Japanese partners.

Final Project: Written book report. The student demonstrates mastery of the content of this class by using class content in order to examine a book about Japanese business. How does the book handle issues addressed in class, what is different, etc. Grading is based on how well the student shows s/he has mastered the content of the course. Each student selects a book from a bibliography distributed in class. (Other books are possible with the prior consent of the instructor.) The report is approximately five pages, double-spaced. Reports are graded on how well they demonstrate mastery of *class content* (not on a clever analysis of the book).

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Office Hours/Place: Announced in class each week, also by appointment

Requirements for Credit (with letter grade)
Japanese Business Culture and Systems JAPANGEN 151 / 251
Richard Dasher (rdasher@stanford.edu)
Winter 2016 – 17

	Three units	Four units	Five Units
Attendance & participation in all regular classes, do all readings	Required	Required	Required
Final Book Report (graded)	Required	Required	Required
Market research report	Required but only graded as satisfactory / unsatisfactory	Required but only graded as satisfactory / unsatisfactory	Required but only graded as satisfactory / unsatisfactory
In-class team project/ presentation (taking company to Japan) - graded	Required	Required	Required
Written homework assignments (two planned)	One assignment in full	Two assignments in full	Two assignments in full
Special individual study project (deeper study of a class topic, e.g. labor market conditions)	N/A	N/A	Required

NOTE Above requirements are for both 151 and 251 levels. Participation at 251 level involves additional questions on written assignments, and grading is more stringent for 251 students: I expect 251 students to work at the graduate level, providing more sophisticated analysis and in-class discussion. In the final paper, 251 students must refer to outside sources beyond the required class readings.

For required textbooks and Course Reader contents, see following page.

TEXTBOOKS – Required textbooks include:

Gercik, Patricia. 2011. *On Track with the Japanese*. AuthorHouse, 2011. Please be sure to get the 2011 edition of this book (which originally came out in 1992).

Vogel, Steven. 2006. *Japan Remodeled: How Government and Industry Are Reforming Japanese Capitalism*. ISBN 0-8014-4449-7, approx. \$25.

Course Reader. Available from Stanford Bookstore, last year's cost approx \$75. Contents include:

“Going hybrid: a special report on business in Japan.” *The Economist*, December 1, 2007, after p. 58. **18 pages**.

Ishida, Takeshi. “Conflict and its accommodation: *omote-ura* and *uchi-soto* relations.” In *Conflict in Japan*, ed. By Ellis Krauss, T. Rohlen, and P Steinhoff, pp. 16 – 38. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984. (**21 pages**; book total 417 pages)

Cole, Robert E. “Some cultural and social bases of Japanese innovation: small group activities in comparative perspective.” In *The Political Economy of Japan: Volume 3, Cultural and Social Dynamics*, ed. by Shumpei Kumon and Henry Rosovsky, p. 292 – 318. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992. **26 pages**; book total 494 pages.

Nonaka, Ikujiro, and Hirotaka Takeuchi. “The business-system layer: a typical hierarchy.” In *The Knowledge-Creating Company: How Japanese Companies Create the Dynamics of Innovation*, by Nonaka and Takeuchi, pp. 181 – 196. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995. [Case study of R&D and product development at Sharp Corporation.] **15 pages**; book total 284 pages.

“Holding back half the nation: Japanese women and work.” *The Economist*, March 29, 2014. 9 pages reduced to **5 pages**

Kopp, Rochelle. “Strategies for coping with the karate-teacher manager.” In *The Rice Paper Ceiling: Breaking through Japanese Corporate Culture*, by Kopp, pp. 121 – 140. Berkeley: Stone Bridge Press, 1994. **19 pages**; book total 270 pages