

—Exploring Japanese Modern Society in Gunma— Summer Programme 2021 at Gunma University, Japan

Application Information

1. Purpose

This programme will be opened to both undergraduate and postgraduate students who are currently enrolled at Gunma University's overseas partner universities. The programme aims to provide students with an opportunity to develop their understandings in Japanese local society under the circumstance of Coronavirus, culture, language and Gunma University by participating in the intensive language and culture courses.

2. Concept and Courses

Gunma Prefecture, which has rich beautiful natural environment and specific industries, is located in the center of Japan. However, as well as in other regions in the country, Gunma is confronting many social problems and challenges, such as natural disasters, lifestyle-related diseases, multicultural coexistence and the succession of traditional culture. Therefore, in this programme, participants from all around the world will be invited to discuss those social issues affecting Japan and think about possible solutions by learning about Gunma's society, people, natural environment, culture and experiencing new projects related to regional revitalization.

A. English Course: *Study of Japan* in Gunma

This course consists of lectures in *Study of Japan*, project work, cultural experience through Japanese tea ceremony and Japanese classical music and fieldwork in Kusatsu (草津) and Shima (四万). Additionally, there will also be an opportunity for the participants to have interaction with Japanese students. Finally, students are required to present their research projects in a final presentation.

A Certificate of Participation will be awarded to all participants at the end of the programme.

B. Japanese Cultural Course: Project work in Japanese

This course mainly consists of project work in Japanese, English lectures in *Study of Japan*, cultural experience through Japanese tea ceremony and Japanese classical music and fieldwork in Kusatsu (草津) and Shima (四万). Additionally, there will also be an opportunity for the participants to have interaction with Japanese students. Finally, students are expected to choose their own research topics and required to present their research projects.

A Certificate of Participation will be awarded to all participants at the end of the programme.

3. Requirements

A. English Course: *Study of Japan* in Gunma

- Undergraduate and postgraduate students from Gunma University's international partner universities and other institutions designated by Gunma University (a certificate to prove Japanese language proficiency is not required).
- Students who are interested in Japanese society and *Study of Japan*.
- Students who understand English well and have sufficient English language proficiency to carry out project work.
- Students who are able to attend all the lectures and project work during the period of July 7 to July 20, 2020.
- Students must purchase an overseas travel insurance plan prior to their arrival to Japan.

B. Japanese Cultural Course: Project work in Japanese

- Undergraduate and postgraduate students from Gunma University's international partner universities and other institutions designated by Gunma University.
- Students who speak Japanese well and have sufficient Japanese language skills to carry out project work (who have studied Japanese language for approximately 600 hours and have N3 in Japanese Language Proficiency Test - JLPT).
- Students who understand English well and can follow lectures conducted in English.
- Students who are able to attend all the lectures or project work during the period of July 7 to July 20, 2020.
- Students must have joined in one of overseas travelling insurances before travelling to Japan.

4. Programme Outline

Period: Tuesday, 29 June 2021 ~ Monday, 9 July 2021

Course size: Maximum number of students in each course is 15

Minimum number of students in each course is 3

Participation fee: 25,000 JPY

(This fee includes the costs of tuition. The participants need to pay for their air tickets, local transportation, accommodation and travelling costs for fieldwork, food and travel insurance on their own.)

5. Accommodations

Comfort Hotel, Maebashi, approximately 5,000 JPY per night (Breakfast included)

<https://www.choice-hotels.jp/hotel/maebashi/>

6. Programme Schedule (tentative)

Based on Gunma University's academic calendar of 2021, the final lecture schedule will be announced in April 2021.

A. English Course - *Study of Japan* in Gunma

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|--|---|---|-------------|------------------------------------|
| 29 June 2020, Online orientation: Preparations for Coronavirus and instructions for entering Japan (The Zoom ID and time will be announced after the participants being decided) | | | | |
| | 10:20-11:50 | 12:40-14:10 | 14:20-15:40 | 15:50-17:20 |
| 29 June Tuesday | Orientation | Welcome party | Campus Tour | Interaction with Gunma students |
| 30 June Wednesday | Study of Japan (1) The hot spring towns and their architectures of Gunma Prefecture | Study of Japan (2)Diabetes Mellitus-Why so many in Gunma? | | |
| 1 July Thursday | Project work | Cultural experience (Japanese Classical Music) | | Interaction with Gunma students |
| 2 July Friday | Study of Japan (3)Silkworm: past history and future plans in Gunma and Japan | | | |
| 3 July Saturday | Field trip to Kusatsu and Shima hot spring | | | |
| 4 July Sunday | | | | |
| 5 July Monday | Study of Japan (4)Buddhist Art in Japan | Cultural experience (Japanese Tea Ceremony) | | Interaction with Gunma students |
| 6 July Tuesday | Study of Japan (5) Traditional Japanese theatres in Gunma and beyond | Project work | | |
| 7 July Wednesday | Study of Japan (6) The Akiya (empty property) problems and demographics in Gunma | Project work | | Interaction with Gunma students |
| 8 July Thursday | Project work | Final Presentation | | |
| 9 July Friday | Closing Ceremony | Farewell party | | |
| 22 July, Monday: Final online lecture after participants returning back to home countries | | | | |

About the project work

Students are required to select a research topic related to Japanese society and make a final presentation about the outcomes of the discussions they held during the lectures and project work.

Lecture Summaries: *Study of Japan*

| Title and Instructor | Summary |
|--|---|
| The hot spring towns and their architectures in Gunma Prefecture | Japanese hot springs have been famous worldwide for its chemical ingredients and medical effects. However, from the ancient times, great attentions have been paid in designing town, spa inn and various types of different bath places in hot spring cities, which reflect an important aspect in the relationship between “Water environment and Humanities”. Therefore, this lecture is going to clarify and discuss Gunma Prefecture’s unique hot spring culture through the perspective of the hot spring city and its architecture. |
| Dr. Yunlian Chen Gunma University, International Center | |
| Diabetes Mellitus-Why so many cases in Gunma? | Diabetes mellitus is one of the most common lifestyle-related diseases in the world. Although Gunma has very rich nature and healthy environment, the population of diabetes patients is much higher than that in other regions. We usually consider that clean air, water and nature make people healthy. However, the result is opposite in Gunma. In my talk, I briefly discuss the mechanisms causing diabetes and disclose the secret why we have so many diabetes patients in Gunma. |
| Professor Noriyuki Koibuchi Gunma University, Faculty of Medicine | |
| Silkworm: past history and future plans in Gunma and Japan | The silkworm is one of the insects and makes cocoons at the pupal stage. Silk is made from silkworm cocoons. Japan was the world's largest silk producer in the early 1900s. In the 21st century, several types of silk with new features and various useful proteins are produced in silkworms using genetic engineering techniques. This lecture will introduce the characteristics of silkworms, the history of silk production in Gunma, and the application of transgenic technology to silkworms. |
| Professor Shigeki Takeda Gunma University, School of Science and Technology | |
| Buddhist Art in Japan: An Aesthetic, Universal and Practical Interpretation of the Ten Ox-Herding Pictures | Based on the *Ten Ox-Herding Pictures*, this talk will present a multidimensional interpretation of this important example of Zen Buddhist art. In addition to exposing students to the religio-aesthetic qualities of this work, students will be invited to actively reflect on the lessons contained within each of the ten pictures in order to grasp the universal (not limited to any one religion or set of beliefs), practical and timeless message that this series of enigmatic images has been teaching us over the centuries. |
| Professor Sylvain Bergeron Gunma University, Education Center | |
| Traditional Japanese Theatres in Gunma and Beyond | In the Edo period (1603-1868), traditional theatres such as <i>bunraku</i> and <i>kabuki</i> constituted an important part of popular culture in Gunma. This lecture will focus on <i>kabuki</i> , reviewing its development from popular village entertainment to lavish star-studded spectacle in the city of Edo, early modern capital of Japan. We will also see how <i>kabuki</i> today is embracing cutting-edge technology to stage its updated versions, ‘Super Kabuki’ and ‘Cho Kabuki’. |
| Professor Michiko Suemastu Gunma University, Faculty of Social and Information Studies | |
| The Akiya (empty property) problems and demographics in Gunma | High levels of empty properties, known as “Akiya” in rural Japanese towns are recognized as having a serious impact on the viability of communities, although it has been identified that dealing with empty properties can have social, financial and regenerative benefits. This course outlines 1) trends in the number of empty homes in one of the cities of Gunma, Tomioka-city, and 2) examine how the local authority deal with empty properties with the private sectors and take initiatives that can help reduce the number of empty properties. |
| Professor Takako Ochi Gunma University, International Center | |

B Japanese Cultural Course: Project work

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| 29 June Tuesday | Orientation | Welcome party | Campus Tour | Interaction with Gunma students |
| 30 June Wednesday | Project work on Japanese language (1) | Project work on Japanese language (2) | | |
| 1 July Thursday | Study of Japan (1) The hot spring towns and their architectures of Gunma Prefecture | Cultural experience (Japanese Classical Music) | | Interaction with Gunma students |
| 2 July Friday | Study of Japan (2) Buddhist Art in Japan | Study of Japan (2) Buddhist Art in Japan | | |
| 3 July Saturday | Field trip to Kusatsu and Shima hot spring | | | |
| 4 July Sunday | | | | |
| 5 July Monday | Project work on Japanese language (3) | Cultural experience (Japanese Tea Ceremony) | | Interaction with Gunma students |
| 6 July Tuesday | Study of Japan (3) Traditional Japanese theatres in Gunma and beyond | Project work on Japanese language (4) | | |
| 7 July Wednesday | Project work on Japanese language (5) | Project work on Japanese language (6) | | Interaction with Gunma students |
| 8 July Thursday | Project work for final presentation | Final Presentation | | |
| 9 July Friday | Closing Ceremony | Farewell party | | |
| 22 July, Monday: Final online lecture after participants returning back to home countries | | | | |

About the project work in Japanese

Students are required to carry out research projects on topics related to Japanese society they select at the beginning of the course. After holding discussions and conducting a questionnaire survey, students will analyze the data and give a final presentation based on their research.

Lecturer Summaries: *Study of Japan*

| Title and Instructor | Summary |
|--|--|
| The hot spring towns and their architectures in Gunma Prefecture | Japanese hot springs have been famous worldwide for its chemical ingredients and medical effects. However, from the ancient times, great attentions have been paid in designing town, spa inn and various types of different bath places in hot spring cities, which reflect an important aspect in the relationship between “Water environment and Humanities”. Therefore, this lecture is going to clarify and discuss Gunma Prefecture’s unique hot spring culture through the perspective of the hot spring city and its architecture. |
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| Professor Michiko Suemastu Faculty of Social and Information Studies | |

7. Application process

- Application: Please apply via your own university officers, who are responsible for international exchange. They will apply on your behalf via email.
- Application deadline: Wednesday, 31 March 2021.
- Selection method: We welcome all students from our partner universities, however, it will be necessary for us to decide the candidates by considering nationality and early registration.
- Announcement of selection results: Gunma University will send the results to your universities by 7 May 2021(Friday).
- Visa: If you need a letter for a visa application to Japan, Gunma University will send it to you by the end of May 2021. After receiving a notice of acceptance, please submit:
 1. A copy of your valid passport
 2. A copy of your air ticket
- Participation fee payment and cancellation policy: You need to pay participation fee from the website of *Flywire* (See below link). Bank cash card, credit card, debit card and online payment are all available.

<https://www.flywire.com/>

The accommodation and travelling cost for fieldwork will be announced by Gunma

University's travel agency in April 2020 when you are officially accepted as a participant. Please follow the instructions and pay the fee by the deadline. The cancellation policy will be announced by the travel agency in a later date.

- **About the cancellation of the programme due to Coronavirus (Important)**

We currently are continuing to prepare for opening this 2021 Summer Programme as scheduled, however, we have to make a decision whether to carry out it or not by April 2021. For the case, the circumstances of cancellation of the programme are shown as below.

- Your government do not issue permissions to you for travelling to Japan
- Japanese government do not issue permissions to you for entering Japan
- Once you enter Japan, you are required "14-day-quarantine" in a hotel

8. About Gunma University

Gunma University is located about 100 km north-west of Tokyo and consists of Faculty of Education, Faculty of Social and Information Studies, Faculty of Medicine, School of Science and Technology. Currently, Gunma university have about 6,500 students, of which approximately 250 are international students. There are 30 exchange students from our overseas partner universities have so far studied for half a year or one year in the academic year 2019.

9. For inquires

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