



KIIS Japan Program, Summer 2024

ARC 401 Topics: "The Hell of Tsushima": The Legacy of the 1905 Russo-Japanese War of 1905

Instructor: Prof. Raymond De Luca

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Instructor's office hours: on site and by appointment

Syllabus subject to change

1. Course Description

This course, whose title references a line of verse by the Russian poet Anna Akhmatova, studies the cultural and historical legacy of the 1905 Russo-Japanese War. The war is considered one of the most cataclysmic, albeit understudied, events of modern history that foreshadowed and precipitated some of the twentieth century's biggest conflicts: World War I, the Russian Revolution of 1917, Pearl Harbor, World War II, and the Cold War. Through close analysis of art, media, literature, and film within the Japanese, Russian, and U.S. contexts, this course will examine the transnational history of the war, overviewing both the conflict's causes and its post-war legacy, which marked the emergence of the United States as an international power in the early twentieth century. The course will also consider the unresolved territorial disputes generated by the war that continue to animate contemporary Russo-Japanese relations.

2. Overall KIIS Program Student Learning Outcomes:

KIIS Study Abroad Mission Statement:

KIIS provides high-quality education abroad programs for students from all diverse backgrounds that promote deep international learning, are integrated into the curriculum, and encourage critical and creative thinking. Our goal is to help students understand the wider world and develop personal and professional skills for lifelong enrichment. We strive to go beyond generalizations and cultural stereotypes to help foster a nuanced appreciation of the world in which we live.

Students participating on KIIS study abroad programs aim to:

- 1) Understand contemporary issues of their host country/countries (i.e. KIIS program location).
- 2) Develop skills to interact comfortably in a global setting.
- 3) Understand other cultures.

Prior to your KIIS study abroad program, and again at the conclusion of your program, KIIS will ask each student to a) answer a few multiple-choice questions, and b) write a short reflective essay (two paragraphs in length) related to the elements detailed above. There is no right or wrong answer, and your responses will not affect your grade in any way. The

purpose of the exercise is to help KIS measure the effectiveness of its study abroad programs.

3. Course Objectives and Specific Learning Outcomes:

Students will demonstrate:

- (1) New appreciation for an understudied, yet pivotal, conflict of the twentieth century, and how this event shaped the course of the century as a whole.
- (2) Understanding of how to evaluate different kinds of cultural and literary texts: historical documents, poems, novels, newspaper accounts, etc. We will be consuming a range of media in our consideration of the Russo-Japanese War
- (3) Familiarity with *contemporary* Russian and Japanese politics; students will gain insight into how historical memory still shapes modern-day political discourse.
- (4) A recognition of the multinational character of historical events. This course will encourage students to think transnationally in their assessment any conflict.
- (5) The ability to connect academic learning with real-world experiences and sites by visiting a memorial for Japanese war dead in conversation with our class material.
- (6) Develop an awareness of the past's continued influence on the present through a consideration of contemporary Russian and Japanese political relations.

4. Major Topics covered in the Course:

This is a selected, but not exhaustive, list of materials that we will cover over the summer term, presented in no particular order here.

- Anna Akhmatova, *Poem without a Hero* (1967)
- *The Treaty of Portsmouth* (1905)
- *Scenes and Incidents, Russo-Japanese Peace Conference* (dir., Edwin S. Porter, 1905), 15m.
- Yosano Akiko, "Brother, Do Not Give Your Life" (1904)
- *Cruiser 'Varyag'* (dir., Viktor Eisymont, 1946)
- "Growing Up," Higuchi Ichiyō (1895)
- Aleksandr Blok, "The Scythians" (1918)
- Claude Money, *La Japonaise* (1876)
- *Dersu Uzala* (dir., Akira Kurosawa, 1975)

5. Required Readings and Materials

* All readings, images, texts, and films will be made available online prior to departure

7. Graded Assignments:

(1) In-class participation: 15%

Our classes will be discussion-based, so coming prepared with comments and questions about each of our readings will be essential. This class will depend on all of us to actively contribute as we explore this historical material.

(2) In-class presentation (i.e., close-watching): 15%

Each student (or small groups of students) will be assigned to do a short in-class presentation (3-5 minutes). This presentation will center on a specific figure, battle, or cultural artefact that played a role during the conflict. Students will be expected to provide necessary context about their topic, while also offering some analysis, in conversation with what we have previously covered in class.

(3) On-Site Reflection (1-2 pages): 20%

In Tokoy, we will have visited both the Meiji Shrine, completed in 1923, and the Yasukuni Shrine, established in 1869 and dedicated to Japan's war dead. Your task in this assignment is to select one of these monuments and reflect on how your new knowledge of the Russo-Japanese War informed your experience of it. What have you learned about Japan that shaped your perception of the monument? What surprised you about these sites? How has our material prepared you more a more culturally nuanced perspective about Japan's history and political culture? What do you want to learn more about? The goal of this assignment is for you to think about the real-world impact of what we've been covering in class.

(4) Compare and Contrast Essay (2-3 pages): 20%

We will read Anna Akhmatova's *Poem without a Hero* alongside Yosano Akiko's "Brother, Do Not Give Your Life." These are two very different works: one Russian, written fifty years after the conflict, the other Japanese, composed during the war's unfolding. Yet both are poems written by women and assume a highly critical stance toward Russo-Japanese militarism. Your task in this assignment is to analyze the similarities and differences between Akiko and Akhmatova's poems. Where do they overlap, and where do they diverge? How might we account for these discrepancies and likenesses? Pay close attention to how the role that gender plays in both of these poems.

(5) Final Essay (2-3 pages), Mini-Research Paper: 30%

This final essay invites students to conduct a bit of independent research about contemporary Russian and Japanese politics. How does the legacy of the 1905 Russo-Japanese war impact Russia and Japan's political engagement? How, do you think, has the legacy of the war shaped Japan's response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2023? And how has Russia's rhetoric about Japan evolved under Putin? Is Russia still contesting Japan's northern islands? The goal of this brief

research project is to demonstrate how history still bears contemporary resonance and actively influences countries' decisions, relations, and trajectories.

8. Attendance Policy:

KIIS program participants are expected to be punctual to and in attendance at all classes, presentations, meetings and required excursions, and to remain with the program for the full academic period. Unexcused absences from classes and/or mandatory meetings will result in a lowering of the student's final grade, as will excessive tardiness. Multiple unexcused absences could result in expulsion from the program. Any absence from an academic class session must be excused for medical reasons.

9. Disability Accommodation:

KIIS will make every reasonable effort to provide accommodations for program participants with special needs or disabilities, but we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Be aware that many foreign countries do not have comprehensive legislation comparable to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a result, businesses and other establishments operating in foreign countries may not be able to provide accommodations.

If you have a disability accommodation need, we recommend you contact your KIIS Campus Representative, <https://www.kiis.org/about-kiis/contact-us/campus-representatives/> early in your program selection process so that s/he has time to discuss any specific needs, including which KIIS programs may be best suited. You also are welcome to contact KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, maria.canning@wku.edu, to discuss your disability accommodation needs (e.g. housing, transportation, excursions, class schedule, etc.).

Immediately after acceptance, notify KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, haley.mctaggart@wku.edu, if you have a special need or disability that might require any form of accommodation abroad. Failure to notify KIIS may prevent you from participating on your KIIS program.

If you require any accommodations abroad, you must provide KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, an accommodation letter from your home campus' disability accommodation office that lists the accommodations you are eligible to receive. Please do not request accommodations directly from your KIIS Program Director or other KIIS Faculty; the KIIS Office will notify your KIIS Program Director and/or Faculty after we have received your above accommodation letter.

In some cases, you may need to make arrangements for a caregiver to join you on your KIIS program, should your physician, campus disability accommodation office, or KIIS make such a recommendation or require it.

10. Title IX / Discrimination & Harassment:

Recent attention to gender discrimination and sexual harassment at colleges and universities reminds us of the importance of adhering to standards of ethical and professional behavior. KIIS Study Abroad is committed to supporting and encouraging safe and equitable educational environments for our students, faculty, and program directors. Students, faculty, and program directors are required to be civil and treat each other with dignity and respect. As such, harassment and/or discrimination of any kind will not be permitted or tolerated.

Sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, sexual assault, and sexual/dating/domestic violence) and sex discrimination are violations of KIIS policies. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to a) KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning (+1-859-200-1000) or KIIS Executive Director, John Dizgun (+1-270-227-2288), b) WKU's Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir (270-745-6867 / ena.demir@wku.edu) or WKU's Title IX Investigator, Michael Crowe (270-745-5429 / michael.crowe@wku.edu). Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a KIIS program director and/or faculty member, KIIS program directors and faculty are considered "Responsible Employees" of Western Kentucky University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator.

If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center, <https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/> at 270-745-3159.

For more information on KIIS Title IX, see <https://www.kiis.org/students/health-safety/title-ix-clery/>; additional Title IX resources can be found here <https://www.wku.edu/eeo/titleixbrochure2020.pdf>.

Everyone should be able to participate on a KIIS program, attend a KIIS event, or work in a KIIS environment (e.g. KIIS office) without fear of sexual harassment or discrimination of any kind. Be respectful of each other.