



KIIS Japan-Korea Pop Program, Summer 2026

ARC 100: Introduction to Asian Studies: From Army to Zelda

Instructor: Dr. Zelideth María Rivas

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Instructor's office hours: on site and by appointment

Syllabus subject to change

1. Course Description: This two-week immersion explores Asia “*from Army to Zelda*”—from colonial militarism and reconstruction to today’s global cultures of K-pop, anime, and street food. Lectures, site visits, and cultural engagement in Korea and Japan allow students to connect academic readings to lived experiences in temples, markets, and pop-culture districts.

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 KIIS measure the effectiveness of its study abroad programs.

3. Course Objectives and Specific Learning Outcomes:

- Identify key historical and cultural developments in Korea and Japan.
- Explain how colonialism, nationalism, and globalization shaped both nations.
- Analyze music, animation, fashion, and cuisine as reflections of identity.
- Connect academic frameworks in Asian Studies with field experiences.
- Produce analytical and reflective writing grounded in observation.

4. Major Topics covered in the Course: Orientalism in theory, culture, history, popular culture, gender, food studies, visual culture, soft power, identity, and film / media

5. Required Readings and Materials:

- Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Intro, pp. 1–30)
- David Birch, Tony Schirato & Sanjay Srivastava, *Asia: Cultural Politics in the Global Age* (ch. 1–2, 5, 7)
- Rhoads Murphey, *A History of Asia* (ch. 21 “Modern Transformations”)
- Koichi Iwabuchi, *Recentering Globalization* (Introduction)
- Arjun Appadurai, “How to Make a National Cuisine” (1998)
- Christine Yano, “Introduction”
- Park, *Understanding Hallyu*
- John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze* (excerpt)
- **Media:** BTS “Idol” MV • Studio Ghibli *Spirited Away* scene • Netflix *Street Food: Asia* (S1E1 Seoul) and others

6. Graded Assignments:

Component	Description	%
Participation	Active involvement in lectures & excursions	10
Reading homework	500–700 words linking readings to daily sites	15

Component	Description	%
Journal	1-page reflections on readings / excursions	15
Place as Text	Assignments for excursions	10
Excursion quizzes	Quizzes about excursion guide	5
Group Presentation	10-min analysis of a theme (pop culture, religion, food, space)	25
Final Essay	1,500–2,000 words synthesizing class themes	20

Homework Summary

- **Journal #1:** Heritage & Modernity in Korea
- **Journal #2:** Industry & Nation in Japan
- **Journal #3:** Pop Culture & Fandom
- **Journal #4:** Food & Aesthetics
- **Group Presentation:** Delivered in Osaka
- **Final Essay**

Class Attendance:

- 1) **Students are expected to attend all class meetings.** KIIS does not tolerate absences from class meetings.
- 2) Tardiness will prevent you from taking quizzes or doing writing assignments that are usually given at the beginning of each class. **Two (2) tardy arrivals or early dismissals become one (1) absence. Anything over 10 minutes will fall in this category.**

Late assignments:

Late assignments **will not be accepted.** The exceptions to this policy are, of course, serious illness. If either happens, we will discuss options.

Course policies:

- A. Academic Dishonesty Policy: The first instance of academic dishonesty will result in a zero for the assignment. The second instance of academic dishonesty will result in a course grade of E. I will report the sanction to the KIIS office.
- B. Incomplete Policy: I give incompletes only if the student has completed 95% or more of the course, and a verifiable emergency occurs. Incompletes must be finished by the start of the next semester.
- C. You are expected **to read the texts** and familiarize yourself with big concepts before coming to class. **Failure to bring your text or your notes on the readings to class means that you will be unable to participate in the**

discussions and results in a loss of participation points for the day and an unexcused absence from class.

- D. Be prepared to take notes and participate in discussions.
- E. **Show respect** to your instructor, classmates, and yourself. Be responsible and considerate.

7. 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.

8. 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/titleix/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.

Daily Schedule

Week 1 — Korea: From Empire to Pop Power

Date	Focus / Site Visits	Readings & Homework
Sat June 6	Depart U.S.	—
Sun June 7	Arrival to S. Korea / Travel to Daegu	Read Birch ch. 1 “ <i>The Idea of Asia.</i> ” HW: 200-word arrival observation.
Mon June 8	Orientation & first impressions of Asia Evening scavenger hunt	Read Murphey ch. 21 “ <i>Modern Transformations.</i> ” HW: Journal #1 – How does heritage shape modern identity?
Tue June 9	Gyeongju temples (Buddhism & heritage)	Read Said <i>Orientalism</i> (Intro). HW: Photo + 100-word caption on colonial architecture.
Wed June 10	Seomun Market (food and daily life)	Read Appadurai “How to Make a National Cuisine.” HW: Short field note on vendor interaction. Journal #2 due
Thu June 11	Seoul Markets & Dongdaemun Design Plaza	Read Heinz “Tongues, Texts, and Scripts.” HW: 250-word reflection on temple values.
Fri June 12	Gyeongbokgung & Bukchon Hanok Village (heritage tour)	View BTS “Idol” + Read Iwabuchi Intro. HW: Notes on music as diplomacy.
Sat June 13	Modernization & K-pop soft power / Japan orientation	Read Birch ch. 7 “Cultural Politics and Globalization.” HW: Visual journal with captions.

Week 2 — Japan: Modernity, Media, and Meaning

Date	Focus / Site Visits	Readings & Homework
Sun June 14	Fly Seoul → Nagoya	Read Keene <i>The Pleasures of Nō</i> . HW: Compose a 3-line haiku + photo moment. Journal #3 due

Date	Focus / Site Visits	Readings & Homework
Mon June 15	Nagoya Castle + Arrival orientation	Read Murphey on Tokugawa Japan. HW: Compare castle vs. modern architecture
Tue June 16	Toyota Commemorative Museum + classes	Read Birch ch. 5 “Modernization and Culture.” HW: Reflection on Toyota branding and national image.
Wed June 17	Free Day (Kyoto)	
Thu June 18	Osu Kannon • Chukyo student exchange	Read Iwabuchi pp. 31-42 on transnational fandom. HW: 300-word mini-analysis on Otaku culture.
Fri June 19	Osaka Kyoiku University activity	Watch Netflix <i>Street Food: Asia (Osaka)</i> . Read Urry <i>Tourist Gaze</i> . HW: Journal #4 – Food and nostalgia.
Sat June 20	Shinsekai district	Yano, Christine. “Introduction” and Park, “Introduction” <i>Understanding Hallyu</i> ” HW: Discussion notes on soft pow and international relations.
Sun June 21	Depart Japan → U.S.	Final Essay due