Summary
This introductory course is an inquiry into the culture of Japan - its thought and way of life - that is designed to foster future study of the archipelago. It elucidates the specificities of a Japanese identity that is imbued with both tradition and openness to innovation.

Content
Culture and thought as mirrored in cinema and anime
Specifics in four parts
Do – The Way
Keys of understanding: Japanese society after the opening of Japan to the West at the end of the 19th century.
Spirituality and martial arts: Akira Kurosawa’s film Judo Saga (Sanshiro Sugata) 1943
Introduction to Zen: traditional as in Japanese temples and in a contemporary global context.
Professional and private life
Several reflections on the lives of women and men from the postwar period to the present day
Examples of arranged marriage Yasujiro Ozu’s film Banshun (Late Spring) 1949
Communication through a third party
First examination: written answer to one thematic among five

Cool Japan – Aging Japan: innovation and ethics
Anime and science fiction: Osamu Tezuka
From Hiroshima to Fukushima: questioning ethics in a nuclear context
Visualizing dreams: Satoshi Kon’s anime Paprika 2006
Contemporary Japan
From technological visions to reality: “Soul” in Japanese robotics, by Raphaël Holzer
Nature – nurture – Shinto as a social reinvigorator: Naomi Kawase’s film An (Sweet bean) 2016
Synthesis
Second examination: research plan for the spring semester (individual or as a group)

Keywords
Interculturality, Do, Shinto, Zen, arts, communication, robotics, food, nurture, innovation, ethics, cinema, anime
POLY-perspective:
• interdisciplinary perspective
• creative perspective

https://www.epfl.ch/schools/cdh/cdhs-vision/

Learning Prerequisites
Recommended courses
Japon Contemporain A BA5
Histoire de l’Asie contemporaine A BA3
Histoire de l’Asie contemporaine B BA6
Chine Contemporaine BA4
Economie de la Chine BA5
Chine: une nouvelle puissance globale? BA6
Introduction au monde russe BA6

Learning Outcomes
By the end of the course, the student must be able to:
• Develop a critical methodology for studying ethnocentric thinking
• Interpret cultural stereotypes attached to Japan (spirituality, gender, arts)
• Develop an intellectual argument on a proposition relevant to the course
• Synthesize the array of knowledge necessary to have a good understanding of social integration in Japan
• Synthesize the contributions of contemporary Japan (innovation, work ethics, spirituality, robotics, arts, architecture, gardens, food)
• Compose or write a memoir
• Use a work methodology appropriate to the task

Transversal skills
• Communicate effectively with professionals from other disciplines.
• Communicate effectively, being understood, including across different languages and cultures.
• Take account of the social and human dimensions of the engineering profession.
• Demonstrate the capacity for critical thinking

Teaching methods
Fall semester: lecture and visiting speakers + supervision (English/French) of the elaboration of a research plan
Spring semester: supervision of research, mini-colloquium, a memoir sample will be furnished to students

Expected student activities
Elaboration of an individual or group research plan, active participation, critical lecture of articles and books, working discipline and time management, writing skills
- Fall semester: written examination, research plan (two pages: title, issue, detailed plan, bibliography)
- Spring semester: abstract (300 words), participation to a mini-colloquium, memoir (4500 words)

Assessment methods
Fall semester: written examination (50%), quality of the research plan (50%)
Spring semester: oral presentation at the mini-colloquium (40%), memoir (60%)

Supervision
Office hours Yes
Assistants No
Forum No

Resources
Bibliography
Bibliography will be furnished (see below), plus specialized resources on the moodle

• Fosco Maraini *Japan* Arthaud 1969
• Brian McVeigh *Interpreting Japan* Routledge 2014
• Keiko McDonald *Reading a Japanese Film in Context* Uni Hawai 2005
• Kenzaburo Ôé *Hiroshima: Notes* Marion Boyars 1997

**Ressources en bibliothèque**

• *Japan : patterns of continuity* / by Fosco Maraini
• *Interpreting Japan : approaches and applications for the classroom* / Brian J. McVeigh
• *Reading a Japanese film : cinema in context* / Keiko I. McDonald
• *Introducing Japanese Religion* / Robert Ellwood
• *Hiroshima notes* / Kenzaburo Ôé ; translated by David L. Swain and Toshi Yonezawa