Japan Music and Culture

Conducted in English

No prior music experience or knowledge of Japanese or Japanese music is required.

Location: Tokyo, Japan

Dates: January 1 – 24

Host: The Academy at Magic Hour

Credits: 3.0

Description:

In this series lecture seminar, you will explore the music world of Japan. Your course director is Mr. Yukio Kobayashi, who has over forty years of experience in the Japanese music industry, working closely with popular and independent Japanese bands and musicians. You will receive lectures on Japanese music history, elements of Japanese music across a range of musical genres, writing about Japanese music, and more. Featured guests include prominent musicians, DJs, and music producers in independent, mainstream, and anime music. You will spend an afternoon in a recording studio, visit Sony Music, and experience live house music and production. By course end, you will have gained a healthy sense of the professionalism, dedication, and skill that characterizes the Japanese music industry.

Your course begins at a seaside retreat in Kyonan, Chiba, and includes survival Japanese language training, a visit to the largest sitting Buddha in Japan, a Matsuri performance, and more. In Tokyo, you will visit Studio Ghibli, explore Asakusa (Tokyo’s “old” town), and have a program dinner.

Requirements include:

1. **Detailed Journal/Log**:
2. An ongoing music journal/log, including note-taking during lectures and your questions, observations, and responses throughout the course. You are also compiling a song list from the music you’re introduced to by key musical guests. This journal/log forms the basis for your term essay (20% of your grade).
3. You will be given a selection of music by various Japanese artists before your departure. You will choose three artists minimum to write about their musical sound, quality, and offer an overall critique and response. (15% of your grade)
4. **Active Participation**: Motivation, enthusiasm, exemplary behavior, and looking out for your peers for the duration of the course. (15% of your grade)
5. **Presentation**: A 5-7 minute presentation on either your musical and cultural journey in Japan, or focusing on an aspect of the Japanese music world you experienced that you would like to explore more in-depth (20% of your grade)
6. **Term Essay**: In an eight-to-ten-page typed, double-spaced essay based on your journal/ log entries, you will write an in-depth reflection on your musical and cultural journey in Japan this January. You are integrating your song list and other media, if you choose, to include photos, video footage, music samples, and even your own music if you like. Keep in mind, however, that this is an essay first and foremost. (30% of your grade)

Ultimately, the journal/log, presentation, and term essay are not only for your grade, but also serve as physical mementos of your immersion experience.

Required Materials:

Course handouts

Journal (see Culture Program requirements)