



Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences
IDH 2634H- Honors Service Learning (1 credit)
STUDY ABROAD JAPAN

Course dates: May 18 - June 26, 2026

Travel dates: May 28 - June 5, 2026

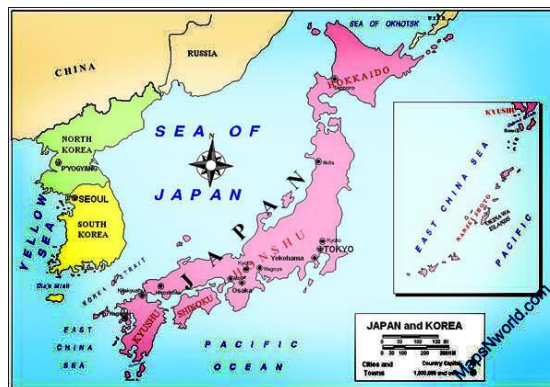
Instructor: Tara Hechlik Newsom, JD, LLM

Office: DT 256 and cell 727-512-9550

Office hours: Per request

Email: Newsom.tara@spcollege.edu

[Japan political map](#)



SPC 2022-23 Catalog Course Description

Prerequisite: (Appropriate score on the college placement test) or (Acceptance into the Honors College) or Permission of the Program. This course is designed to provide students with a laboratory in which learning experiences address human and community needs. This includes contribution to a real community need, research, and reflection. Topics will include civic and social responsibility, service participation, critical thinking, social and cultural diversity, integration of theory and life experience, and experiential learning. The format will incorporate honors research, class discussion, and presentation honors portfolios on service-learning specific to the student's interests. 10 contact hours including in-class orientation and on-line discussion. *(Note: The student must fulfill the requirement of 30 service hours in addition to written assignments. This course is repeatable with different service assignment for up to 3*

credits. Study Abroad opportunities may apply to this course <https://blog.spcollege.edu/international/study-abroad/>).

Course objectives and major learning outcomes:

1. The student will articulate a clear understanding of service learning and of community service and its social importance.
2. The student will demonstrate a commitment to civic and social responsibility.
3. The student will discover and evaluate the interrelatedness of the community service field component with academic concepts and principles in the academic disciplines in which the student works or will work.
4. The student will exhibit reflection on the personal experience as it relates to issues of social and cultural diversity.
5. The student will evaluate the personal experience as it relates to interpersonal development including empathy, conflict resolution and collaborative problem solving.
6. The student will evaluate insights from the personal experience as it relates to self-understanding of skills and weaknesses, motivations, perspectives, personal and social values, and personal goals.

Japan

Through this study abroad opportunity, where SPC students will get to experience a different culture and learn in a foreign context, attention would be paid to relations between Japan, its neighbors, and the United States and how the Japan experience can inform life in different settings such as the U.S, especially in service learning.

Generally, students can look forward to visiting multiples historical sites dealing with political, economic, and social issues in Japan. This includes Himeji Castle, Japan's largest castle; the city of Hiroshima where the atomic bomb was dropped on August 6, 1945; various Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples found throughout the country and many more as detailed in the accompanying program itinerary.

Class assignments [*SUBJECT TO CHANGE PRIOR TO COURSE START*]

Assignments and Possible Points

Service Hours	Pass / Fail
Discussion Forums	100
Supervisor Interview	50
Final Reports	50
TOTAL	200

- **Service Hours:** A log must be kept of service hours completed. No grade is given. This is pass or fail. If the hours are not met, the student cannot pass the course.
- **Discussion Forums:** Weekly posts will be required. The first and second will involve some research. Posts are always stronger when grounded in some research, literature, or authoritative sources. Most of the discussions will involve personal reflection which is particularly important for this course. Though the postings must be done on time,

students are encouraged to think about the upcoming questions. Think ahead, but do not work more than a week ahead. Original posts will be due by Sunday midnight.

- **Class Meetings:** There will be at least two class meetings via Zoom. Meeting number and dates will be finalized upon final class roster. The first meeting is to get to know each other and go over the course objectives and requirements. Attendance and participation is required. The second meeting is for presentations by students. This meeting will last for two hours. The oral presentation before the class either in person or via Zoom and participation in the projects of others will be worth 30% of the presentation grade. This is required.
- **Supervisor Evaluation:** In this assignment, grades are given on the reflection of the student and not the comments of the mentor. Consider early who is the most appropriate person to give an evaluation. The evaluation should list strengths, weaknesses, areas for growth and recommendations for the future. This is not a performance evaluation. It is mentoring advice. This will likely be in the form of a conversation on which the student takes notes. The grade will be given on the student's notes and reflection -- the insight and usefulness of the evaluation for personal growth. We are less interested in the actual responses, how positive or negative the supervisor comments. A great recommendation presenting one as just short of perfect is not really very helpful. Rather, the assignment asks, "can the student benefit from feedback?" This will be confidential between students and instructor and will not be shared with the class.
- **Presentations:** These will be presented at the last class meeting. More specific instructions will be provided.
- **Final Reports:** More specific instructions will be provided.

Required Text

- [*A Brief History of Japan: Samurai, Shogun and Zen: The Extraordinary Story of the Land of the Rising Sun*](#) (2017). 1st edition. By Jonathan Clements. Tuttle Publishing. ISBN-10: 4805313897; ISBN-13: 978-4805313893. Used (from \$10.99) and new (\$11.99) on Amazon.

Grading Procedures

A =	90-100%	180-200 points
B =	80-89%	160-179 points
C =	70-79%	140-159 points
D =	60-69%	120-139 points
F =	Below 60%	0-119 points

College Policies and campus resources

ACADEMIC HONESTY: 'St. Petersburg College expects students to be honest in all of their academic work. By enrolling at the College, students agree to adhere to high standards of academic honesty and integrity and understand that failure to comply with this pledge may result in academic and disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from the College. As

members of the College community, students also have an ethical obligation to report violations of the SPC academic honesty policies they may witness.'

Cheating, plagiarism, copying and any other behavior that is contrary to SPC's standards of behavior will not be tolerated. **Any forms of academic dishonesty will automatically lead you to failing this course ('F' grade). Students may also face expulsion from college.** It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with SPC policy regarding academic honesty and to avoid violating such policies. Policy information is found at: <https://go.spcollege.edu/AcademicHonesty/>

How to Be A Successful Student: SPC Syllabus Addendum Link:

<http://www.spcollege.edu/addendum/>

Important dates:

See academic calendar: <https://spcollege.edu/academic-calendar>

Students with disabilities

St. Petersburg College is committed to providing academic accommodations for students with disabilities. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Accessibility Services Department (<https://go.spcollege.edu/Accessibility/>) and provide appropriate documentation. SPC encourages students with disabilities to follow these procedures as early as possible within the semester.

Mental health help:

As an SPC student it's vital that you know Titans Care. You can access resources through SPC's Student Assistance Program (SAP) (<https://mycoursesupport.spcollege.edu/student-assistance-program>), a collaborative resource for students with mental health or general life issues. SAP provides help and education in suicide prevention, mental health, substance abuse awareness and more. It is SPC's belief that supporting mental wellness is everyone's charge, and that one loss as a result of substance abuse, mental illness, or suicide is one too many. If you or a loved one are considering suicide, please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.

Student Survey of Instruction:

The Student Survey of Instruction (SSI) is administered in courses each semester. It is designed to improve the quality of instruction at St. Petersburg College. All student responses are confidential and anonymous and will be used solely for the purpose of performance improvement. The SSI will be given online using the **MyCourses**.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

(To be adjusted at the discretion of the instructor, especially the non-travel part)

WEEK	TOPICS AND READINGS	DUE ASSIGNMENTS
1	Introduction to the class	Discussions
2-3	Travel abroad Japan	Discussions
3-4	Travel abroad Japan	Discussions
5	Debriefing session and conclusion of the class	Discussions, presentations, and final report
6	Debriefing session and conclusion of the class	Discussions, presentations, and final report