

# PAAS 495: Advanced Topics in Pacific and Asian Studies: Transcultural Japan

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## Course description:

In this course we will strive to understand “Japan” not as a geographically-bounded nation-state, but instead as a globalized and evolving formation. How do Japanese cultural formations like *sushi*, *geisha*, and *Pokemon* exert globalizing influences on the world? Or, how do cultural texts like *Golden Kamuy* or *Uchinaa Hip-hop* redefine the way Japan is understood globally? Starting with transculturalism and globalization theory, we will then pivot toward Japan’s outward flows of globalization (through food heritage, culture industries, and technological innovations). The latter half of the course will focus on newer formations such as Indigenous cultural production, emergent media communities, and radioactive contamination. For your final projects, you will conduct independent fieldwork on “transcultural Japan” in Victoria, and use this as a base for a grounded analysis of Japan’s cultural formations exerting global influence and of Japan itself being transformed by external flows.

Attendance and participation (10%)

Weekly discussion forum posts (25%)

Fieldnotes #1: Observation Journal (10%)

Fieldnotes #2: Interview Transcription (15%)

“Transcultural Japan” in Victoria project + presentation (20%)

Final Exam (20%)

## Proposed reading list:

Avenell, Simon. *Transnational Japan in the Global Environmental Movement*

Bestor, Theodore. *Tsukiji: The Fish Market at the Center of the World.*

Condry, Ian. *The Soul of Anime: Collaborative Creativity and Japan's Media Success Story.*

Miller, Ian, Julia Thomas, and Brett Walker, eds. *Japan at Nature's Edge*

Iwabuchi, Koichi. *Recentering Globalization: Popular Culture and Japanese Transnationalism.*

Visweswaran, Kamala. *Un/common Cultures: Racism and the Rearticulation of Cultural Difference.*