

Medicine, Microbiology, and Health  
UF in Japan  
ALS 4404  
Summer A 2025, Study Abroad Program

## Instructors

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## Course Description

This course offers a distinctive opportunity for students to acquire a profound comprehension of microbiology and its significance in the medical and health domains, while simultaneously immersing themselves in diverse cultures and engaging in physical activity and wellness pursuits. Students will embark on a 21-day immersion in Japan, where they will participate in an array of educational and cultural activities. The program encompasses a comprehensive range of cultural experiences, including research presentations, lectures, site tours, and museum visits. Furthermore, participants will allocate a week to Okinawa, where they will have the opportunity to interact directly with the residents of the Blue Zone village. Through these experiences, students will cultivate essential skills in intercultural competence, self-discovery and communication, and critical thinking, equipping them for success in their academic and professional endeavors.

ALS 4404 is a 3-credit-hour course that is part of the UF Study Abroad program through UF International Center. These credits count toward the UF Summer Enrollment requirement.

## Course Prerequisites / Corequisites

Students must complete the application process through the UF International Center. Selection will be based on submission timing and program fit.

## Course Learning Objectives

1. Historical Perspectives on Medicine in Japan: Gain a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of medical practices and theories in Japan, tracing developments from traditional methods to modern advancements.
2. Advancements in Medical Research: Explore the latest innovations and progress in medicine and research within Japan, focusing on cutting-edge treatments and technological breakthroughs.
3. Comparative Medical Practices: Analyze and contrast the medical practices and healthcare systems between Asia (with a focus on Japan) and North America, highlighting differences in approaches, outcomes, and philosophies.
4. Fermentation and Gut Health: Delve into the science of fermentation as it relates to gut health, studying both traditional Japanese fermentation techniques and their modern applications in medical and nutritional science.
5. Lifestyle Practices in the Okinawa Blue Zone: Investigate the lifestyle, diet, and social practices of the Okinawa Blue Zone, renowned for its high rate of longevity, to understand potential applications to health and wellness strategies globally.
6. Cultural Competence: Students gain exposure to the Japanese healthcare system, its history, and its cultural context. Understanding how cultural factors influence patient care and medical practices is crucial for any medical professional working in a globalized context.
7. Professional Networking and Internship Opportunities: Studying abroad allows students to build a network of professional contacts from Japan. These connections can be invaluable for future collaborations and career opportunities.

8. Personal Development: Living and studying in a different country can significantly contribute to a student's personal growth, resilience, and independence. These are all qualities that are beneficial in any career, particularly in the demanding field of medicine.

### Materials and Supply Fees

A nonrefundable deposit of \$395 is required with the application to cover the total program cost. The program fee of \$5,590 must be paid by 45 days prior to departure. If financial aid is received, payment can be deferred until the aid disburses. The program fee covers tuition, housing, transportation, program excursion fees, international health insurance, and emergency medical assistance. Separate funds are necessary for international round-trip airfare, most meals, personal travel, and other personal expenses.

### Required Textbooks and Software

There are no required textbooks for this course. Supplemental reading will be provided.

### Schedule Overview

Dates	Locations
May 19-25	Tokyo
May 25-26	Nagoya
May 26-29	Kyoto and Osaka
May 30-31	Shodoshima Island
June 1-2	Kyoto
June 2-9	Okinawa

### Course Assignments

#### Critical Thinking

- Historical Scientist Impersonation**

Each student will select a different person of scientific and historical significance associated with a trip locale to share an accurate, informative, and interesting presentation with the group. Suggestions for subjects will be provided, but students can propose other figures of interest. The presentation should be 10-15 minutes and ready to present on the appropriate day during the trip. Electronic handouts should be shared with the group to reinforce learning and provide at least two references (You may use any citation format you desire, but please be consistent).

Criteria	Ratings			Points
	Excellent (25 to 20)	Good (15 to 10)	Insufficient (5 to 0)	
Scientific informative	New, complex learning fostering new research insights	Valuable learning building on standard course curriculum	Basic or limited technical information	25
Historically accurate	Excellent (25 to 20)	Good (15 to 10)	Insufficient (5 to 0)	25

	Solid historical information with references	Valid historical substance	Incomplete historical context	
Balanced perspectives	Excellent (25 to 20) Respectful consideration of multiple perspectives	Good (15 to 10) Recognition of different opinions	Insufficient (5 to 0) One-sided or biased view	25
Creative presentation	Excellent (25 to 20) High audience engagement	Good (15 to 10) Peaks of strong interest	Insufficient (5 to 0) Limited effort	25

### Intercultural Learning and Communication

#### ○ Scribe & Photographer/Blogger

Each student will be assigned to summarize key information for one day's activities and to either serve as the photographer or blog writer for another day's activities. Scribe summaries should be 1 to 3 pages long. Photo albums should include 10-20 photos. Blogs should include 2-3 posts. {Do we want to post their blogs on an official UF MCB post?}

Criteria	Ratings			Points
Representative of Group Experience	Excellent (25 to 20) Captured unique insights and diverse views	Good (15 to 10) Most perspectives represented	Insufficient (5 to 0) Generic summary	25
Topic Coverage	Excellent (25 to 20) Comprehensive and concise	Good (15 to 10) Most key points included	Insufficient (5 to 0) Incomplete coverage	25
Creativity	Excellent (25 to 20) Emotionally evoking and mentally challenging	Good (15 to 10) Some engaging points	Insufficient (5 to 0) Lacks effort to connect with others	25
Professionalism	Excellent (25 to 20) Polished communication worthy of publication	Good (15 to 10) Well written with good tags	Insufficient (5 to 0) Major grammatical errors	25

#### ○ Participation

Students are expected to participate in the mandatory pre-trip orientation meeting through the UF International Center. Active engagement in daily activities is also required to fully benefit from this experiential learning program.

Activities include (cultural interaction, cultural quiz, scavenger hunts, lecture discussions, work style assessment)

Grade reductions will be applied for persistent or egregious lack of effort and involvement. Examples include being consistently late, sleeping or being inattentive during lectures, leaving the group during tours, skipping events, and not turning in activities. It is not anticipated that this will be an issue as the program is designed for students to desire involvement. Students will be given an opportunity to explain their behavior and address it with both instructors. Code of Conduct violations will not be tolerated and will be handled per University guidelines.

#### ○ Reflection Project

The Reflection Project is an opportunity to summarize your learnings to solidify and retain them for yourself and to share with others. It should creatively express at least three things you learned, two things you found interesting, and 1 question you still had.

Finding time to collect highlights and insights can be a challenge and takes some discipline. It can be beneficial to jot down notes during the experience and then fill in more details when it is possible to sit down. The longer you wait the easier it is to forget details. Try to schedule a time daily to capture your thoughts. Evening is a good time to write about the experiences of the day. Do not fall behind. A travel journal can become a cherished treasure to remember amusing incidents and rewarding experiences. Some things to consider noting include:

1. Observations: What did you see? How did it make you and others feel? How could it impact your future professional endeavors?
2. Food and Culture: What novel tastes or approaches did you experience? How has this impacted your overall world views?
3. Historical Perspectives: What has changed over time? What may have precipitated the changes? What changes may be likely in the future and how could you influence them?

The Reflection Project is more than a compilation of your experiences, but should consider challenges that were overcome and new awareness and shifts in perspective. It should contemplate aspects of how the program enriched your academic learning and professional growth. It can also offer recommendations for others and your plans for the future.

Criteria	Ratings			Points
Content	Excellent (25 to 20)	Good (15 to 10)	Insufficient (5 to 0)	25
	Includes all elements of learnings, insights and questions	Missing one element	Missing two or more elements	
Comprehensive	Excellent (25 to 20)	Good (15 to 10)	Insufficient (5 to 0)	25
	Curation of multiple cultural experiences	Assimilates several activities	Simplistic points	
Depth	Excellent (25 to 20)	Good (15 to 10)	Insufficient (5 to 0)	25
	Demonstrates critical thinking	Some in-depth insights	Unidimensional	
Communication	Excellent (25 to 20)	Good (15 to 10)	Insufficient (5 to 0)	25
	Polished and creative	Solid format	Significant errors	

## Self-Discovery and Communication

### ○ ePortfolio

Your e-Portfolio is a foundation for showcasing your global and professional learning journey. The Wix website builder is recommended for simplicity, but other website accounts can be used. Basic building blocks of the site will include a personal interest statement, resume/CV or LinkedIn profile, and abbreviated travel log including photos.

Criteria	Ratings			Points
Content	Excellent (25 to 20)	Good (15 to 10)	Insufficient (5 to 0)	25
	Comprehensive coverage of biographical, career, and travel topics	Limited or missing components	Missing two or more elements	
Skills	Excellent (25 to 20)	Good (15 to 10)	Insufficient (5 to 0)	25
	Highlights competencies and achievements reflecting creativity and critical thinking	General proficiency and experiences noted	Poor self-awareness or sensitivity in expressing capabilities	
Visually Appealing	Excellent (25 to 20)	Good (15 to 10)	Insufficient (5 to 0)	25
	Organized for easy navigation and comprehension	Solid format	Sloppy effort	
Professionalism	Excellent (25 to 20)	Good (15 to 10)	Insufficient (5 to 0)	25
	Sophisticated, clear communication	Proper grammar and spelling	Significant errors	

## Assignment Grades

Assignments	Due Date	% Grade
Historic Scientist Impersonation	At related point in trip	25%
Participation, Scribe/Blog/Photos	Rotating during trip	25%
ePortfolio	End of Summer C	25%
Reflection Project	End of Summer C	25%

## Grading Scheme

Range	Grade	Grade Points	Range	Grade	Grade Points
94.0% to 100%	A	4.00	74.0% to < 77.0%	C	2.00
90.0% to < 94.0%	A-	3.67	70.0% to < 74.0%	C-	1.67

87.0%	to	< 90.0%	B+	3.33	67.0%	to	< 70.0%	D+	1.33
84.0%	to	< 87.0%	B	3.00	64.0%	to	< 67.0%	D	1.00
80.0%	to	< 84.0%	B-	2.67	60.0%	to	< 64.0%	D-	0.67
77.0%	to	< 80.0%	C+	2.33	0%	to	< 60.0%	E	0.00

## Class Expectations and Make-Up Policy

Please see UF policy at [Attendance Policies](#). Excused assignment extensions must be consistent with university policies in the [Undergraduate Catalog](#) and require appropriate documentation.

**Participation in program activities is mandatory unless excused due to medical issues.**

## Course Evaluation

Student assessment of instruction is an important part of efforts to improve teaching and learning. At the end of the semester, students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at [UF Gator Evals Guidelines](#). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via [Gator Evals Portal](#). Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at [Gator Evals Public Results](#). Additional anonymous feedback on the course may be requested, but participation is not required.

## Academic Honesty Policy

As a student at the University of Florida, you have committed yourself to uphold the Honor Code, which includes the following pledge: *"We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity."* You are expected to exhibit behavior consistent with this commitment to the UF academic community, and on all work submitted for credit at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: *"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."*

It is assumed that you will complete all work independently in each course unless the instructor provides explicit permission for you to collaborate on course tasks (e.g., assignments, papers, quizzes, exams). Furthermore, as part of your obligation to uphold the Honor Code, you should report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. It is your individual responsibility to know and comply with all university policies and procedures regarding academic integrity and the Student Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code at the University of Florida will not be tolerated. Violations will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for consideration of disciplinary action. For more information regarding the Student Honor Code, please see: [UF Student Conduct Honor Code](#).

## Software Use

All faculty, staff, and students at the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

## Services for Students with Disabilities

The Disability Resource Center coordinates the needed accommodations of students with disabilities. This includes registering disabilities, recommending academic accommodations within the classroom, accessing special adaptive computer equipment, providing interpretation services and mediating faculty-student disability related issues. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester

## Student Privacy

There are federal laws protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please see the [Notification to Students of FERPA Rights](#).

## Campus Helping Resources:

Students experiencing crises or personal problems that interfere with their general well-being are encouraged to utilize the university's counseling resources. The Counseling & Wellness Center provides confidential counseling services at no cost for currently enrolled students. Resources are available on campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career or academic goals, which interfere with their academic performance.

## Health and Wellness

**U Matter, We Care:** <https://umatter.ufl.edu/>

If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

**Counseling and Wellness Center:** 3190 Radio Road, 352-392-1575, <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu> provides counseling services, groups and workshops, outreach and consultation, self-help library, and wellness coaching

**Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)**

Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

**University Police Department** at 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies), or [police.ufl.edu](http://police.ufl.edu).

## Academic Resources

**E-learning technical support:** <https://elearning.ufl.edu/>, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to [Learning-support@ufl.edu](mailto:Learning-support@ufl.edu).

**Career Resource Center:** <https://career.ufl.edu/>, 352-392-1601, First Floor Reitz Union. Career assistance and guidance.

**Library Support:** <https://uflib.ufl.edu/> Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

**Student Success Initiative:** <https://studentsuccess.ufl.edu/> Pathways to student support through advising, coaching, peer mentoring and tutoring

**Writing Studio:** <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>, 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

**Disability Services:** <https://disability.ufl.edu/>, 1 Reid Hall, 352-392-8565. Registration, accommodations for disabilities.

**On-Line Students Complaints for Online Course:** <https://pfs.tnt.aa.ufl.edu/state-authorization-status/#student-complaint>