

Musashi University Summer Collaborative Learning (MUSCLE) Program 2025 Course Descriptions

2nd QUARTER: 7-week courses

June 5-July 23

Students must enroll in two courses but can take all three if they choose.

These courses are 2 Credits and meet twice a week for 105 minutes per session. Students must attend both sessions of these courses.

SEMINAR IN VISUAL CULTURES

Robert Dahlberg-Sears

Monday & Thursday 3rd (13:25-15:10)

What kinds of visual relationships do we create between representations and reality? Between the self and others? The course acts as an introduction to a variety of elements of visual culture in Japan as a way of coming to better understand the idea of Japan and its lifeways and to begin formulating answers to these questions. We will apply an interdisciplinary lens to introduce concepts, case studies, and points of comparison across our materials. Our materials are broadly ethnographic, but will also pull on media studies, art, photography, and cultural studies. Course meetings will be student discussion driven rather than lecture based, and we will draw on in-class outings and out of class field observations to support these.

FIELDWORK IN JAPAN

Brian Masshardt

Tuesday 3rd (13:25-15:10) & Thursday 1st (9:00-10:45)

This course provides a foundational understanding of key fieldwork methods used in ethnographic research. Although formally classified as a lecture, this course will be highly interactive, balancing readings, discussions, and conversations with fieldwork professionals. However, fieldwork is learned by doing, not just by reading about it. Students will gain hands-on experience with essential research methods, including journaling, surveying, direct observation, participant observation, and interviewing, all of which will contribute to the creation of a mini-ethnography. Above all, this course challenges students to actively engage with their surroundings, critically reflect on their observations, and apply theoretical knowledge to real-world contexts.

SEMINAR IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Jason Douglass

Wednesday 3rd (13:25-15:10) & 4th (15:20-17:05)

Entrepreneurship is the practice of creating value from nothing by identifying opportunities, taking calculated risks, and building sustainable, ethical solutions to real-world problems. In essence, it is about the relentless pursuit of innovation, adaptability, and pragmatic problem-solving. The course invites students to embrace an entrepreneurial mindset and provides the structure and individualized guidance necessary for them to achieve meaningful outcomes.

The course is designed for students who are eager to tackle problems – whether social, environmental, economic, cultural, health-related, technological, educational, or beyond – they genuinely care about solving. Ideal participants will be self-driven, curious, and ready to commit to developing a minimum viable product (MVP) that demonstrates their innovative solution to a problem of personal significance. Through seminar discussions, interactive exercises, individualized guidance, and peer-to-peer feedback, students will leave the course with a refined pitch deck, polished presentation, and tools to iterate upon and scale their concept. The course culminates in a Demo Day, where students present their ventures to a panel of local entrepreneurs for feedback and discussion.