Rethinking Japan: Introduction to Modern Japanese Society and Culture (Level 4)

**Module Code**  
LNLN023S4

**Credits/Level**  
30/4

**Module Type**  
Academic

**Previous Name**  
N/A

**Teaching Pattern**  
22 one-and-a-half hour sessions

**Entrance Requirements**  
N/A

**Synopsis**  
This module aims to provide you with a critical understanding of crucial aspects in Japan's modern cultural and social history. It will give you an opportunity to learn some of the main ways to explore Japanese history, culture, and especially its cultural products. You will be introduced to key texts (historical, literary, visual, cinematic, and theoretical) which represent and chart two central developments: Japan's emergence as a modern, 'westernized', powerful, and imperialistic nation-state (early twentieth century); and Japan's post-war transformation into a high-tech consumer society (1945-present).

We will consider notions of 'Japaneseness' and the changing discourses on national and cultural identity, with which Japan sought to position itself vis-à-vis the west and Asia; and in turn, we will scrutinise western images of Japan and the 'Far East'. Some of the topics we will look at include Japan as a nation and community, identity in modern Japan, Japan in Asia, Western images of Japan, multi-cultural Japan, and gender in Japan.

**Indicative Content**
- Inventing the nation: Meiji Japan and modernisation
- The Imperial Rescript on Education and the Meiji Constitution
- Building an Empire
- Total War and Total Defeat
- Occupation: demilitarisation and democracy?
- Re-building Japan: Post-war economic growth
- High Speed Change: Social and political protest
- Japan in the world: Post-war to Post-bubble
- The politics of Japaneseness
- Orientalism and Occidentalism
- Post colonialism
- Globalization and Japan
- Gender, sexuality and family in contemporary Japan
- Popular Music in Japan: The problem of authenticity
- Media production and consumption in Japan: issues of power, freedom and control
- Media and culture in Zero Generation

**Coursework/Assessment**

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<th>Component</th>
<th>Basic Requirements</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
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<tr>
<td>Essay 1</td>
<td>2000 words</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay 2</td>
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