11. Perceptions of Images from Japan
--How to Design an Attractive Study-Abroad Program--
Telus Centre 131 | 15:15-16:45

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Chair and Discussant: Ben Whaley
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In spring 2016, instructors from the Japanese Program at the University of Calgary together designed a brand-new study-abroad program in Japan. This program targets those students deeply attracted to Japanese culture and society, but who lack formal knowledge of the Japanese language. Since its inception, we have completed two trips in 2017 and 2018, and will run the same program in the coming spring of 2019. The program interest was so strong that the past two trips both received more applications than available spots, and the feedback from the students as well as the instructors was extremely positive.

The design of this program started with the creation of two new university courses taught during the trip -- "Topics in Japanese Culture in an Immersion Setting: Longing, Memory, and Inheritance" and "Topics in Japanese Civilization: Japanese Cultural History in the Present Day". The learning objectives are presented in a clear and focused manner: to experience contemporary Japan, and to observe and understand it in a historical context. The content of the teaching firmly enhanced the learning outcomes through field trips, cultural events and meetings with local Japanese students.

In this panel, the three program coordinators will jointly present various approaches to this program, including the design, the planning, the practice, as well as the response to unexpected events and difficulties. We hope to share what we learned from the design and the past two trips in order to discuss how to provide a better learning environment in today's universities and how to help our students succeed and thrive in their study of Japanese language and culture.