

## “Culture of Services: Paradox of Customer Relations”

Understand the subtle and sometimes counter-intuitive dynamics of customer relations. Learn a fresh, cultural perspective on service-focused industries.



**September 26, 2019 – August 4, 2020**

Length: **Self-paced (8 weeks)**

Instructor: **Yutaka Yamauchi, Ph.D.**

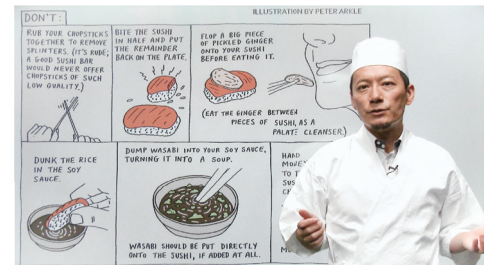
Associate Professor of Graduate School of Management, Kyoto University

Services are everywhere in our society. We cannot live without them. More than 70% of advanced economies fall under the category of the service sector. Other sectors, such as agriculture and manufacturing, also seek to incorporate service business.

What is service? While the existing discourse on services emphasizes customer satisfaction, hospitality, and clear design, this course offers a radically new perspective on services.

The coursework will explore major underlying theories of service, including customer satisfaction and service quality. In addition, learners will be exposed to competitive analyses, and explore the contradictory relationships inherent in services from an intersubjective perspective.

In this business and management course, you will learn how to analyze customer interactions, using video data taken in actual service organizations. Through discussions of a variety of services such as sushi bars, restaurants, hotels, and apparel, you will explore the complex nuances and begin to see services differently.



**Material environment**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Italian</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– No table cloth</li><li>– No plates or silverware set</li><li>– The waiter wears an apron</li></ul> | <b>French</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Table cloth</li><li>– Plates, glasses, silverware all set</li><li>– The waiter wears a black suit and a tie</li></ul> |
| – “Casual”  | – “Formal”  |

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**An upscale apparel store**  
A store employee stands still and continues to look at the customer, without doing anything else.  
This is far from relaxing!  
– Every action is watched carefully.

**A popular apparel store**  
A store employee looks at the customer without showing that she is doing so.  
– showing instead that she is busy with some other work.

- Looking from the side or back
- Working on the clothes
- Speaking to the air

Looking but not staring.

**A popular restaurant**  
Customers are given ample time to choose their drinks and dishes.  
– And as soon as the customers have decided, an employee rushes and takes an order  
–no waiting.

**An upscale restaurant**  
When an employee comes with a menu, he stands by and takes an order.  
– No time is given for customers to discuss and choose their orders.  
– But otherwise, customers need to wait long—until the employee comes.

**Week 1** Introduction

**Week 2** Service experience: Comparative analysis

**Week 3** Existing theories of service

**Week 4** Ethnomethodology: Analysis of customer interactions

**Week 5** Hospitality: A critical perspective

**Week 6** Aesthetic of service: Taste and manners

**Week 7** Dialectic of customer relations

**Week 8** Service design from cultural perspective

<https://www.edx.org/course/culture-of-services-paradox-of-customer-relations-2>  
[kyotoux@highedu.kyoto-u.ac.jp](mailto:kyotoux@highedu.kyoto-u.ac.jp)

