

Japanese Design

Aesthetics and Visual Culture

Section 1

Instructor/Title	Seonga Kim-Lee / Assistant Professor
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【Course Outline / Description】

This course aims at understanding Japanese aesthetics, culture, and society through the twentieth-century design. Students will examine broad range of design examples in terms of reflective of the social, political, and economical culture of the time. The course will begin by exploring Japanese aesthetics and prewar design and continues by discussing contemporary design with regard to the emergence of design, made in Japan, pop culture, and disaster and design. Students need to be familiarized with Japanese terms related to aesthetics and culture at the beginning of this course in order to understand how religion and philosophy are reflected in Japanese art and design.

Through lectures, discussions, presentations, and field trips, students will understand how traditional Japanese aesthetics reflected on contemporary design and how individual Japanese designers uniquely delivered traditional aesthetics to international style.

Section 2

【Course Objectives/Goals/Learning Outcomes】

At the end of this course students will be able to:

- Understand design as a key tool for understanding Japanese aesthetics, culture, and history.
- Perceive a brief history of Japanese design in the twentieth century and demonstrate specific issues affected Japanese design.
- Clarify the difference between Japanese and western aesthetics in design.
- Demonstrate how traditional Japanese culture reflected in the contemporary design.

Section 3

【Class Schedule/Class Environment, Literature and Materials】

Unit 1: Japanese aesthetics and culture

Lecture 1: Tuesday, September 4

Introduction

Read page 3- 18 and understand the contents.

Reading page 3- 18: Naomi Pollock, "Introduction," *Made in Japan, 100 New Products*, Merrell, 2012, 9-23.

Lecture 2: Thursday, September 6

Aesthetics of Japanese Art and Design

Read page 19-43, 48-53 and understand the contents

Reading page 19-43, 48-53: Patricia J. Graham, *Japanese Design: Art, Aesthetics, and Culture*, Tuttle Publishing, 2014, 16-45.

Lecture 3: Tuesday, September 11

Aesthetics of Japanese Art and Design

Discussion: *wabi-sabi*

Read page **54-60** and prepare for the discussion in class.

Reading page **54-60**: Roger J. Davies and Osamu Ikeno ed., "wabi-sabi," *The Japanese Mind*, 223-232.

Lecture 4: Thursday, September 13

Japanese culture and design

Read page 61-64 and understand the contents.

Reading page 61-64: Matthias Dietz and Michael Monninger, "Furoshikibility," *Japan Design*, Taschen 1992, 11-14.

Lecture 5: Tuesday, September 18

Japanese culture and design

Discussion-*itokodori*

Read page 65-68 and prepare for the discussion in class.

Reading page 65-68: Roger J. Davies and Osamu Ikeno ed., "Itoko-Dori: Adopting Elements of Foreign Culture," *The Japanese Mind*, 127-133.

Lecture 6: Thursday, September 20 (Saturday, September 22)

Field Trip to Ryoan-ji in Kyoto

Unit 2: The emergence of design

Lecture 7: Tuesday, September 25

Modernization and Westernization

Read **page 71-77** in the textbook and understand the contents

Reading: Felice Fischer, "Japanese Design: from Meiji to Modern," *Japanese Design*, 8-13.

Lecture 8: Thursday, September 27

The emergence of design

Read **page 101-107** in the textbook and understand the contents

Reading **page 101-107**: Takuo Hirano, "The History of Japanese Design: A Personal View," *Japan 2000*, 95-99.

Lecture 9: Tuesday, October 2

Made in Japan

Read **page 108-111** in the textbook and understand the contents

Reading **page 108-111**: Pat Kirkham and Susan Weber, ed. *History of Design*, Bard Graduate Center 2013, 506-508.

Lecture 10: Thursday, October 4

Design and marketing

Read **page 112-115** in the textbook and understand the contents

Reading **page 112-115**: Motoo Nakashi, "Design and Marketing," *Japanese Design*, 22-24.

Lecture 11: Tuesday, October 9

Unit Assignment and Discussion

Unit 3: Pop culture and design

This unit will cover the sixties design when Japan had fully recovered from the war and hosted the 1964 Olympics and the 1970 Osaka Exposition. Japanese architects suggested a new futuristic solution for the fast expanding city. Also, Japanese design is reflected fun and enjoyable life through animation, manga, toys and graphic design.

Lecture 12: Thursday, October 11

Metabolism architecture

Read **page 119-134** in the textbook and understand the contents

Reading **page 119-134**: Michael Ross, "Megastructuring: Urban Structures for the Expanding Metropolis," *Beyond Metabolism*, McGraw-Hill, 1978, 23-38.

Lecture 13: Tuesday, October 16

Pop culture and design

Read **page 135-143** in the textbook and understand the contents

Reading **page 119-134**: Pat Kirkham, "Economic Growth and Rising Dissent, 1960-1975," *History of Design*, Bard Graduate Center 2013, 509-511.

Lecture 14: Thursday, October 18

Japanese toys and plastics

Read **page 144-149** in the textbook and understand the contents

Reading: Andrew Davey, "Artificial Emotion: Heroes of an Idealized World," *Detail: Exceptional Japanese Product Design*, 15-19.

Lecture 15: Tuesday, October 23

Unit Assignment and Discussion

Lecture 16: Thursday, October 25

University Festival- NO CLASS

Unit 4: Emptiness and Simplicity

Lecture 17: Tuesday, October 30

Emptiness in Architecture

Read **page 153-159** in the textbook and understand the contents

Reading **page 153-159**: Hara Kenya, "The Origin of Japanese Design," *Wa: The Essence of Japanese Design*, 11-17.

Lecture 18: Thursday, November 1

Emptiness in Architecture

Read **page 160-166** in the textbook and understand the contents

Reading **page 160-166**: Arata Isozaki, "Ma (Interstice) and Rubble," *Japan-ness in Architecture*, 81-100.

Lecture 19: Tuesday, November 6

Emptiness and Simplicity: Light, Thin, Short, Small

Read **page 177-187** in the textbook and understand the contents

Reading **page 177-187**: Kenji Ekuan, *The Aesthetics of the Japanese Lunchbox*, MIT Press, 2000, 125-139.

Emptiness in marketing: Muji

Read **page 188-212** in the textbook and understand the contents

Reading **page 188-212**: Hara Kenya, "Muji," *Designing Design*, Lars Mueller, 2015, 227-281.

Lecture 20: Thursday, November 8 (Saturday, November 3)

Emptiness in Architecture

Field Trip: The Church of Light

Unit 5: Designers and contemporary design

Lecture 21: Tuesday, November 13

Japanese Fashion designers in Paris

Read **page 215-226** in the textbook and understand the contents

Reading **page 215-226**: Yuniya Kawamura, "The Japanese Fashion Phenomenon in Paris since 1970," *Japanese Revolution in Fashion*, 91-123.

Lecture 22: Thursday, November 15

Designers in postmodernism

Read **page 227-244** in the textbook and understand the contents

Reading **page 227-244**: Matthias Dietz and Michael Monninger, "Introduction," *Japan Design*, Taschen 1992, 9-23.

Lecture 23: Tuesday, November 20

Disaster and design

Read **page 245-253** in the textbook and understand the contents

Reading **page 245-253**: Esther Charlesworth, "Shigeru Ban," *Humanitarian Architecture*, Routledge, 2014, 19-30.

Lecture 24: Thursday, November 22

Bubble economy and community design

Read **page 254-270** in the textbook and understand the contents

Reading **page 254-270**: Naomi Pollock, "Designing for the Japanese Public," *Japan 2000*, 31-47.

Lecture 25: Tuesday, November 27

Emotional design

Read **page 271-327** in the textbook and understand the contents

Reading **page 271-327**: Hara Kenya, "Re-Design," *Designing Design*, Lars Mueller, 2015, 22-47.

Hara Kenya, "Haptic," *Designing Design*, Lars Mueller, 2015, 70-149.

Lecture 26: Thursday, November 29

Presentation and discussion

Lecture 27: Tuesday, December 4

Presentation and discussion

Lecture 28: Thursday, December 6

Presentation and discussion

Lecture 29: Tuesday, May 11

Presentation and discussion

Lecture 30: Thursday, December 13

Review

Final Exam: TBA

【Textbooks/Reading Materials】

Texts of reading materials will be provided by the instructor.

Section 4

【Learning Assessments/Grading Rubric】

Class Participation 20%

Unit Assignments 40% (#1+#2 =10%, #3=10%, #4=10%, #5=10%)

Final Exam 20%

Final Presentation 20%