

Documenting Japan

Film and Photography as Cultural Description

Section 1

Instructor/Title	Steven C. Fedorowicz
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【Course Outline / Description】

We have often heard the phrases “the camera never lies,” “seeing is believing” and “a picture is worth a thousand words.” This course provides an introduction to the field of visual anthropology, with a focus on documentary films and photographic projects. How does one visually represent a culture? Culture has often been likened to an iceberg; we can only see the tip and perhaps the most important aspects are submerged and difficult to see. Visual anthropology strives to visualize the invisible – knowledge, values, morals, beliefs, perceptions, capabilities and private spaces. In this course, films and photography dealing with Japan will be examined, analyzed and evaluated in terms of providing understanding of Japanese culture. Who constructs visual images, for what purpose and in what context will also be of concern. The theoretical focus of the course will be on the issues and consequences of visual representation; methodology and technique will also be discussed. The course provides visual cultural descriptions on such topics as traditional culture, popular culture, education, art, entertainment, sports, religion, gender, politics and globalization.

Section 2

【Course Objectives/Goals/Learning Outcomes】

Section 3

【Class Schedule/Class Environment, Literature and Materials】 (*subject to change*)

T 9/4 First Day of Class – Introduction to Course

Part I: Getting started in visual anthropology

Th 9/6 Portrait Exercise

T 9/11 Film and discussion: *Japanland* (Muller, 2006)

RECOMMENDED READING Sugimoto: An Introduction to Japanese Society –AND– Muller Japanland

Th 9/13 How to do anthropology in Japan

**READ Benu An Ethnography of Dinner Entertainment in Japan
-AND- T. Bestor Inquisitive Observation**

RECOMMENDED READING: V. Bestor Digital Resources and Fieldwork

T 9/18 Film and discussion: *Neighborhood Tokyo* (Bestor, 1992)

Th 9/20 Ethics and Shooting Culture in Japan

READ: Fedorowicz Shooting Culture in Japan

T 9/25 What is Visual Anthropology?

READ: Mead Visual Anthropology in a Discipline of Words

-AND- Grimshaw The Ethnographers Eye

Video and Discussion: *Sense of Vision* (BBC, 2003)

Th 9/27 Visual Anthropology (pt. 2)

READ MacDougall The Visual in Anthropology

-AND- Morphy and Banks Rethinking Visual Anthropology

Film and Discussion: *The Couple in the Cage* (Heredia and Fusco, 1993)

T 10/2 Visual Anthropology (pt. 3)

READ <http://visualanthropologyofjapan.blogspot.jp/2007/05/its-visual-but-is-it-anthropology.html>

Th 10/4 **MIDTERM EXAM I**

Part II: Photography

T 10/9 Photography

READ Sontag On Photography – In Plato's Cave

Th 10/11 Film and discussion: *Annie Leibovitz: Life through a Lens* (Leibovitz, 2008)

T 10/16 Photography (pt. 2)

READ Scherer Ethnographic Photography in Anthropological Research

Short videos: *Worlds in Motion* (Thomas Hoepker), *Bruce Gilden*,
Tokyo Love Hello (Chris Steele-Perkins)

Th 10/18 Two-Frame Photo Story presentations

T 10/23 Two-Frame Photo Story presentations

Th 10/25 University Festival Preparation Day - **NO CLASS**

T 10/30 Japanese Photography **READ Fraser**

Th 11/1 **MIDTERM EXAM II**

Part III: Documentary Film

T 11/6 Film and discussion: *Kokoyakyu* (Eng, 2006)

READ: Whiting The Samurai Way of Baseball and the National Character Debate -AND- Kelly An Anthropologist in the Bleachers: Cheering a Japanese baseball Team

Th 11/8 Documentary Film **READ Barbash and Taylor Cross-Cultural Filmmaking**

T 11/13 Film and discussion: *The Cove* (Psihoyos, 2009)

READ <http://visualanthropologyofjapan.blogspot.jp/search?q=The+Cove>

Th 11/15 Nuts and Bolts **READ Barbash and Taylor Nuts and Bolts**

T 11/20 Film and discussion: *Cuba Sentimental* (Tanuma, 2010) **READ**

<http://visualanthropologyofjapan.blogspot.jp/search?q=cuba+sentimental>

Th 11/22 Film and discussion: *The Great Happiness Space* (Clennell 2006)

READ Takeyama

T 11/27 Low Budget Films and Student Projects

Short films: *Tohoku Hitchhiking* (Shuff, 2000) and *Performing Naturalness* (Dacot, 2008). Also: Selected VAOJ Student Shorts

Th 11/29 Film and discussion: *Against Coercion: Refusing To Stand For Kimigayo*

(Matsubara and Sasaki, 2006) **READ VAOJ posts on Japanese flag, national anthem, patriotism**

T 12/4 Film and discussion: *Peace* (Soda 2010) **READ**

<http://visualanthropologyofjapan.blogspot.jp/2013/05/golden-week-ii.html>

Th 12/6 Film Treatment Presentations

T 12/11 Film Treatment Presentations

Th 12/13 Course wrap-up and review activities

Final Examination Week is 12/18-12/22. Check the CIE final examination schedule for the date, time and place for the final exam.

【Textbooks/Reading Materials】

Section 4

【Learning Assessments/Grading Rubric】

Students will be evaluated as follows:

1. Class Participation and Activities (10%)
2. Two-Frame Photo Story (15%)
3. Film Treatment Presentation (15%)
4. Midterm Exam I (20%)
5. Midterm Exam II (20%)
6. Final Exam (20%)

Reading assignments including complete citations can be found on the university Black Board System (access it at <https://lms.kansai-gaidai.ac.jp/index.html>). You will need to log in using your KGU student account and password. Other information and services may become available on Black Board during the course of the semester.

Please understand that students share responsibility with the Professor in terms of communication regarding class issues. If you cannot speak to the Professor before, during or after class, please see him in office hours or contact him via e-mail.

Section 5

【Additional Information】

Personal Conduct: Please refrain from any personal conduct that infringes upon the rights of other students, faculty, or staff. Examples of other unacceptable behavior includes, among other things, interrupting others during class discussions, making rude and/or abusive comments, coming to class late, and leaving class early.

Electronic Devices: Please refrain from using laptop computers, cell phones, iPods, iPads, e-books, video games, tape recorders, digital cameras, video cameras, etc. in class without permission. Such usage in the form of multi-tasking rarely adds to the classroom experience at the time and is also distracting to other students.

Academic Cheating: The best advice here is don't do it! So there is no misunderstanding about the nature of cheating or our university's policies, I provide the KGU Center for International Education and Asian Studies Program official policy:

The Asian Studies Program takes very seriously any incident of academic cheating. Cheating is unfair to students who work honestly, and compromises both the learning and evaluation processes.

Academic cheating includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism (using previously published work without properly acknowledging the source, including that available on the internet); submitting work done in collusion with a student or someone else in a manner not authorized by the instructor; misconduct on an examination, or any other attempt to dishonestly pass off another's work as one's own or otherwise create an unfair academic advantage.

The penalties for academic cheating may include failure on the assignment [and] failure in the course.