

Semester: FALL 2019

Wa: Rules and Principles in Japanese Arts, Design and Aesthetics

Section 1

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【Course Outline / Description】

Wa is a pivotal concept in Japan that encompasses many situations. As a twofolds word embracing concepts of peace, quiet and harmony as well as Japaneseness and style, it is an interesting keyword that can help articulate various thoughts about Japanese arts.

Wa is used in this course as a keyword that offers two levels of understanding about arts and aesthetics: one exploring the different influences on the formation of pure Japanese artistic qualities and the other being the cultivation of harmonious, controlled and balanced traits.

Through the study of zen art and philosophy, traditional ink painting, modern Bijin-ga, ikebana, calligraphy, tea ceremony, poetry, Mingei and design, this course exposes the connections between Wa and other rules and principles connected to art practice and Japanese aesthetics, such as Wa-kei-sei-jaku, Yūgen, Mono no Aware, Wabi-Sabi etc.

Section 2

【Course Objectives/Goals/Learning Outcomes】

Students will be introduced to considering the common traits of several Japanese arts, such as calligraphy, ink painting, flower arrangement, scroll paintings, tea bowls etc... The students will be invited to think on how those disciplines can connect via the keyword Wa and how each of them uses other meaningful key words to shape their qualities. At the end of the course, the students will be able to tell the ways in which these traditions differ and how they relate through nuance and shared perspective, using their five senses and intellect.

Section 3

【Class Schedule/Class Environment, Literature and Materials】

Class #	Contents	Readings / preparations / in-class activities
1	Course introduction : presentation of the different topics that will be studied in class and grading system.	Special packet Start reading <i>Thousand Cranes</i> (the whole novel) in preparation for class # 26 (Tea 3/3).
2	Design 1/4: Terminology	LDB1 Packet Note the different key characteristics of Japanese Design as described in: > Patricia Graham, <i>Japanese Design: art, aesthetics and culture</i> (pp.78~111)
3	Design 2/4: Sōetsu Yanagi and Mingei	Note the definition of Mingei and why this movement was important for modern art and design: > Kyoko Utsumi Mimura, “Sōetsu Yanagi and the Legacy of the Unknown Craftsman” in <i>The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts</i> , p.208-223)

4	Design 3/4: Nature and artifice	Get ready to discuss the influence of nature on Japanese arts by reading: > Masaharu Anesaki, <i>Art, life and nature in Japan</i> (p.3~28)
5	Design 4/4: Wabi-Sabi	Understand the meaning and different definitions of the key concepts as seen in: > Andrew Juniper, <i>Wabi-sabi : the art of impermanence</i> (pp.1~3 / 47~52 / 69~87/103~120) > Leonard Koren, <i>Wabi-sabi for artists</i> (pp.21~72) ※optional reading = choose one or the other text, you don't have to read both ※be ready to discuss the texts in connection with the documentary starring Marcel Theroux, <i>In Search of Wabi-Sabi</i> (2009)
6	Zen 1/3: Definitions	List and understand the different aspects of Zen practice as described in the text listed below : > Shunryu Suzuki, <i>Zen mind, Beginner's mind</i> (pp.21~34)
7	Zen 2/3: Zen art	List and understand the different characteristics of Zen arts as described in: > Shin'ichi Hisamatsu, <i>Zen and the Fine Arts</i> (pp.28~38 / 52~60)
8	Zen 3/3: Sengai and Hakuin	Note the differences and similarities in Hakuin and Sengai's works > Galit Aviman, <i>Zen paintings in Edo Japan</i> (p.33~62)
9	Calligraphy 1/3: Classics	LDB 2 List and take notes on the important elements used in calligraphy as described in: > Christopher Earnshaw, <i>Sho : Japanese calligraphy</i> (pp.2~16 / 95~99) > H.E Davey, <i>Brush meditation</i> (pp.17~23 / 28~ 36)
10	Calligraphy 2/3: Moderns and contemporaries	Find information on the following calligraphers (biography, style): ● Yamaoka Tesshu ● Inoue Yu-Ichi
11	Calligraphy 3/3: Movie "Earless Hoichi"	Prepare the class by reading the short story > Lafcadio Hearn, <i>Kwaidan</i> (1907) and by gathering information about the movie: > Masaki Kobayashi, <i>Kwaidan</i> (1953)
12	Midterm exam (in class)	Be ready for the in-class exam (review from class #2 to 11)
13	※ Take home paper 1	Choose between the different topics proposed

		and start drafting your paper.
14	Ink painting 1/6: Definition and practice	Understand the history and the different elements used in traditional ink painting: > Shuichi Kato, <i>Japan spirit and form</i> (pp.94/101~115)
15	Ink painting 2/6: Classic Schools	Look up the definitions and characteristics of each school / movement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tosa • Kano • Bunjin-ga
16	Ink painting 3/6: Modern Schools	Look up the definitions and characteristics of each school: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maruyama • Rinpa
17	Ink painting 4/6: Eccentrics ※ Take home paper 1 deadline !	Find information on the following painters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Itō Jakuchū • Soga Shōhaku
18	Ink painting 5/6: Bijinga Definition and aesthetics	Understand the characteristics of “beauty” in Bijinga paintings as analyzed in: > Pilar Cabanas, “Bijinga and nature” (in Pamela J. Asquith, <i>Japanese images of nature</i> (pp.68~82))
19	Ink painting 6/6: Bijinga Uemura Shōen	> Nanako Yamada and Helen Merritt, “Uemura Shōen: Her paintings of Beautiful Women” (in <i>Woman’s Art Journal</i> , pp.12-16)
20	Poetry 1/4: Classic Waka	LDB 3 Understand the history and the different categories in Japanese poetry, as seen in: > Addiss, Groemer, Rimer, <i>Traditional Japanese Arts and Culture. An illustrated sourcebook</i> (pp.34- 45/ 96-101/ 141-151)
21	Poetry 2/4: Modern Waka	Find information on the following poets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yosano Akiko • Tawara Machi
22	Poetry 2/2: Moderns Haiku	Note the different characteristics of Haiku poetry as seen in: > Lorraine Ellis Harr, “Haiku Poetry” (in <i>The Journal of Aesthetic Education</i> , p.112-119) > Makoto Ueda, “Bashō and the poetics of Haiku” (in <i>The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism</i> , pp.423-431)
23	※ Take home paper 2	Choose between the different topics proposed and start drafting your paper.
24	Tea 1/2: History <i>Sen no Rikyu</i>	Classify the information about tea ceremony and its aesthetics as seen in :

		> Herbert Pluschow, <i>Rediscovering Rikyū</i> (p.112~127 / 131~132) > Okakura Kakuzo, <i>The book of tea</i> (pp.7~9 / 23~30 / 37~39 / 48~49)
25	Tea 2/3: Principles <i>Wa-kei-sei-jaku</i> <i>Ichi-go Ichi-e</i>	Find information about the two key expressions used in tea practice: <i>Wa-kei-sei-jaku</i> and <i>Ichi-go Ichi-e</i> .
26	Tea 3/3: Thousand Cranes	Read the whole novel and note how the tea ceremony and its elements are impacting the characters' love life: > Yasunari Kawabata, <i>Thousand Cranes</i> (1953)
27	Ikebana 1/2: Definition and schools Ikenobo, Ohara and Sogetsu	Understand the evolution of Ikebana (history and aesthetics) as explained in : > Kudo Masanobu, <i>The history of Ikebana</i> (pp.6~13) > Josiah Conder, <i>The flowers of Japan</i> (pp.38~39 / 54-56 / 80~86)
28	Ikebana 2/2: Chabana ※ Take home paper 2 deadline !	Note the characteristics of the tea flower arrangement as described in: > Haruo Shirane, <i>Japan and the culture of the four seasons</i> (p.95~107)
29	Conclusion Iki, Yūgen, Fūryū etc.	Note the meaning of the terms Iki, Yūgen and Fūryū as seen in: > Yoji Yamasuke, <i>Japaneseness</i> (pp.131-135) and see how they connect with the other keywords seen throughout the semester (Wa, Wabi-Sabi, Zen etc.)
30	Review	Gather your notes and handouts (review topics from class # 14 to 29)

【Textbooks/Reading Materials】

No textbook required. All Reading materials (articles, book chapters) will be distributed in advance as packets.

Handouts will also be provided to complement the points seen during the lecture.

Section 4

【Learning Assessments/Grading Rubric】

Midterm exam: 30% (quiz and take home paper 1)

Final exam: 45% (quiz and take home paper 2)

Class participation: 25%

Section 5

【Additional Information】

Online sources / references

- TNM - Tokyo National Museum Image search (<https://webarchives.tnm.jp/imgsearch/index>)
- Boston Museum of Fine Arts (<https://www.mfa.org>)

- JSTOR - Journal Storage (<https://www.jstor.org>)
- Cipango – French Journal of Japanese Studies. English Selection (<https://journals.openedition.org/cjs/>)
- JAANUS - Dictionary of Japanese Architectural and Art Historical Terminology (<http://www.aisf.or.jp/%7Ejaanus/>)
- Library of Congress (<https://www.loc.gov/>)
- Google Arts and Culture (<https://artsandculture.google.com>)
- Young, David Earl & Young, Michiko Kimura (<https://www.japaneseaesthetics.com>)