

## Inside the Secret World of the Geisha

### Section 1

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### 【Course Outline / Description】

Entertainers to Queen Elizabeth, Prince Charles, US & Foreign Presidents, painted by Picasso, sculpted by Rodin, and yet the role and image of the Japanese Geisha has often been misinterpreted outside Japan, and has shaped Western stereotypes about Japan and Japanese women. Being historically closed in a world of secrecy, not many Japanese either have been able to get access to this world with its own rules and etiquette, and with very little documentation.

This course examines the primary role of the Geisha in Japan as an artist and an entertainer encompassing a variety of important social, cultural, and historical elements. Leveraging the instructor's personal connections and research, as well as use of academic literature and visual documentation including historical photographs, documentaries and movie representations, this course attempts to provide a complete cultural experience to the Asian and Japanese Studies student on the true role and place of these artists and keepers of tradition in Japanese culture, and in a traditional world which runs parallel (and yet is completely different than) to the modern Japanese world of manga, anime, and robots.

With emphasis on the Geisha of the five Kagai (performance districts) in Kyoto, this unique course not only explores the historical and cultural elements, but also introduces this relatively unknown and closed world and gives an account of the daily lives of these women, and examines as to why and how the Geisha have continued to survive and remain prominent over the past several hundred years, and as to what is their current and future role in contemporary Japan?

### Section 2

#### 【Course Objectives/Goals/Learning Outcomes】

This course will enable the student to:

- Understand and explain the historical role and evolution of the Geisha
- Contrast Euro-American and Japanese representations of the Geisha
- Understand the daily/working lives and the macrocosm of the Geisha
- Explore the *Gei* of the Geisha in the context of the art culture in Japan
- Discuss the role of the Geisha in Contemporary Japan and the impact of an aging customer demographic
- Pursue future Geisha Studies as a field of academic research

### Section 3 [Class Schedule/Class Environment, Literature and Materials]

	Schedule of Instruction	Work outside of Classroom Activities
L1	Course Introductions; Student Introductions/image of the Geisha; Setting the Stage for the Semester	Review assigned reading and visual materials
L2	Introduce differences between Maiko and Geiko; Introduction to visual elements of the Maiko and Geiko	Readings: Dalby/Iwasaki
L3	Discussion on the Role of Courtesans and Women Entertainers in both Japanese and non-Japanese cultures.	Readings: Dalby/Iwasaki
L4	Watch Movie: Life of Oharu	Prepare for discussion on Life of Oharu; Readings: Dalby/Iwasaki
L5	Discussion on Life of Oharu and options available to women in Tokugawa & Meiji Periods	Watch assigned video on The Tayu; Readings: Dalby/Iwasaki
L6	The Tayu; Historical Perspectives (Heian - Tokugawa); Izumo no Okuni and the Kabuki Movement; Evolution of the Pleasure quarters (Edo/Kyoto)	Readings: Dalby/Iwasaki
L7	Evolution of the Pleasure quarters (Edo/Kyoto)	Reading: Johnston (A Woman, Sex and Morality in Modern Japan, Chapter 4)
L8	Evolution of Japanese and Western stereotypes of Japanese Femininity and Masculinity; Views on Sexuality	Readings: Dalby/Iwasaki
L9	Video: Introduction to the Hanamachi (Tokyo/Kyoto)	Readings: Dalby/Iwasaki
L10	The Impact of Photography on the image of the Geisha; The Golden Period of the Geisha;	Watch Movie: Gion no Shimai; Reading: Enlightenment Geisha
L11	Watch Movies: "Gion no Shimai" & "Gion Bayashi"	Watch Movie: Gion Bayashi
L12	Discussion on Kenji Mizoguchi's Portrayal of Geisha in Movies	Readings: Dalby/Iwasaki
L13	Daily Lives/Key Events: Shikomi – Misedashi – Maiko - Geiko - Natori Geiko - Retirement; Sakkou - Danpatsushiki -Erikae	Comparison Paper Due on Dalby/Iwasaki
L14	Daily Lives/Key Events: Shikomi – Misedashi – Maiko - Geiko - Natori Geiko - Retirement; Sakkou - Danpatsushiki -Erikae	Final Research Paper Outline Due
L15	The Gei of the Geisha - Kyomai & the Inoue School of Dance	Prep for Vocabulary List and Final Research Paper & Presentation
L16	The Gei of the Geisha - Dance, Music, and Entertainment	Prep for Vocabulary List and Final Research Paper & Presentation
L17	The Gei of the Geisha - Public Dance Performances of the Kagai	Prep for Vocabulary List and Final Research Paper & Presentation
L18	The Geisha Macrococosm	Prep for Vocabulary List and Final Research Paper & Presentation
L19	Visual Aesthetics: Kimono, Obi, Hairstyles & Make-up	Prep for Adopt-a-Maiko Presentation
L20	Adopt a Maiko & Vocabulary Presentations	Adopt-a-Maiko Presentation Due
L21	Adopt a Maiko & Vocabulary Presentations	Prep for Vocabulary List and Final Research Paper & Presentation
L22	Role of Geisha in Contemporary Japan;	Prep for Vocabulary List and Final Research Paper & Presentation
L23	Movie: Real Geisha, Real Women	Listen to Podcast of Ex-Geisha Sayuri's Interview
L24	Survival of the Geisha	Prep for Vocabulary List and Final Research Paper & Presentation
L25	Geisha in Other Hanamachi	Prep for Vocabulary List and Final Research Paper & Presentation
L26	Role of Ookini Zaidan & Other Supporting Organizations	Final Presentations Due
L27	Final Research Paper Presentations	Prep for Vocabulary List and Final Research Paper & Presentation
L28	Final Research Paper Presentations	Prep for Vocabulary List and Final Research Paper & Presentation
L29	Final Research Paper Presentations	Final Research Paper Due
L30	Course Review; Feedback; Celebration	Vocabulary List Due
Notes	The schedule is tentative; the topics covered on each proposed date may change/expand depending on the understanding background and pace of the students.	

**【Textbooks/Reading Materials】**

<b>Textbooks①</b>	
Title	Geisha of Gion: The True Story of Japan's Foremost Geisha (Memoir of Mineko Iwasaki)
Author	Mineko Iwasaki
Publisher	Downton Press; UK Edition (May 6, 2003)
ISBN	074343059X (978-0743430593)
<b>Textbooks②</b>	
Title	Geisha: 25th Anniversary Edition
Author	Liza Dalby
Publisher	Univ of California Press; Anniversary, Updated edition (December 10, 2008)
ISBN	0520257898; 978-0520257894
<b>Textbooks③</b>	
Notes	Additional Reading materials will be distributed in class.

<b>Reference Books①</b>	
Title	Butterfly's Sisters: The Geisha in Western Culture
Author	Yoko Kawaguchi
Publisher	Yale University Press (November 30, 2010)
ISBN	0300115210 (978-0300115215)

**Additional Readings adapted from:**

- Foreman, Kelly. *The Gei of Geisha. Music, Identity, and Meaning*. London: Ashgate Press, 2008.
- Pincus, Leslie. *Authenticating Culture in Imperial Japan: Kuki Shūzō and the Rise of National Aesthetics*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.
- Ariyoshi Sawako, *The Twilight Years*. Translated by Mildred Tahara. New York: Kodansha America, 1987.
- Aihara, Kyoko. *Geisha: A Living Tradition*. London: Carlton Books, 2000.
- Burns, Stanley B., and Elizabeth A. Burns. *Geisha: A Photographic History, 1872–1912*. Brooklyn, N.Y.: Powerhouse Books, 2006.
- Downer, Lesley. *Women of the Pleasure Quarters: The Secret History of the Geisha*. New York: Broadway Books, 2001.
- Ishihara, Tetsuo. Peter Macintosh, trans. *Nihongami no Sekai: Maiko no Kamigata (The World of Traditional Japanese Hairstyles: Hairstyles of the Maiko)*. Kyoto: Doshosha Shuppan, 2004.
- Scott, A.C. *The Flower and Willow World: The Story of the Geisha*. New York: Orion Press, 1960.
- Gerstle, A.C. *18th Century Japan: Culture and Society*. Routledge, 2012.

**Section 4**

**【Learning Assessments/Grading Rubric】**

Final Exam/Glossary	10	%
Class Participation	15	%
Short Writing Assignments	15	%
(Research Paper/Presentation)	45 (25/20)	%
(Presentation - Adopt-a-Maiko)	15	%

**Section 5**

**【Additional Information】**

All assignments and associated guidelines and class communication will be handled via Blackboard so please make sure to check every day.

**Class Attendance/Punctuality:**

Class participation is an important part of your contribution to this course (and to your grade), regular attendance is expected. **Being absent from or late to class will lower your class participation grade and, consequently, your final grade.**

Class participation is based on the philosophy of “quality not quantity.” In other words, it is not how much you talk but what you have to say and how you support classroom learning that is important. In determining your class participation grade, I will consider the following:

- Your contributions (knowledge and preparation of assignments, answering questions, asking questions).
- Your relationship with other class members (listening skills, attempts to bring others into the dialog, not dominating the discussion/class).
- Your commitment to the class activities/discussion (engagement in class and small group discussions, body language, attention and focus).

Please note that my focus on class participation is not just to grade you but for all of us to learn. Class time is your chance to ask questions, respond to the readings and lectures, learn from your colleagues, and understand the wider nuances of how Japanese society operates.