

Japanese Design

Aesthetics and Visual Culture

Section 1

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【Course Outline / Description】

This course aims at understanding Japanese aesthetics, culture, and society through design. Students will examine broad range of design examples in terms of reflective of the social, political, and economic culture of the time. The course will begin by exploring Japanese aesthetics and culture and continues by discussing contemporary design regarding 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, field trips, and presentations, 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:

- Take 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】

		Schedule of Instruction	
Class	Date	Schedule of Instruction	Work Outside of Classroom Activities
1	Tuesday, August 30	Unit 1: Aesthetics and Culture DNA of Japanese Design	Read: 日本貿易振興機構, 「日本デザインの遺伝子展」の記録 DNA of Japanese Design, (日本貿易振興機構 2006), 18, 20. Nendo et al, Hidden-Unveiling Japanese Design (ADP, 2014), 12, 14.
2	Friday, September 2	Unit 1: Aesthetics and Culture Japanese Aesthetics— <i>karei, miyabi, notan</i>	Read: Patricia J. Graham, “Iki,” “Miyabi and Furu,” and “Karei,” Japanese Design: Art, Aesthetics, and Culture, (Tuttle Publishing, 2014), 25-34.

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3	Tuesday, September 6	Unit 1: Aesthetics and Culture Japanese Aesthetics— <i>wabi-sabi</i>	Read: Patricia J. Graham, “Wabi and Sabi,” <i>Japanese Design: Art, Aesthetics, and Culture</i> , (Tuttle Publishing, 2014), 20-23.
4	Friday, September 9	Unit 1: Aesthetics and Culture Japanese Aesthetics— <i>shibui</i>	Read: Patricia J. Graham, “Shibui,” and “Wabi and Sabi,” <i>Japanese Design: Art, Aesthetics, and Culture</i> , (Tuttle Publishing, 2014), 16-19.
5	Tuesday, September 13	Unit 1: Aesthetics and Culture Unit Assignment and Discussion #1: wabi-sabi	Prepare for the class discussion: Roger J. Davies and Osamu Ikeno ed., “Wabi-Sabi,” <i>The Japanese Mind</i> , (Tuttle Publishing, 2002), 223-232.
6	Friday, September 16	Unit 1: Aesthetics and Culture Japanese Aesthetics: Emptiness	Submit Unit Assignment #1 A guest speaker will be invited to the class online.
7	Tuesday, September 20	Unit 1: Aesthetics and Culture Japanese Aesthetics: Emptiness	Read: Hara Kenya, “The Origin of Japanese Design,” <i>Wa: The Essence of Japanese Design</i> , (Phaidon, 2014), 11-17.
8	Friday, September 23	Unit 1: Aesthetics and Culture Japanese Aesthetics: Emptiness in Architecture	Prepare for the class discussion: Mathias Frick, Tadao Ando: From Emptiness to infinity, [DVD] Credo Film 2014.
9	Tuesday, September 27	Unit 1: Aesthetics and Culture Japanese Aesthetic: Emptiness and Muji	Field Trip: Ryoanji, Kyoto
10	Friday, September 30	Unit 1: Aesthetics and Culture Japanese Culture and Design	Read: Roger J. Davies and Osamu Ikeno ed., “Shudan Ishiki,” <i>The Japanese Mind</i> , (Tuttle Publishing, 2002), 195-199.
11	Tuesday, October 4	Unit 1: Aesthetics and Culture Unit Assignment and Discussion #2: iitokodori	Prepare for the class discussion: Roger J. Davies and Osamu Ikeno ed., “Iitoko-Dori: Adopting Elements of Foreign Culture,” <i>The Japanese Mind</i> , (Tuttle Publishing, 2002), 127-133.
12	Friday, October 7	Unit 1: Aesthetics and Culture Japanese Culture and Design: Furoshikibility & Monozukuri	Submit Unit Assignment #2 Read: Kenji Ekuan, “Electronics and The Japanese Soul-The Universality of Japanese Design,” <i>Journal of Japanese Trade and Industry</i> , no. 4, 1984, 47-50.
13	Tuesday, October 11	Unit 1: Aesthetics and Culture Unit Assignment #3 and Discussion	Prepare for the group project
14	Friday, October 14	Unit 1: Aesthetics and Culture Japanese Culture of Miniaturization	Read: Young Lee, “Smaller is Better: Six Examples,” <i>Smaller is Better: Japan’s Mastery of the Miniature</i> , (Kodansha International, 1984), 25-31.
15	Tuesday, October 18	Unit 1: Aesthetics and Culture Unit Assignment #3 and Presentations	Submit Unit Assignment #3 Prepare for the class presentation
16	Friday, October 21	Unit 2: History of Modern Design Modernization and Westernization	Read: Felice Fischer, “Japanese Design: from Meiji to Modern,” <i>Japanese Design: a survey since 1950</i> [ext. cat., Philadelphia Museum of Art], 8-13.
17	Tuesday, October 25	Unit 2: History of Modern Design The Emergence of Product Design	Read: Takuo Hirano, “The History of Japanese Design: A Personal View,” <i>Japan 2000</i> , 95-99.
18	Friday, October 28	No Class	Fall Break

19	Tuesday, November 1	Unit 2: History of Modern Design Japanese Modernism in Architecture	Read: Cherie Wendelken, "Aesthetics and Reconstruction: Japanese Architectural Culture in the 1950s," in Carola Hein et. al., <i>Rebuilding Urban Japan after 1945</i> , (Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 188-209.
20	Friday, November 4	Unit 2: History of Modern Design Design and Marketing	Read: Motoo Nakanishi, "Design and Marketing," <i>Japanese Design: A Survey since 1950</i> [exh. cat., Philadelphia Museum of Art], 22-24.
21	Tuesday, November 8	Unit 2: History of Modern Design Unit Assignment #4 and Discussion	Prepare for the group project
22	Friday, November 11	Unit 2: History of Modern Design Pop Culture and Design	Read: William M. Tsutsui, "Form and Themes in Japanese Popular Culture," <i>Japanese Popular Culture and Globalization</i> (Association for Asian Studies 2010) 5-22.
23	Tuesday, November 15	Unit 2: History of Modern Design Unit assignment #4 and presentations	Submit Unit Assignment #4 Prepare for the class presentation
24	Friday, November 18	Unit 3: Contemporary Design Fashion Designers in Paris	Read: Yuniya Kawamura, "The Japanese Fashion Phenomenon in Paris since 1970," <i>Japanese Revolution in Fashion</i> , (Berg, 2012), 91-123.
25	Tuesday, November 22	Unit 3: Contemporary Design Bubble Economy and Design	Prepare for the class discussion: Botond Bognar, "What Goes Up, Must Come Down," <i>Havard Design Magazine</i> , No. 3, Fall 1997. 125. Oscar Boyd and Chris Russell, hosts, "Nakagin, Nakagone: Demolishing an architectural dream," <i>Deep Dive</i> (Podcast), April 14, 2022.
26	Friday, November 25	Unit 3: Contemporary Design Emotional Design	Field Trip: Ando Gallery, Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art; Kobe Earthquake Memorial Museum
27	Tuesday, November 29	Unit 3: Contemporary Design Disaster and Design	Read: Esther Charlesworth, "Shigeru Ban," <i>Humanitarian Architecture</i> , (Routledge, 2014), 19-30.
28	Friday, December 2	Final presentations	Prepare for the final presentation.
29	Tuesday, December 6	Final presentations	Prepare for the final presentation.
30	Friday, December 9	Review	Review notes for the final exam.

【Textbooks/Reading Materials】

The reading materials will be provided by the instructor and uploaded to Blackboard in pdf format.

Section 4

【Learning Assessments/Grading Rubric】

Grading Criteria

2022 Fall Semester

Class Participation 20%

Unit Assignments 50%

Final Presentation 15%

Final Exam 15%

Section 5

【Additional Information】

There will be no mid-term exam in this course, and there are small assignments for students to understand the contents through class discussion and group projects. Therefore, it is essential to participate in class actively to achieve the learning objectives.