

Documenting Japan

Film and Photography as Cultural Description

Section 1

Instructor/Title	Dr. Steven C. Fedorowicz, Ph.D.
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Office Hours	by appointment
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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. 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. 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. 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】

Students will be able to analyze and evaluate visual representations of culture, especially in the Japanese context. Students will be able to demonstrate technical, methodological and theoretical aspects of visual anthropology and ethnographic photography.

Student participation (class discussions and analyses of photos, films and other images) is especially important in this course. Please do the readings in advance of the class and be ready to be a active participant.

Section 3

【Class Schedule/Class Environment, Literature and Materials】

Lecture 1 First Day of Class – Introduction to Course

Part I: Getting started in visual anthropology

Lecture 2 Portrait Exercise

Lecture 3 Film and discussion: Japanland (Muller, 2006)

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

Lecture 4 How to do anthropology in Japan

READ Befu An Ethnography of Dinner Entertainment in Japan

-AND- T. Bestor Inquisitive Observation

RECOMMENDED READING: V. Bestor Digital Resources and Fieldwork

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Lecture 5 Film and discussion: Neighborhood Tokyo (Bestor, 1992)

Lecture 6 Ethics and Shooting Culture in Japan
READ: Fedorowicz Shooting Culture in Japan

Lecture 7 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)

Lecture 8 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)

Lecture 9 Visual Anthropology (pt. 3)
READ <http://visualanthropologyofjapan.blogspot.jp/2007/05/its-visual-but-is-it-anthropology.html>

Lecture 10 Midterm review activities
READ (REVIEW) all previous class readings

Part II: Photography

Lecture 11 Photography
READ Sontag On Photography – In Plato's Cave

Lecture 12 Film and discussion: Annie Leibovitz: Life through a Lens (Leibovitz, 2008)

Lecture 13 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)

Lecture 14 Two-Frame Photo Story presentations

Lecture 15 Two-Frame Photo Story presentations

Lecture 16 Japanese Photography READ Fraser

Lecture 17 The Visual Anthropology of Deaf Communities in Japan
READ Fedorowicz 1

Lecture 18 The Tachinomiya Project and Photo Exhibition
READ Fedorowicz 2

Part III: Documentary Film

Lecture 19 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

Lecture 20 Documentary Film
READ Barbash and Taylor Cross-Cultural Filmmaking

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Lecture 21 Film and discussion: The Cove (Psihoyos, 2009)

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

Lecture 22 Nuts and Bolts

READ Barbash and Taylor Nuts and Bolts

Lecture 23 Film and discussion: Cuba Sentimental (Tanuma, 2010)

READ

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

Lecture 24 Film and discussion: The Great Happiness Space (Clennell 2006)

READ Takeyama

Lecture 25 Low Budget Films and Student Projects

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

Lecture 26 Film and discussion: Against Coercion: Refusing To Stand For Kimigayo (Matsubara and Sasaki, 2006)

READ VAOJ posts on Japanese flag, national anthem, patriotism

Lecture 27 Film and discussion: Peace (Soda 2010)

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

Lecture 28 Film Treatment Presentations

Lecture 29 Film Treatment Presentations

Lecture 30 Final review activities

READ (REVIEW) all photography and film related class readings

【Textbooks/Reading Materials】

All work outside of classroom assignments, including reading assignments with their full citations, can be found on the university Black Board System and/or Visual Anthropology of Japan website.

Section 4

【Learning Assessments/Grading Rubric】

Grading will be based on:

1. Participation (25%)
2. Discussion Board (15%)
3. Portrait Exercise (10%)
4. Two-Frame Story Presentation (25%)
5. Film Treatment Presentation (25%)

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Section 5

【Additional Information】

Standards of Personal and Academic Conduct

The Professor is an advocate of inclusion, tolerance and diversity. The classroom is regarded as a “safe place” for free speech.

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: As a general rule, please refrain from using lap top computers, iPads, smart phones/cell phones*, iPods, e-books, video games, tape recorders, digital cameras, video cameras, etc. during class. Such usage in the form of multi-tasking rarely adds to the classroom experience at the time and is also distracting to other students. Taking photos and video infringes upon the right to privacy and portrait rights.

If your personal situation requires the use of a personal computer, iPad or other similar devices in class, with the permission of the KGU administration and/or the Professor, it will be allowed under the following conditions:

- a) you must inform the Professor in person and via e-mail of your request;
- b) you cannot access non-class materials during the class period;
- c) you must sit in the front row;
- d) your usage of such devices will be monitored;
- e) if you break any of these rules even once you will no longer be allowed to use such devices

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.”

Artificial Intelligence: “... [U]sing AI-generated content verbatim for reports or papers and submitting it as one's own work is inappropriate as it does not align with the educational goals of our institution... Using content directly generated by AI in reports or papers may be considered plagiarism... It is your responsibility to verify the credibility of such information.” Kansai Gaidai A.I. Policy, December 1. 2023

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In this course, students are not allowed to use A.I. for any purposes. This includes generating ideas, making an outline, inputting exam questions into an AI generator and using AI-generated answers (and passing them off as your own work). The use of A.I. will be considered plagiarism, a form of cheating. The penalties for academic cheating will include failure on the assignment and failure in the course.

For any writing or presentation exercises, your answers and content should come from class readings, films/videos, lectures and discussions. (It is a good idea to use these sources and cite them within the text.) The purpose of these assignments is for the student to demonstrate what they have learned in class lectures, discussions and other materials provided by the Professor.

Do not use materials from the internet that have the same information as class materials (as this would demonstrate that you did not do the readings).

If you quote or borrow ideas from a class reading or another source, you must credit the source within your text and then give a complete citation at the end of your essay (you can use any academic citation style you want).

If asked by the Professor, you must show where you got the information to answer your questions (from class materials). You might also be asked to show outlines and/or early rough drafts. It is your responsibility to provide this information.

Please be advised that the use of Grammarly or similar service might leave an AI footprint on your text.

Accommodations: Reasonable accommodation for students with known disabilities will be made in accordance with Kansai Gaidai University's guidelines. The Registrar's Office requires documentation from home universities. Any student who feels they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability is responsible for contacting the Professor as early as possible in the semester.