AR 351 The Arts and Society in Japan  
IES Abroad Tokyo

**DESCRIPTION:**
This course is a selective survey of major developments in Japanese visual cultures (art and architecture). Particular emphasis is placed on the relationship between art and history, religion, and literature of pre- and early modern Japan and some contemporary examples. While the course moves somewhat chronologically, it also demonstrates fluidity between traditions of the distant past and their modern manifestations. The course examines themes such as the creation of religious images and spaces; the process of picturing political and economic authority; the social identity of artists and workshop production; the elite and commoner patronage and consumption; the use and re-use of the visual past to promote ideological claims; gender and representation; and the impact of foreign art in Japan. It also addresses issues specific to history of art and the sociology of art in order to accommodate students who are unfamiliar with these academic disciplines.

**CREDITS:** 3

**CONTACT HOURS:** 45

**LANGUAGE OF PRESENTATION:** English

**PREREQUISITES:** None

**ADDITIONAL COST:** None

**METHOD OF PRESENTATION:**
The class will consist of lectures and discussions, and there will be one student presentation every week. We will read academic articles and book chapters pertaining to each topic, and discuss how the readings help us understand the arts and society in Japan. In addition to the assigned readings, students are also encouraged to use online archives and visit museums to see the artworks, their digital reproductions, and how they are interpreted today.

**REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:**
- Class Preparation and Participation - 20%
- Field Study Report and Presentation - 20%
- Mid Term Exam - 30%
- Final Research Paper and Presentation - 30%

**Class Preparation and Participation**
Students are expected to attend all 12 meetings with adequate preparation to actively participate in discussions. Students are required to write a 100-200 word summary/response for one of the required readings for each session and a brief oral report on sites visited during the week appropriate to the topic and submit their response paper to the instructor at the class meeting. Students are asked to lead some class discussions.

**Field Study Report and Presentation**
One session will take place at the Tokyo National Museum and one at the Tokyo National Museum of Modern Art. Assignments specific to this trip will be given and graded.

**Mid Term Exam**
A mid-term exam covering the earlier half course content will be carried out in week 7.
Final Research Paper and Presentation

Students are asked to write an in-depth study of an object or a series of objects related to eras and areas covered in the course (10-12 pages). Students are encouraged to think about the topic of their paper early, as paper topics and preliminary bibliography will be required for submission in advance. Each student will make a brief presentation on his/her paper topic and the class will ask questions, offer suggestions, and provide feedback to help presenters develop their ideas. Students will present their final papers with visual aid (slide/power point/handouts) during the last class session. Each student will be responsible for presenting one’s own paper and responding to another class member’s paper.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:
By the end of the course students will be able to:
- Demonstrate a good grasp of the historical development of Japanese art and its connections to social and wider cultural and technological developments
- Analyze and report on the visual arts
- Present, debate, and critique in a group setting

ATTENDANCE POLICY:
Following the attendance policy of IES Tokyo, attendance to all class meetings is strictly required for the students. In other words, students are required to attend every class meeting including excursions because there will be important information regarding marketing, economics and business strategy to learn but also it is fair that your classmates have your critical observations and insight in the class.

The three-hour format for classes makes missing a single class equivalent to missing a full week during a regular semester. Unexcused absences will therefore result in significant grade penalties. The first unexcused absence will result in a penalty of one-third of a letter grade from your final grade; additional unexcused absences will result in a penalty of one letter grade for each additional absence. That is, one missed class turns an A into an A-, two missed classes turns it into a B-, three turns it into a C-, and so on. An absence is considered “excused” only if it is unavoidable due to illness or other health conditions, or for other reasons approved by the instructor in advance.

Electronic Devices
Students are required to turn cell phones to silent (not just vibrate) in the classroom. You may use your laptop or tablet for taking notes in class, but using it for something not class related is not permitted. Looking at non-related websites will affect your participation grade.

Important note about trigger warnings and course content
The classroom is a safe space, and I will do my best to keep it as such. There is certain material that may prove to be uncomfortable for students, and which you may want to refrain from discussing. I understand that it is difficult to pin-point exactly what may trigger an individual – we all have different experiences, and certain things trigger certain emotions for different individuals. I have refrained from including explicit trigger warnings because I understand that any topic has the potential of being triggering. Please carefully read the course content and be aware of what will be discussed each week. I have included detailed descriptions of each week’s content. If you feel uncertain about a certain week’s content, please email me. If you believe that a certain topic may be triggering for you, please do not hesitate to let me know.
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<th>Week</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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| **Week 1: Course introduction** | Brief overview of course content. Introduction of visual resources and texts used in the course. Students will get recommendations on which museums and galleries in the greater Tokyo area to visit, in addition to the two national museums that we will be visiting during the course. | • Visual resources and online archives  
• Reading list  
• List of recommended museums and galleries in greater Tokyo area |
| **Week 2: Visualizing Faith** | Examine topics integral to an understanding of Buddhist art and architecture in Japan by studying temple sites and architectural forms, Buddhist iconography and icons, and ritual practices. | • Deal, William E. and Brian Ruppert. 2015. “1 Early Historical Contexts”, and “Ancient Buddhism (645-950)”, in A Cultural History of Japanese Buddhism, Wiley-Blackwell.  
• Murase, Miyeko, and Mitsuoki Tosa, eds. 2001. The Tale of Genji: Legends and Paintings. |
<p>| <strong>Week 4:</strong> | Consider concepts such as high vs. low, functional vs. decorative, and |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Field Study --Tokyo National Museum, Ueno</th>
<th>religious vs. secular art using objects on permanent view. Students will be asked to write a short paper using a specific object to further evaluate these binaries.</th>
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<td>Week 5: Picturing political authority</td>
<td>Explore how political authority is articulated in art and architecture of medieval and early modern Japan.</td>
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|                                         | * Field Study Report 1 due  
| Week 6: Materializing economic power    | Examine the birth and flourishing of a new townsman culture in Edo period by studying material culture of the time.                                                                                                                                       |
| Week 7                                 | Midterm Exam                                                                                                               |
| Week 8: Printing popular culture       | Investigate how the rise of publishing industry affected pop and visual cultures of early modern Japan.  
  Preliminary report on final project due and will be discussed in class today.                                                                 |
| Week 9: Deciphering vectors of influence, combined with | Consider the process of artistic exchange between different cultures by studying new Japanese  |
|                                         | * [Sadao and Wada](#). 2003. “VIII. Eyes to the West: The Meiji Restoration”, in Discovering |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Week 10: Distinguishing “self” | Explore definitions of artistic “self” in the early modern Japan by examining various practices of artistic production. | Explore how contemporary art and popular culture appropriate, connect themselves with the traditional forms of art. |
| Field Study to National Museum of Modern Art. | painting styles developed during the late 19th century and European paintings that demonstrate Japanese influence. | the Arts of Japan: A Historical Overview, pp. 244-69. |
| • Elliott, David. 2011. Bye Bye Kitty!!!: Between Heaven and Hell in Contemporary
### Course Content
All reading assignments will be uploaded in advance on Moodle. There will also be discussion questions pertaining to each week’s readings uploaded two weeks in advance on Moodle. You do not need to write down answers to these questions, but are encouraged to think about the answers as you read the articles.

### REQUIRED READINGS:
Students MUST complete the relevant readings before each class.


**RECOMMENDED READINGS:**


