

UMBC UGC New Course Request: HIST 392: Art and Power in Japan: 1600 to the Present

Date Submitted: 5/26/20 (revised 9/29/2020)

Proposed Effective Date: Summer 2021

	Name	Email	Phone	Dept
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COURSE INFORMATION:

Course Number(s)	HIST 392 (and ASIA 392)
Formal Title	Art and Power in Japan: 1600 to the Present
Transcript Title (≤30c)	Art and Power in Japan
Recommended Course Preparation	HIST 103
Prerequisite NOTE: Unless otherwise indicated, a prerequisite is assumed to be passed with a "D" or better.	N/A
# of Credits Must adhere to the UMBC Credit Hour Policy	3
Repeatable for additional credit?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Max. Total Credits	3 <small>This should be equal to the number of credits for courses that cannot be repeated for credit. For courses that may be repeated for credit, enter the maximum total number of credits a student can receive from this course. E.g., enter 6 credits for a 3 credit course that may be taken a second time for credit, but not for a third time. Please note that this does NOT refer to how many times a class may be retaken for a higher grade.</small>
Grading Method(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reg (A-F) <input type="checkbox"/> Audit <input type="checkbox"/> Pass-Fail

PROPOSED CATALOG DESCRIPTION (Approximately 75 words in length. Please use full sentences.):

The aim of this course is to view art and architecture as instrumental to change in pre-modern and modern Japan. Rather than restricting "art" to the realm of leisure, we will emphasize art's ability to serve as a visual placeholder for political motivations. The course will begin by analyzing sites in Nara and Kyoto but will also highlight the design of temples, shrines, and memorial spaces in locations such as Nagoya, Hiroshima, and Tokyo.

RATIONALE FOR NEW COURSE

To begin, the History Department has many course offerings on Japanese history and culture but none of them prioritize *visual* culture. (Also, at present, the Visual Arts curriculum does not have any East Asian art/art history course offerings which may further broaden the appeal of this course.) I taught "Art and Power" as a topics course (HIST 355/ASIA 300) in 2014 and 2016—and it filled both times—indicating that there is an audience for such a class. Based on the students who took the course previously (and my hope that HIST 392 will receive an Arts and Humanities designation), I foresee that this course will be popular with History and Asian Studies majors and minors, Visual Arts majors and minors, students seeking upper level university credit, and any student who needs AH GEP credit. As to why the 300 level is appropriate for this class, I utilize a good number of theoretical readings and concepts that would make the course less suitable for a 100 or 200 level course; with that said, no specialized knowledge of Japan and/or art is assumed, so the course is accessible to all. (Taking HIST 103, East Asian Civilizations, is *recommended* as it provides an entrée into Japanese culture, but it not necessary.) As to how often the course will be taught, I would like to offer it once every other year on campus and hopefully as a summer Faculty Led Study Abroad (FLSA) course every third summer. In fact, my FLSB proposal for SU 2021 (based on "Art and Power") is up for university approval (SPR/SU 2020). What all this means, I believe, is that this course will have an appeal both on-campus and "on the ground."

ATTACH COURSE SYLLABUS (mandatory):

Please note that this is an updated version of the 2016 syllabus, which was designed for a once/week meeting.

HIST 392/ASIA 392: Art and Power in Japan, 1600 to the Present

Meeting:

Professor: Dr. Julie Oakes (juloakes@umbc.edu), pronouns: she, her, hers

Course Description

The aim of this course is to view art and architecture as instrumental to change in pre-modern and modern Japan. Rather than restricting art to the realms of cultural attainment and leisure, we will emphasize art's ability to serve as a visual placeholder for political motivations. The Tokugawa regime (1600-1868) used its temple and mausoleum construction to stake a claim to the ideological and literal landscape, while Edo commoners challenged that presumption by focusing on the creation of the icons and ceremonies of popular Buddhism. We witness similar manipulations of visual culture in the Meiji period (1868-1912), where treasure photography and the creation of museums drove the transformation of religious icons into "art" or *bijutsu* (a word actually created in the 1870s), finally rendering them Japan's "national treasures" (*kokuhō*) in the 1890s. The course will conclude by looking more broadly at the political potency of aesthetics and material culture in the 20th century, as can be found in the Japanese folkcraft (*mingei*) movement, the post-war avant-garde movement, and in memorials to war such as Yasukuni Shrine and the Hiroshima Peace Park.

Academic Objectives

1. Understand the interplay between larger political/social goals and their more tangible/visual realization
2. Be able to "read" structures and objects similar to how one reads written resources
3. Interrogate all sources with a critical eye and convey hypotheses effectively in Discussion Board and exam writing
4. Apply the themes of the course in writing a research essay that exhibits the relationship between art and authority

Required Books

Karen Gerhart, *The Eyes of Power: Art and Early Tokugawa Authority* (University of Hawai'i Press, 1999)

Patricia Graham, *Faith and Power in Japanese Buddhist Art, 1600-2005* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2007)

Noriko Aso, *Public Properties: Museums in Imperial Japan* (Duke University Press, 2014)

*Okakura Tenshin (Kakuzo), *The Book of Tea* (Penguin, 2010/original 1906) *available on line as a free .pdf

Karen M. Fraser, *Photography and Japan* (reaktion books, 2011)

Grading Procedures

Midterm Exam	20%
Object analysis essay (3-4 pages)	10%
Final Exam	20%
Research Paper (8-10 pages)	30%
*Participation	20%

Note: A detailed rubric will be provided on Blackboard for each assignment. Regarding the final research project, I require you to *hand in a hard copy* and not email it; however, it is your responsibility to keep a digital copy of anything you submit. (I have misplaced very few papers in all my years of teaching, but it is good to be prepared!) **Also note that you must complete all three major assignments in order to pass the course.**

*The "Participation" component refers to any daily assignments I give during the semester (Discussion Board responses, hand-in writing assignments, etc.) as well as your overall attendance record. I take attendance each day, and attending class regularly—fully prepared to contribute both on paper and in discussion—is a great way to improve your overall results in the course.

Course Format

Each class will combine a lecture on the main themes of the day *and* an in-depth analysis of any primary documents assigned for that class as well as the visuals I display in the PowerPoints. It is generally during the latter (the written and visual source assessment) that I will ask **you** for **your** interpretations of the material, which will hopefully generate some great class discussion. Needless to say, it is critical that you come to class having done all the reading.

It is my intention to post the PowerPoint lectures on Blackboard *before* each class in case you like to like to match your class notes with the corresponding images. Regardless of your method—by hand or on your laptop—I *strongly* suggest you take notes each class!

Policy on Make-Up Exams/Late Paper

I do offer make-up exam opportunities—with no penalty attached—but **only if you request it by 10:00pm the night before the exam is scheduled**. (You can avail yourself of this opportunity just once.) If you miss an exam and have not notified me in advance, you are still allowed to take a make-up, although your score can be penalized by a full letter grade depending on the circumstances. A late paper may also be downgraded, again at the instructor's discretion.

Classroom Decorum

I expect each student in the class to do her/his part in making sure we have an environment conducive for learning each and every day. Please do your best to be on time, and do not get up in the middle of class unless it is an emergency—it's distracting. Also, do not talk to your neighbors, surf the web, or text, etc., during class. I will allow students who need their laptops to take notes or look at documents to use them in class, but I will ask students who appear to be doing *other* activities with their computers to close them. (I may ask the same of your cell phones if they become a distraction.) Having a drink or a small snack during class is OK with me—just no meals, please. *Bottom line: please be respectful of your fellow students, the learning process, and me. Thank you.*

Correspondence

Regarding your e-mail messages to me, I will try to respond within 24 hours; however, feel free to send me a polite reminder if I haven't responded within 48 hours. Also, while I realize e-mail is perfect for shooting off a quick note or request, I ask that you maintain a modicum of formality when sending me a message. If your e-mails do not begin with "Dear Prof. Oakes" or "Hello Dr. Oakes," nor end with some sort of appropriate closing ("Thank you," "Best," or at least your name!), I will not respond. This is good practice for the real world!

Academic Integrity and Personal Safety/Security

In 2001, UMBC's undergraduate students adopted the following Undergraduate Honor Statement as it describes the high standards to which everyone in the community will be held:

I hereby assume the responsibilities of an engaged member in a scholarly and civic community in which academic work and behavior are held to the highest standards of honesty. It is my active participation that affirms these principles and gives them true meaning as well as value in my education. I realize that by committing acts of dishonesty I hurt myself and place an indelible mark on the reputation of UMBC. Therefore, I will not cheat, fabricate materials, plagiarize, or help another to undertake such acts of academic dishonesty, nor will I protect those who engage in acts of academic dishonesty.

Please be advised that the penalty for academic dishonesty—including plagiarism and other forms of cheating—in any UMBC History Department course is an "F" for the course. ALL cases of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Academic Conduct Committee.

If you have concerns and/or questions about sexual assault and relationship violence, [click this link](#) for resources compiled by the Women's Center. (For the live links to all of these centers and programs, go to our Blackboard copy of the syllabus.) The Women's Center is also a fabulous resource for LGBTQ materials and support.

The [Counseling Center](#) at UMBC is a completely confidential resource for questions or concerns about mental health. The staff there supports students "in attaining their goals and assists students with mental health, emotional, and social problems that interfere with their personal and academic functioning."

For assistance with food insecurity, check out the [Retriever Essentials](#) site; for assistance with food, shelter, and/or health care concerns, call the confidential number 2-1-1 or send an email to info@211MD.org.

Assignments

The Foundations of Japanese Culture

1. (8/31) Introduction to Shintô and the Power of Visual Culture

Blackboard reading (BB): David Freedberg, et al, "The Object of Art History," *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 76, No.3 (Sept. 1994), pp. 394-410 (read only Freedberg, pp. 394-396; Higonet, pp. 399-401; Klein, pp. 401-404; and Tickner, pp. 404-407)

Today we will see a DVD on Shintô.

2. (9/7) The Power of Religious Architecture: Ise, Izumo, and Nara

BB: Ch. 2, "The Grand Shrines of Ise and Izumo" (pp. 16-50) and Ch. 3, "Great Halls of Religion and State" (pp. 52-80), from William Coaldrake, *Architecture and Authority in Japan* (Routledge, 1996).

Discussion Board: After reading about what gives Ise, Izumo and the Nara temples/temple sites their architectural authority, choose (and upload) an image of a religious building or site you feel exhibits some form of power and authority. You aren't expected to know everything about this site; just use the visual cues in front of you and your historical/aesthetic intuition to advance an argument. Your response should be 1-2 full paragraphs.

Tokugawa Period (1600-1868): Central Authority and Commoner Diffusion of Power

3. (9/14) Case Study: The Shogun's Nijô Castle and Power Writ Large

BB: Ch. 6, "Nijô Castle and the Psychology of Architectural Intimidation (pp. 142-155)," from Coaldrake
Gerhart: Introduction, pp. ix-xv; Ch. 1, pp. 1-33

We will see a DVD excerpt today on the political foundation of the Tokugawa shogunate.

Discussion Board: Put yourself in the position of a daimyô forced to visit the Shôgun at Nijô Castle. What part of the experience would have found more intimidating: the architectural intimidation (Coaldrake) or the iconographic intimidation (Gerhart)? Write 1-2 paragraphs, using specifics from the texts—which from here on out is the expectation for all Discussion Board posts.

4. (9/21) More Architecture for the Political Elite: Nagoya Castle and Nikkô's Yômeimon (Gate)

Gerhart: Ch. 2, pp. 35-71; Ch. 3, pp. 73-105

Graham: Ch. 2, pp. 45-72

Discussion Board: Focusing on the memoir entry on pp. 49-52 in the Graham text, what was Kôsen Shôton's understanding of the power of place and space? Also, what does the description say about the interrelationship politics, faith, and aesthetics?

5. (9/28) A Voice for the Common People: Popular Buddhism and Visual Authority

Graham: Ch. 3, pp. 73-95 ("Temples for Commoners"); Ch. 4, pp. 96-126

We will see a DVD today called "Preaching from Pictures," on *mandala* and the visuality of popular preaching.

Discussion Board: To what degree do you feel the common people were successful in carving out some religious authority for themselves in a society otherwise dominated by the authoritarian Tokugawa regime? Choose one main site or set of images to discuss, being as detailed and descriptive as possible.

Modern Japan: Meiji Period (1868-1912) to the Pacific War

6. (10/5) Midterm Exam/Iconic Persecution of Buddhism and Meiji Reinvention

Graham: Ch. 7, pp. 177-198; Ch. 8, pp. 199-210

After the exam, I will lecture on the main themes of the Meiji Period (1868-1912), the “art and power” of which will be covered in the three classes following the exam. While I know you will be focusing on the exam, try to read the Graham pages (above) before you start studying!

7. (10/12) Meiji Visual Might: Exhibitions, Expositions, and the Creation of Museums

Aso: Ch. 1, pp. 13-61; Ch. 2, pp. 63-93

BB/handouts: Primary documents from Okakura Tenshin and Ernest Fenollosa on the creation of the museums.

In lieu of a Discussion Board entry, you will do an in-class writing exercise based on the issue of placement proximity. I will show you an image (that should be familiar from the readings), and I will ask you to write about the “messages” made possible by placing it a museum display next to different objects.

8. (10/19) Tea as National Exceptionalism/Research Day

Okakura, *The Book of Tea*; read chapters 1-5

We will spend the second half the class in the library, discussing research strategies for the paper.

9. (10/26) The Power of Photography: from Treasure Surveys to War Images

Fraser: Introduction, pp. 11-21; Ch.1, pp. 37-55 (bottom); pp. (mid) 62- (top) 71; Ch. 2, pp. 87- (top) 103

BB: Julie Oakes, “Treasured Objects, Treasured Images,” (unpublished article)

Discussion Board: Upload to Blackboard TWO photos (taken with your cell phone) of the same building or object, one taken as a reporter/researcher might and the other as an artist might see it. (If you don't have access to a cell phone, you can find images on-line and post those instead.)

10. (11/2) Aesthetic Authority Abroad: Comparing Japanese Colonialism in Taiwan and Korea

Due today: Object analysis essay

Today we will do group work!

Taiwan group: read Aso: Ch. 3, pp. 95-108 and BB article by Paul D. Barclay, “Tangled Up in Red: Textiles, Trading Posts, and Ethnic Bifurcation in Taiwan,” *Outcasts of Empire: Japan's Rule on Taiwan's "Savage Border," 1874-1945* (University of California Press, 2018), 181-189

Korea group: read Aso: Ch. 3, pp. 109-126 and BB article by E. Taylor Atkins, “Curating Koreana: The Management of Culture in Colonial Korea,” *Primitive Selves: Koreana in the Japanese Colonial Gaze, 1910-1945* (University of California Press, 2010), 106-117, 144-146

11. (11/9) Countering the Nation-State Narrative: the Creation of the Japanese Folkcraft (*mingei*) Movement

Aso: Ch. 4, pp. 151-167

BB: Yanagi Sôetsu (excerpts from *Selected Essays on Japanese Folk Crafts*, 2017)

Discussion Board: We spent the past couple of lectures discussing the designation and display of exceptional works of art—and the power entailed therein. Referring to Yanagi's folkcraft movement, address whether or not you think it's possible for “nameless” or “useful” objects to command aesthetic authority in the face of the carefully crafted “national” canon.

12. (11/16) Post WWII Protest Art: ANPO (Mutual Security Treaty) and the Avant-Garde

BB: 1) Linda Hoagland, "The Lost Art Of Resistance," *Impressions* No. 33 (2012), pp. 30-41; 2) Barbara Thornbury, "America's 'Kabuki'-Japan, 1952-1960: Image Building, Myth Making, and Cultural Exchange," *Asian Theatre Journal*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Fall, 2008), pp. 193-230

We will see part of Hoaglund's documentary (*ANPO: Art X War*) today

Memorials to War

13. (11/23) The Yasukuni Shrine Controversy

BB: 1) Nicole Rousmaniere, ed., Kinoshita Naoyuki, "Portraying the War Dead: Photography as a Medium for Memorial Portraiture," *Reflecting Truth: Japanese Photography in the 19th Century* (2004), pp. 86-97; 2) John Nelson, "Social Memory and Ritual Practice: Commemorating Spirits of the Military Dead at Yasukuni Shinto Shrine," *Journal of Asian Studies* Vol. 62, No. 2 (May 2003), pp. 443-467; 3) *see below*

We will see a DVD today on Yasukuni.

Discussion Board: As part of your homework, please watch (on YouTube) at least thirty minutes of a documentary of ONE of the following (all in DC): the World War II Memorial, the Korean War Memorial, or the Vietnam War Memorial; then respond to the following question: to what extent do you feel that the way Japan memorializes its war dead at Yasukuni is different from how the United States does at (the site you chose)?

14. (11/30) Memorializing the Pacific War: The Korean A-Bomb Memorial in Hiroshima

Fraser: pp. 108- (top) 117

BB: Lisa Yoneyama, "Ethnic and Colonial Memories: The Atomic A-Bomb Memorials," *Hiroshima Traces* (1999), selected sections TBA

15. (12/7) Final Exam today!!

Final Papers will be due by Monday, December 19th, by 3:30 pm.