

31030 JAPANESE CULTURE AND ART I

INSTRUCTOR: Tomohiro Taguchi

COURSE DESCRIPTION

As the last Ice Age came to an end Japan pulled away from the Eurasian continent into isolation. The arch formed by these islands can be seen to resemble the cross section of a concave mirror or a huge parabolic antenna, symbolically reflecting the vast continent, while at the same time receiving information from it. Looking back on the history of Japanese culture, which developed by accepting diverse cultural influence from the Asian continent, it is an interesting notion to conceive this peculiar shape of the Japanese islands as a symbol characterizing Japan's cultural history before the country's modernization. By examining various aspects of arts and religious and philosophical thought, this course seeks to account for the development of Japanese traditional culture through its history of exchange with the Asian continent.

COURSE SCHEDULE

1. The ideal of Japanese culture and arts: The intermixed culture of the traditional and the modern, and the diverse viewpoints that exist on the study of Japan [once]
2. The formation of ancient Japan before the introduction of Buddhism: The origin of the Japanese culture of "magical culture and arts"
The birth of ancient civilizations and the formation of Japanese culture [twice]
3. The formation and the spread of Buddhism: The beginning and development of Buddhist art
The influence of Indian culture [once]
4. Absorbing and assimilating Chinese and Korean culture: *hiragana*, *katakana*, *waka*, calligraphy, and narrative scroll painting
Japanese culture within the sphere of East Asian culture [twice]
5. The formation and development of samurai culture: Noh drama, ink painting, and the foundations of the tea ceremony, gardens and martial arts as art
Japanese culture in the Middle Ages [twice]
6. The absorption of Western culture in the Momoyama period: The aesthetic of castle art
Japanese culture in the Age of Great Voyages [twice]
7. The culture of townsfolk in the Edo era: Bunraku and kabuki theaters, paintings and aesthetic sense, "sui and iki"
The essence of Edo culture in modern history [twice].

TEXTS

Textbook: None

Materials and references are provided

Supplementary Materials

Videotapes and slide films using PowerPoint presentations are used as teaching materials

ASSESSMENT

Attendance 25%; Oral presentation and homework 25%; Final paper (approx: 2,000 words) 50%