Forms in Japanese Culture:  
from tea ceremony to anime

IDIS 198
Spring 2005
MWF 11:30-12:20
PPHAC 233

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I will use Blackboard to post assignment schedules, web sites, articles, and other intriguing information, and to communicate with you by email. You must register as a student for this course. The access code to enroll is “anime” (lower case). Please enter the email address you use; I expect to communicate with the entire class using Blackboard’s email list, and it is your responsibility to check your email about course assignments, any changes, etc.

Course description: Many traditional Japanese arts adhere to exact and specific methods of performance. There are many art forms that have been performed in much the same way for hundreds of years. The tea ceremony has a specific form of preparation. In noh theater there is a prescribed form for taking a step. Flower arranging has formal rules to follow. Japanese animation has roots in older traditional forms. In addition to looking at some traditional art forms and their place in today’s Japan, we will investigate what’s happening in some other “forms,” such as the Japanese house, pottery, as well as animation. What is the meaning of these forms to modern Japanese society, as well as to the older generations of Japanese society? What conflicts arise from the difference in understanding? How does contemporary Japan reconcile the conflict between their traditional forms and culture with modern western society? How are those different cultures melded together in contemporary Japanese society?

The first four required textbooks are available at the college bookstore:


Other readings:
How to look at Japanese art by Stephen Addiss with Audrey Yoshiko Seo; photocopy handed out in class. Other readings will be a link will on Blackboard or photocopies.

Course objective: To become familiar with some of the basic artistic and culture forms of expression in literature, noh and kabuki theater, tea ceremony, architecture, and animation (to name a few), and to see what the modern interpretations are in Japan today. At the end of the course, you will have an overview of contemporary Japan’s views of its traditional artistic forms of expression. You will have a chance to select two areas of interest to investigate, for a presentation and a paper. This course is a chance for you to compare your interests in arts and culture to what’s going on in Japan in similar areas.

Course requirements:
1) Register for this course on Blackboard, and check your email.
2) Readings: keep up with the reading assignments. I will post month by month assignment schedules on Blackboard.
3) Quizzes: there will be twelve quizzes on the readings; you can drop 2 of the 12. The schedule is listed below, indicated by “Q.” If you miss a quiz, you’ll get a zero. No make ups.
4) Papers: there will be one 8-10 page paper, first draft and final paper. The purpose of the draft is to give you a chance to improve your writing style and the organization of your ideas. Even though you have a chance to improve your paper, think of the first draft as a final paper, rather than something you dash off. There will be a list of topics as the due date approaches.
5) Presentation: each student will give a 10-15 minute presentation, demonstration, or a critique on a topic relating to Japanese culture. You will need to get my approval on the topic. The links in Blackboard should help, and I can point you in the right direction if necessary. You are also to turn in a written summary of the presentation. Topics might include: “What’s currently the best-selling novel in Japan?”; “What would be a legitimate modern flower arrangement?”; “How are tattoos viewed in Japan?” Presentations will start in February, but start thinking about your topic early. The * mark on the schedule below denotes presentation.
6) Final exam at the end of the semester.
7) Attendance: I do not take attendance, but you will not be able to participate in discussion if you’re absent. I realize that you may be absent from time to time; let me know by email if you know you will be missing a class.

In this course we will have lots of discussion, about topics related to the readings as well as those that interest you. Bring questions, reactions, comments to class.

Grading:
- reading assignments & class discussion: 20%
- quizzes on reading assignments: 20%
- class presentation & written summary: 20%
- one 8-10 page paper, draft and final: 20%
- final exam: 20%

Detailed schedules will be posted in Blackboard; rough outline (subject to change):

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
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<tr>
<td>1/10 Course Intro</td>
<td>1/12 “Cool” article</td>
<td>1/14 Hume ch. 1</td>
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<td>Hume ch 3 (b)</td>
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<td>Addis ch 1 * Q6</td>
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<td>spring break</td>
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<td>3/14</td>
<td>Napier ch 1 *</td>
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<td>3/21</td>
<td>film clips; drafts due</td>
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Some Japanese web sites (under “external links” in blackboard):

- Mainichi Newspaper: [http://mdn.mainichi.co.jp/](http://mdn.mainichi.co.jp/)
- Yomiuri Newspaper: [http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/index-e.htm](http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/index-e.htm)
- The Japan Times: [http://www.japantimes.co.jp/](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/)
- Japan Today: [http://www.japantoday.com/e/?content=home](http://www.japantoday.com/e/?content=home)

see what kind of on-line discussions are going on about japanese culture:

- [http://forum.japantoday.com/m_8885/mpage_2//tm.htm#](http://forum.japantoday.com/m_8885/mpage_2//tm.htm#)

The Japanese embassy in Washington DC:


An Australian site about popular Japanese culture: