

The Kyoto Consortium for Japanese Studies (KCJS)

KCJS is an in-country program for the intensive study of Japanese language, humanities, and social sciences. Established in 1989, the thirteen institutions that govern KCJS include Boston University, Brown University, University of Chicago, Columbia University/Barnard College, Cornell University, Emory University, Harvard University, University of Pennsylvania, Princeton University, Stanford University, Washington University in St. Louis, Yale University, and University of Virginia. For more information, visit www.kcjs.jp

Kyoto's History Through Space and Architecture

京都の都市空間史と建築史

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Course Time: To be arranged around students' schedules

Location: KCJS (2F Fusokan)

Office Hours: TBA

Course Description & Objectives:

Kyoto was Japan's political and cultural capital for more than a millennium. Throughout most of that period, it was home and ritual center to the emperor and the civil aristocracy, the focal point of both sectarian and warrior politics, and the seat of the country's most successful industries. It was also among the world's largest cities.

The dawn of the modern era shifted attention away from Kyoto, but the city did not wither. In fact, it innovated, becoming home to Japan's first hydroelectric plant, gas-lit streets, and electric streetcar. Boasting 17 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Kyoto retains the title of Japan's "cultural capital." But today, the city is also home to leading universities and a thriving tech industry.

This course examines the city of Kyoto across time with a focus on city planning, architecture, and material culture (art and objects!). We will leverage our location in the heart of the city to visit sites of both historical and cultural significance. Students will learn techniques for critically examining cityscapes and monuments, how to document them, and how to report on them in ways that are modern and intellectually compelling.

Format & Attendance

The course will consist of two, ninety-minute meetings each week. In most weeks, the second meeting will be an expedition to a site of historical or cultural importance within Kyoto. Students are expected to attend all meetings and outings. Students who must be absent for any reason should contact the instructor as soon as possible.

Online Component & Readings

This course has a Canvas site that delivers teaching modules, readings, exercises, and quizzes. Accessing canvas regularly is required.

Assessments

Participation	15%
Observation Reports (about 4)	40%
Independent Project: Mid-term Progress	15%
Independent Project: Final	30%

Participation: The “in-house” lessons will be a blend of lectures and discussions. We will occasionally be working with your laptops and mobile devices to acquire skills for documenting and presenting information in ways that are edifying, accurate, and visually appealing. Excursions will be a blend of lectures and hands-on “tasks” (we will go beyond just looking at temples or monuments!). Participation marks are a function of engagement: students who, through their participation, demonstrate familiarity with the materials, contribute to the learning process, and otherwise advance the objectives of the course through their engagement with places and other students will receive high marks.

Observation Reports: Students are required to prepare observation reports after most excursions that are based largely on the “tasks” listed in the schedule below. These reports will take several forms, including brief essays, simple sketches, annotated photographic surveys, and short videos. Developing the content and form of these reports will be a central part of the learning process. Observation reports should serve as the raw materials for developing “independent projects.” Students will also sometimes be asked to briefly introduce their reports to the class.

Independent Project: Throughout the semester, each student will develop an independent project on a topic related to the course. In most cases, projects will take one of the following forms: 1) Digital interactive map; 2) website; 3) illustrated essay; 4) a combination of several of these! Similar to “observation reports,” learning how to develop the content and form of these projects will be a central part of the learning process. Independent projects should be equivalent to about 6000 words.

Grading Scale

A	95-100	C	65-69
A-	90-94	C-	60-64
B+	86-89	D	55-59
B	80-85	D-	50-54
B-	75-79	F	below 50
C+	70-74		

Learning Schedule

1 (Sep.28 • Oct.1)

Course orientation and Kyoto’s grand urban vision

2 (Oct.5 • 8)

Heian-kyō: The Imagined

Readings:

1. Toby, “Why Leave Nara.”
2. Stavros, introduction and chapter 1 of *Kyoto: An Urban History of Japan’s Premodern Capital*

Field-trip: アスニー京都

Tasks:

- Examine the 25,000th model of Heian-kyō and identify key sites from the readings: Imperial palace, Rajō gate, Suzaku and Nijō roads, the temples of Tōji and Saiji, eastern and western markets. Which areas are most developed? Which the least? What’s happening in the surrounding hills and plains? What do you notice about topography and hydrology?

3 (Oct.12 • 15)

Heian-kyō: The Real

Readings:

1. Stavros, chapter 2 of *Kyoto: An Urban History of Japan’s Premodern Capital*

Field-trip: 東寺とその周辺、京都駅前の羅城門 model.

Important note: There will be a short training session about visiting sites of profound historical significance, including rules governing photography, touching artefacts, and how to show respect.

Tasks:

- On a sheet of paper, make a very simple sketch of the main grounds of Tōji, including major buildings, walls, ponds, and surrounding roads. Take note of the names of the buildings and use the signs to note their dates of construction. Can you also try sketching a sectional view of the pagoda? How did making the sketches deepen your observation?

4 (Oct.19 • 22)

How to Read Architecture and Symbols Common to Japan, Part I

Readings:

1. Selections from Nishi, *What is Japanese Architecture?*
2. Selections from 仏像とお寺の解剖図鑑 (*Dissecting temple and Buddhist Statues*)
3. Selections from ten Grotenhuis, *Japanese Mandalas*

Tasks:

- No field trip this week. We’ll focus on how to read space, architecture and symbols.

Vocabulary: 彫刻、仏像、曼荼羅

5 (Oct.26 • 29)

The rise of Buddhist Kingship and Suburban Temple-Palace Complexes

Readings:

1. Goodwin, “The Buddhist Monarch.”
2. Stavros and Tomishima, “The Shōkokuji Pagoda: Building the Infrastructure of Buddhist Kingship in Medieval Japan.”

Field-trip: 三十三間堂 and 方広寺, maybe 法住寺

Tasks:

- At Sanjūsangendō, count the spaces between columns, inside and out. What’s “wrong” with the building’s name and how can it be explained?
- Photograph the building’s exterior carefully, focusing on the tiles, carvings, painting, etc. Look for consistent patterns and common symbolic elements.
- Photograph artefacts of archery contests held on the temple’s veranda.
- Can you find and photograph a 法輪 (ほうりん), the symbol of Buddhist kingship?
- Inside Sanūsangendō: Look for Indian influence in the iconography. Can you find a Bodhisattva with a pagoda in his hand?
- Why is the bell at Hōkōji important? Try to copy the key words?

6 (Nov.2 • 5)

Tech Training Week

This week, we will be staying in to engage in training on how to use several free, web-based services to map and illustrate space. Bring your laptop and mobile phone to both sessions.

7 (Nov.9 • 12)

The Medieval Wave: Zen and a New Aesthetic

Readings:

1. Selections from Levine, *Daitokuji*.
2. Selections from Keene, *Yoshimasa and the Silver Pavilion*

Field-trip: 相国寺、上御霊神社

Tasks:

- Photograph the symbols and traits we studied in previous sessions: be ready to assign names and briefly explain their significance
- Identify what about Shōkokuji is quintessentially “Zen” in style.
- Can you identify the “seven buildings” of the 七堂伽藍?
- How do the pearl, dragon, and lotus feature?

8 (Nov.16 • 19)

How to Read Architecture and Symbols Common to Japan, Part II

Readings:

1. Selection from Hardacre, *Shinto*
2. Selections from 神社の解剖図鑑

Field-trip: 北野天満宮

Tasks:

- Create a simple sketch of the shrine grounds and try to identify the different layers of sacredness and their boundaries (liminality)
- Photograph the key symbolic elements studied this week
- Document the animals you find, real and mythical

9 (Nov.30 • Dec.3)

Making Kyoto Medieval

Readings:

1. Stavros, “Making Kyoto Medieval”
2. Berry, selections from *Culture of Civil War in Kyoto*

Field-trip: 京都文化博物館. We can also view the remains of the Muromachi “Palace of Flowers” on the campus of Doshisha university.

Tasks:

- Examine the exhibit carefully and identify at least 3 characteristics that defined medieval Kyoto *other* than the presence of warriors in the city.

10 (Dec.7 • 10)

The Dawn of Modern Kyoto

Readings:

1. Selections from Tseng, *Modern Kyoto*
2. New English-language guides for the Kyoto National Museum and surrounds

Field-trip: Walk from 平安神宮 to 琵琶湖疎水、then 南禅寺

Tasks:

- You will be given a map of Meiji-era Kyoto and another of Kyoto today. As you walk, plot your movement across both virtual spaces. Note specific ways the landscape has changed.

Exam/Project Presentation Session