



HAA 1656/2656: Japanese Architecture as Performative Space

Spring 2018, Tues./Thurs. 4-5:15 PM, 203 Frick Fine Arts Bldg.

Instructor

Elizabeth Self

Email

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Office Location & Hours

221 Frick Fine Arts, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:30-3:30 PM or by appointment

Class Description

Why do Japanese castles look so different from European castles? How do Buddhist beliefs affect garden design? Why do Japanese houses have grass mats instead of carpets covering their floors? This course will answer some of these questions and pose many more. Together, we will analyze how specific cultural and societal requirements have affected the appearance and form of buildings in Japan, from the earliest temples, castles, and gardens, to modern skyscrapers. In particular, we will try to understand how architecture has functioned as a spectacular stage for creating political and religious authority. Why do governments spend so much time and money on spectacular works of architecture, from Himeji Castle to the Tokyo Skytree? Through case studies of specific sites and in-depth readings, we will inquire into some of these questions.

Expectations

In this course, you will be expected to attend class regularly, participate in class discussions, read the assigned read, and turn in work on time. In addition, it is expected that you will treat your fellow students and the instructor (me!) with respect. This includes not using your phone during discussion and lecture and not disrupting the class, as well as preparing for and participating in class. In return, you can expect that I will treat you with the same respect. You can also expect that I will be on time for class, prepare (hopefully) interesting lectures, give you adequate time and preparation for you to successfully complete your assignments and exams, and inform you of my assessments (grades) in a timely manner.

Objectives

After successfully completing this class, you should be able to:

- Analyze and explain, in writing or verbally, some of the typical characteristics of Japanese architecture
- Interpret significant works of Japanese architecture within their historical, political, religious, and social context
- Discuss the ways that architecture creates authority and expresses political ideas through form and structure
- Explain the connections between Japanese architecture and common conceptions of Japanese aesthetics (simplicity, tranquility, 'Zen,' etc.) and philosophy

Class Structure

This class is arranged roughly chronologically, beginning with the earliest Japanese architecture and ending with the most modern. Each class is centered around one particular case study (listed on the schedule) but will also cover other important sites. Classes will be a mixture of discussion and lecture, including a number of in-class and out-of-class writing assignments.

The final assignment for this class will be slightly unusual: a podcast. In groups of two to three people, you will choose a Japanese monument and create for it an audio tour, using the podcast format (40%). In addition, you will be graded on attendance and participation (15%), three short exams (30%), and three short reading reflections, written about required articles or essays (15%).

Course Materials

Required Materials

Please purchase and bring with you to class every day a set of 3" x 5" note cards - a 100 pack should be plenty. You can buy these at any drugstore, the University bookstore, or from an online retailer. **These will be used so that you can participate in daily**

activities and by collecting them, I will record your attendance, which is part of your class grade. You must bring them to every class.

Required Text

The required text for this course is William H. Coaldrake, *Architecture and Authority in Japan* (London: Routledge, 1996). This text is available as an e-book through the University of Pittsburgh library. It is also available on Amazon or through the library and will be placed on Course Reserve at the Frick Fine Arts Library.

Optional background readings (**strongly** suggested) will come from a beautifully illustrated textbook, *What is Japanese Architecture?* (Kazuo Nishi, Kazuo Hozumi, and H. Mack Horton. *What is Japanese Architecture?* New York: Kodansha USA, 2012.)

Other readings, such as articles or selections from texts, will be available on Courseweb as scanned PDFs. All materials on the Courseweb site are for your educational purposes in this class only. Materials may not be posted on the Internet or shared electronically with others outside the class.

Optional Materials

There are many excellent online resources available online, completely free. Be careful with using online sources and use your discretion. For example, it is acceptable to cite JAANUS or the Metropolitan Museum's website, but you should not cite Wikipedia. Please talk to me if you have any questions.

I will list a few online and offline resources below:

- Inoue, Mitsuo. *Space in Japanese Architecture*. New York: Weatherhill, 1985. This is a great book on the theoretical understanding of space in Japanese architecture.
- JAANUS Dictionary of Japanese Architectural and Art Historical Terminology. <http://www.aisf.or.jp/~jaanus/>
- Smarthistory. This website contains articles about Japanese architecture (among other things) written by and vetted by professional art historians. <https://smarthistory.org/>

Grading

Complete descriptions of each of these assignments, along with rubrics and guidelines, will be posted on Courseweb, under the 'Assignments' menu; they will also be discussed in class.

→ 40% - Podcast Group Assignment (multi-step)

For this assignment, you will be required to work in small groups to plan and execute a 6-8-minute-long podcast 'audio tour,' centering on one Japanese site or monument. Over the course of the semester, you will select your site, create

an annotated bibliography, write a script (with citations), and record the podcast. This assignment will draw on your research, writing, and presentation skills; it will also require some degree of technical ability.

→ **30% - Short exams (3)**

These short exams are more like quizzes, and will involve memorization and description, rather than detailed analysis. You will be asked to identify a number of monuments from an image, define a few key terms, and complete a few short answer questions.

→ **15% - Reading Reflections/Short Writing Assignments (3)**

You will be asked to write short (1-1.5 page double-spaced) reflections on certain parts of your reading, discussing the author's thesis statement (argument), evidence, and conclusions. These papers will require a greater degree of analysis and critical reading skills.

→ **15% - Attendance and Participation**

In this course, I place a strong emphasis on participation. You are all grown-ups, so you can decide how often you wish to attend class; however, there are penalties for not attending. Each student will receive two 'free' absences. After this point, each subsequent absence will result in a lowering of this grade. (I give this grade as a number from 1-10; this number is derived by dividing the total number of classes by the number of classes you attended.) Attendance will be taken by a short writing activity at the beginning of each class. If you do not get to class in time to participate in this activity, **your attendance will not be counted.** Please be on time.

Class Policies

Academic Integrity Policy

Cheating or plagiarism on any assignment or exam will not be tolerated. Simply said, plagiarism is using someone else's words as if they are your own. If you use someone else's text word for word in your own writing, you must enclose those words in quotation marks and cite the source; if you paraphrase from a source, you must cite the source as well. If you try to pass off someone else's writing or research as your own in any exam or assignment, or otherwise cheat in the course, you will receive a zero grade for that exam or assignment and you will be reported to the dean's office for disciplinary action pursuant to the School's Academic Integrity Code (see <http://www.as.pitt.edu/fac/policies/academic-integrity>.) I cannot emphasize this strongly enough: **if you copy and paste from a website, I will know it, and you will receive a zero on the assignment.** If you do it again, you may fail the class.

Attendance Policy

You are expected to attend class regularly. Attendance will be tracked via regular in-class activities; two absences will be forgiven automatically. However, doing the readings will not be sufficient to receive a good grade. If you miss class, you cannot make up the activity, and I do not give out my Powerpoints. I encourage you to find someone to provide them with their notes for the class. If you feel uncomfortable asking a classmate, I will ask for you in class. I do not provide notes for missed classes myself.

Disability Services Policy

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you must contact the instructor and the Office of Disability Resources and Services [216 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890; (412) 383-7355 (TTY)] early in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

If you have a disability accommodation, please contact me early on about any needed accommodations. I am very willing to work with you, but I cannot help if you do not talk to me. I understand that sometimes things come up and this does not necessarily happen on an academic schedule. However, please try to send me an email as soon as possible if something does happen. Requests to make up exams or absences **after the fact** will be treated on a case-by-case basis.

Email Policy

Your official Pitt e-mail address (yourname@pitt.edu) will be used by the instructor for official communication with you. You are expected to read e-mail sent to this account on a regular basis. Failure to read and react to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve you from knowing and complying with the content of the communications

I encourage you to email me with questions, comments, and thoughts at any time (efs22@pitt.edu). I answer emails during normal business hours (Monday to Friday, 9-5.) In some cases, I may answer emails after that time period, but it is not guaranteed. Generally, I am committed to responding to emails within two business days. If my response is delayed past that, you should send me a reminder email. In other words, if you have questions about an assignment or quiz, **make sure to ask them well in advance of the due date.**

Technology Policy

Use technology respectfully. You are welcome to use laptops during class time, for the purpose of taking notes or looking up information or images relevant to class content. If you use phones or laptops to watch videos, make calls, listen to music, or otherwise disrupt class, you will be asked to leave class.

Many of the assignments in this class will require you to be familiar with the Courseweb site for the class and to upload your assignments or essays, etc. there. **It is your responsibility to ensure that these have been successfully uploaded before the due**

date and in a format accessible by the instructor. I will discuss guidelines for how to do this during. In general, I encourage you to double-check or even triple-check that your assignments have uploaded successfully.

To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, you may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.