Media Imaginations of Traditional Japan (and Kyoto)

Instructor: Stephen Choi (hc2963@columbia.edu, room F201a)

Monday 2:55pm - 6:10pm (+ field trips on Thursday or Friday)

Course Description

Often, what we think of as tradition is largely determined by how tradition has been depicted in recent years. In this class, we will explore images of Japanese tradition as a kind of adaptation. Focusing on the many aspects of tradition that shape the cultural scape of Kyoto, we will think about how people, places, monuments, arts, and stories traverse time and space to become part of our imagination of the traditional. For example, the early eleventh-century work, *The Tale of Genji*, has been reproduced in countless forms over hundreds of years using different printing and publishing techniques, numerous iterations of the Japanese language, and various visual styles and mediums. It has been translated into many different languages and adapted to film, manga, and animation. Although the work is a thousand years old, the world depicted within it is an active, integral, and thriving part of present-day society. The course will provide students with a deep understanding of how the image of Japan has been developed, changed, and appropriated over time.

During the semester, students will be exposed to diverse forms of media that adapt Kyoto and Japanese tradition for their own purposes within their specific contexts. Through excursions, activities, film viewings, and guest lectures, students will gain a first-hand experience of traditional culture as it exists in present-day Japan, blurring the division between the premodern, modern, and contemporary. Students will also create their own media representation of Kyoto as a way of deeply interacting with its landscape and culture. This wide-ranging investigation of Japanese tradition is designed to prepare students for possible future endeavors dealing with Japanese culture, society, and history, by fostering an understanding of the fluidity of images and how they impact and are impacted by their contemporary contexts.

Expected Outcomes

Students are expected to gain basic knowledge of media culture and the history of the production and reception of images in Japan. They are also expected to be able to articulate their awareness of the processes through which our images of tradition change over time, as well as analyze the significance of those changes in an academic manner. Furthermore, exposure to various styles of language as they appear in diverse forms of media will broaden students' awareness of the diversity of the Japanese language.

Academic Integrity

As members of an academic community, each one of us bears the responsibility to participate in scholarly discourse and research in a manner characterized by intellectual honesty and scholarly integrity. Collaborative scholarship requires the study of other scholars' work, the free discussion of

such work, and the explicit acknowledgement of those ideas in any work that inform our own. This exchange of ideas relies upon a mutual trust that sources, opinions, facts, and insights will be properly noted and carefully credited. In practical terms, this means that, as students, all work submitted in this course, whether in draft or final form, must be your own. You must be responsible for the full citations of others' ideas in all of your research papers and projects; you must be scrupulously honest when taking your examinations; you must always submit your own work and not that of another student, scholar, or internet agent. Any breach of this intellectual responsibility is a breach of faith with the rest of our academic community. It undermines our shared intellectual culture, and it cannot be tolerated.

Use of Generative AI

Absent a clear statement from a course instructor granting permission, the use of Generative AI tools to complete an assignment or exam is prohibited. The unauthorized use of AI shall be treated similarly to unauthorized assistance and/or plagiarism (page 11 of Standards and Discipline at https://universitypolicies.columbia.edu/content/standards-and-discipline).

Policy

KCJS expects all KCJS community members to follow these guidelines when using Generative AI tools for teaching and learning, research, and work-related functions.

- Do not input Confidential Information;
- Do not input Personal Information;
- Do not input information that violates IP or general contract terms and conditions;
- Confirm the accuracy of the output provided by Generative AI tools;
- Check the output of Generative AI tools for bias;
- Disclose the use of Generative AI tools;
- Comply with third-party intellectual property rights.

For more detailed information, please refer to the following page.
https://provost.columbia.edu/content/office-senior-vice-provost/ai-policy

Course Requirements and Evaluation

Attendance and Participation (20%): Daily attendance is mandatory. In case of absence, please notify the instructor.

Discussion Posts (30%): Students are expected to do the readings and prepare weekly responses in preparation for each class. The responses will be used for in-class discussion. Students will also write short reports on field trips, what they experienced, what they learned, and how it relates to the topics raised in the class.

Group Project and Presentation (30%): Students will form groups to produce graphic narratives (manga) about their experiences in Kyoto, incorporating traditional visual elements, and present them in the final class.

Final Paper (20%): Students are expected to reflect on their experiences in the course and in Kyoto, then write how it changed or expanded their understanding of tradition and media.

Schedule for the Semester

Week 2

Class 1 (Jan. 19) – Introduction + Kon Satoshi, *Millennium Actress* (2001)

Week 3

Class 2 (Jan. 26) – Visualizing Tradition (guest lecture by Tobias Hutzler)
Class 3 (THURSDAY, Jan. 29) – Field Trip to the Toei Kyoto Studio Park

Week 4

Class 3 (Feb. 2) – Kurosawa Akira, *Rashōmon* (1950)
[Feb. 6-7 – KCJS Spring Trip]

Week 5

Class 4 (Feb. 9) – *Chihayafuru* and *Hyakunin isshu* (A Hundreds Poems by a Hundred Poets)
Class 5 (FRIDAY, Feb. 13) – Field Trip to the Karuta Competition at Daikakuji

Week 6

Class 6 (Feb. 16) – The Neverending Story of *The Tale of Genji*
Class 7 (FRIDAY, Feb. 20) – Field Trip to The Tale of Genji Museum

Week 7

[Feb. 23 – Holiday, NO CLASS]
Class 9 (FRIDAY, Feb. 27) – Field Trip to the Nishijin Textile Center (To be watched prior to class: Ichikawa Kon, *The Makioka Sisters*, 1983)

Week 8

Spring Break, NO CLASS

Week 9

Class 10 (Mar. 9) – Ichikawa Kon, *Conflagration* (1958) + Manga Project Workshop

Week 10

[March 16, NO CLASS (instructor attending a conference)]

Class 10 (FRIDAY, Mar. 20) – Field Trip to the Utoro Peace Memorial Museum

Week 11

Class 11 (Mar. 23) – Guest Lecture and Workshop by Illustrator, Alex Mankiewicz

Class 12 (THURSDAY, Mar. 26) – Field Trip to Kinkakuji

[Mar. 27 – Nison'in Visit]

Week 12

Class 13 (Mar. 30) – Morimi Tomihiko's Fantastical Kyoto in *Night is Short Walk on Girl*, 2017

Week 13

Class 14 (Apr. 6) – "The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter" and Takahata Isao's *The Tale of the Princess Kaguya* (2013)

Week 14

Class 15 (Apr. 13) – Presentations