FAH 200: SEMINAR: JAPAN’S FLOATING WORLD  
Instructor: Prof. Ikumi Kaminishi  
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Office hours: Tuesdays, 1:30 – 4:00 pm or by appointment  

Spring 2016  
Class: Talbot Seminar Room  
Time: 1:30-4:00 pm

Course Description
This course explores various art media that surround the idea of the Floating World (ukiyo) in Japan’s modern period (17th-20th centuries). The Floating World, which sets against an orthodox Buddhist worldview of impermanence, focuses more on hedonistic outlook in life. First we study the literature and film that address question of reality and illusion. Then we examine arts that depict the world of entertainment and pleasure: colorful woodblock prints of courtesans and actors, as well as the performing arts of kabuki and puppet theaters. Close examinations of these arts would reveal sophisticated and dynamic exchange between intellectuals and leading artists. Focusing on visual, literary, and performing arts, we will explore the matrix of Edo culture, especially the ideas of classicism, hedonism, and satire, and also the government’s response and censorship against parodies. We will also explore modern theaters, film, and anime, which stem from early modern arts in the Floating World.

Learning Objectives:

- To familiarize with visual arts and cultures of Japan
- To develop an ability to analyze, interpret, and write on visual works of art
- To learn to contextualize cultural and historical significance of Japanese art
- To develop critical thinking ability in response to scholarly literature
Expectations:

- Active participation in class discussions (leading discussants will be assigned)
- Learn Japanese history, aesthetic concepts, and visual and literary cultures
- Clear writing skill
- Academic research skill
- Time management (Late papers will be downgraded by a third of a full grade each day.)
- Collaboration toward group work

Requirements and Distribution of Grading

1. Weekly class participation and assigned discussion leadership: 30%
   A pair of students leads discussions based on the assigned articles (4 or 5 times a semester).
   Post key discussion topics based on comments on readings on the course TRUNK, Forum folder, by Monday night. Include images of interest for discussion.

2. Group project: Make a 4-minute video: 30% (content, teamwork, presentation, Q&A)
   Prepare a short video (animated slides allowed). Consider you are making an academic Youtube video that introduces idea of floating world. Present your video in class on March 16. Turn in the storyboard script.

3. Seminar paper: 40% (undergraduates, 12-15 pages; graduates, 17-20 pages)
   The topic of the paper must be relevant to the subject and issues discussed in class. On February 24, submit your paper proposal, which states your thesis, objective, method of study, and preliminary bibliography.

4. Mandatory Attendance. Missing a class (except for an emergency) will result in lower grade. If missed more than three times, the student may be asked to withdraw the course.

An important note on Plagiarism:
Absolutely no plagiarism is tolerated. If detected, that portion of the assignment receives 0 point or grade of F, and I report to Academic Judiciary Affairs Officer. For your information, please review Tufts University Academic Integrity. And if you are not sure how to cite your academic sources properly, please consult with me before you hand in papers.

Online resources information:

- JSTOR: Online database of academic articles
  http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.library.tufts.edu/

- Art Online: Oxford Art Online, excellent encyclopedia
  http://www.oxfordartonline.com.ezproxy.library.tufts.edu/subscriber/advanced_search

- Manual: Chicago Manual of Style Online: Use it when writing an academic paper
  http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org.ezproxy.library.tufts.edu/home.html
**SCHEDULE  (subject for change)**

Week 1  1/27  Introduction: Floating World

- What does *ukiyo* mean?
- Edo Period (1603-1868) of Japan: *samurai*, class society, Edo city
- Floating and fleeting
- Video: clips from *Memoirs of a Secret Empire*

Week 2  2/3  Buddhism: What does Zen got to do with the Floating World?


4) Short scripture: *The Heart Sutra* (*Maha Paramita Sutra*) [pdf on TRUNK]

Discussion:
- What are the concepts of reality, body, mind, world and illusion in Zen?

Week 3  2/10  Literature: The World of Ihara Saikaku


Film: *Life of Oharu*, directed by Mizoguchi Kenji
Source: Ihara, Saikaku, *The Life of an Amorous Woman* (just peruse)

Discussion:
- What is Saikaku’s contribution to the conception of floating world?
- What makes *Life of Oharu* a story in the floating world?
Week 4 2/17  Prints and Books: *ukiyo-e*


**Discussion:**
- What are *ukiyo-e* prints? (Difference between *ukiyo* and *ukiyo-e*)
- What are popular *ukiyo-e* subjects?
- Patrons, artists, publishers

❖ **Bring an image of “floating world”**

❖ **Will form groups; a brief meeting to introduce yourselves in the group.**

Topics: How do they constitute floating worlds?
1. Sport: Sumo and Shinto
2. Historical hero and event: Ōishi Kuronosuke and 47 ronin
3. Travels: Pilgrimages to Ise Shrines
4. Edo pleasure quarter: Yoshiwara district
5. Famous Kabuki actor: Danjuro
6. Or your own topic?

Week 5 2/24  Classical Literature in Edo style


**Discussion:**
- Know the basics story of *The Tale of Genji*, and *Ise Monogatarai*
- Why did Edo people care about Heian classics?
- How are classical heroes transformed?

❖ **Seminar paper proposal w/ preliminary bibliography due in class.**
Week 6  3/2  Double entendre: mitate, fūryū yatsushi

1) Clark, Timothy. “Prostitute as Bodhisattva: The Eguchi Theme in Ukiyo-e.”  


*Impressions*, No. 31 (2010): 50-71. [JSTOR]

Read as General background information:

- Clark, Timothy T. “Mitate-e: Some Thoughts, and a Summary of Recent Writings

Discussion:

- What are the concepts of humors and parodies?
- How do they represent the *ukiyo*?
- What makes Harunobu a skillful designer?

Week 7  3/9  Humor and Authority


2) Shively, Donald. “Sumptuary Regulation and Status in Early Tokugawa Japan.”  

3) Kornicki, Peter F.  “Nishiki no Ura. An Instance of Censorship and the Structure of a Sharebon.”  


Discussion:

- What did governments respond to control people’s interest in pleasure?
- What would the U.S government do in such cases?
- Find images and bring them to class.

Week 8  3/16  Your group video presentations
Week 9  3/23  No class; Spring recess

Week 10  3/30  Kabuki and Jōruri: Double Suicide


Film: Double Suicide, directed by Shinoda Masahiro

Discussion: How does Chikamatsu’s Double Suicide relate to the idea of floating world? How does the film director Shinoda Masahiro aesthetically create a floating world?

Week 11  4/6  Reality vs. Illusion in film

Film 1: Ugetsu (1953), directed by Kenji Mizoguchi
http://tufts.kanopystreaming.com/node/113270


Film 2: Spirited Away (Sen to Chihiro no kamikakushi), dir. by Miyazaki Hayao


Week 12  4/13  Mr. Keiji Shinohara’s demonstration of woodblock printing

Week 13, 14  4/20, 27  Presentations  (Paper Due on 4/27 via email attachment by 6pm)

Late paper policy: Late papers are accepted but downgraded one third of a full grade each day.
Books on TISCH reserve
ND1053.5 .D38 2001  Timothy Clark, et al.  The dawn of the floating world.
NE1321.8 .L36 1978  Richard Lane,  Images from the floating world.
DS822.2 .N558 1997  Nishiyama Matsunosuke.  Edo Culture
N7353.5 .G88 1996  Christine Guth.  Art of Edo Japan
PN2924.5.K3 K2358  Samuel Leiter, ed.  A Kabuki Reader
HN730.T65 S45 1993  Seigle, Cecilia Segawa  YOSHIWARA
N7353.5 .S39 1999  Screech, Timon  The Western Scientific Gaze
N7353.5 .S39 1999  Screech, Timon  Sex and the floating world

Film on TISCH media reserve
VC2695 (c. 1, 2)  Life of Oharu
DV75, VC1684  The Bodyguard
DV675, VC2554  Double Suicide
DV1232 (c.1, 2)  Spirited Away