Re-Inventing Tokyo: The Art, Literature, and Politics of Japan’s Modern Capital

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Course Description:

Tokyo is the political, cultural, and economic center of Japan, the largest urban conglomeration on the planet, holding 35 million people, fully one fifth of Japan’s population. Since its founding 400 years ago, when a small fishing village became Edo, the castle headquarters of the Tokugawa shoguns, the city has been reinvented multiple times—as the birthplace of Japan’s early modern urban bourgeois culture, imperial capital to a nation-state, center of modern consumer culture, postwar democratic exemplar, and postmodern metropolis. The class will focus on the portrayals of Tokyo and its reinventions in art, literature, and politics from the end of the Edo period to the present day. It will examine the changes that took place as the city modernized and Westernized in the Meiji era, became the center of modern urban life in Japan before the Second World War, and rebuilt itself as the center of the country’s economic miracle in the postwar era. As the largest human cultural creation in Japan, one that endured political upheavals, fires, earthquakes, fire-bombings and unbridled development, Tokyo has always been a complex subject. The seminar will use that complexity to consider how to analyze a culture different than one’s own and to question assumptions of the familiar and unfamiliar.

The seminar has been designed by Professors Timothy Van Compernolle, Trent Maxey, and Samuel C. Morse. It will be taught on a regular basis and in the 2010-2011 academic year will be taught by Professor Maxey and Professor Morse.
Books and Images

The other readings will be on e-reserve and at Frost Library at the Reserve Desk.

A webpage for the course that will serve as a constant point a reference  
throughout the semester and which will be used for your oral presentations and  
the multi-media project can be found at:

http://www.ats.amherst.edu/tokyo/

A large database of images for the course is available through the Visual  
Resource Collection website:

https://www.amherst.edu/library/departments/branches/visualresources

The Course

The class will meet on Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:30 to 1:50 in  
Fayerweather 113. There will be at least one additional session at the Mead Art  
Museum to look at woodblock prints of the city.

The assignments and readings have been designed to help you come to your  
own understanding of the way urban space has been constructed, represented,  
and inhabited in Tokyo. Since such a wide range of material is to be covered in  
only one semester, regular class attendance is essential. The assigned readings  
should be completed before each class. You should be prepared to participate in  
class discussions (10%) and share your opinions with your fellow students.

Assignments/Projects

This class is intended to be writing attentive. There will be three graded writing  
assignments of 3-5 pages (10% each), ungraded, one page response papers on  
a selected topic most weeks to focus discussion and a group project to trace the  
transformation of a specific neighborhood of the city through visual and written  
media; the project will involve two oral presentations (10% each) and a  
multimedia portfolio (15%). The group project will furnish the basis for a final  
paper of 10~12 pages (35%) entailing a modest amount of research.

1) A looking assignment comparing and contrasting two images of the city. Due September 29

2) An essay comparing and contrasting the spatial arrangements of Edo and Tokyo. Due October 25
3) An essay discussing how the characters in *Tokyo Story* perceive the city. Due November 15

4) First oral presentations, October 4 and 6

5) Second oral presentations, December 6 and 8

6) Final paper. Due Monday, December 20

**Class Policies**

Be sure to **turn your cell phone off** before you arrive in class.

Late papers: 1/3 of a letter grade (i.e., A to A-; A- to B+) will be deducted for each day the paper is late.

Extensions must be requested through the Dean of Students.

Absences will harm your participation grade. Anyone who misses more than 1/4 of the classes will automatically fail the course.

You may **rewrite** (not edit!) your topical essays within one week after they have been returned to you. You must conference with one of us at least once before turning in a rewritten essay.

**College Policies**

Please be sure you are familiar with the College’s Statement of Intellectual Responsibility (pages 21~2 in the Student Handbook). Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course.

We respect and uphold all Amherst College policies pertaining to the observation of religious holidays, assistance available to the disabled, sexual harassment and racial, ethnic, sexual or religious discrimination. Please make yourselves familiar with these policies (pages 20~41 in the Student Handbook), and feel free to raise concerns or questions during our office hours.
Schedule

Introduction: Destruction and Reconstruction

1 (W, Sept. 8) Introduction to the course

Readings:
- Bognar, “Making of a World City”;
- Jinnai, “Tokyo Then and Now”
- Takashina, “Tokyo: Creative Chaos”

2 (M, Sept. 13) Thinking About a Trope: Tokyo Destroyed, Rebuilt (and destroyed again)

Viewing:
Akira (Otomo Katsuhiro, 1988; 124 min.)

Unit One: Background--Edo, The Shogun’s Capital

Reading: Mansfield, Tokyo, pp. 1-86

3 (W, Sept. 15) Edo—Geographical and Historical Information Culture and Social Space

Readings:
- Coaldrake, Architecture and Authority, pp. 104-6, 120-37
- “Ihara Saikaku and the Books of the Floating World”
- Moriya, “Urban Networks”

4 (M, Sept. 20) Edo—Bad Places and Famous Places and the Ansei Earthquake

Readings:
- Lane, Images of the Floating World, pp. 37-63
- Seigle, Yoshiwara, pp. 1-13
- Shively, “Bakufu vs. Kabuki”
- Smith and Poster, One Hundred Views of Edo, pp, 9-15 and skim plates
- Smits “Shaking Up Japan”
Unit Two: Tokyo, the Nation’s Capital

Reading: Mansfield, *Tokyo*, pp. 87-142

5 (W, Sept. 22)  Modernization

Readings:
- Coldrake, *Architecture and Authority*, pp. 208-239
- Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy*, pp. 31-42, 55-82
- Mori Ōgai, “Under Reconstruction”
- Smith, “Tokyo as an Idea” pp. 45-57

6 (M, Sept. 27)  The New City through the eyes of Kobayashi Kiyochika and Early Photographers

Readings:
- Morse, *Art and Artifice* (skim plates)
- Morse, *Japan at the Dawn of a New Age* (skim plates)
- Smith, *Kiyochika*, pp. 32-41; 44-51; 68-73; 80-81
- Maeda, “Panorama of Enlightenment”

7 (W, Sept. 29)  Creating a Modern Metropolis—Urban Planning and the Topography of the City

Readings:
- Phillips, “Building Meiji Tokyo”
- Hein, “Shaping Tokyo”
- Jinnai, *Tokyo*, pp. 119-170

8 (M, Oct. 4)  Presentations

9 (W, Oct. 6)  Presentations

Unit Three: Politics and Consumption in the Industrial City

Reading: Mansfield, *Tokyo*, pp. 143-182

10 (W, Oct. 13)  Politics in an Urban Setting

Readings:
- Gordon, “The Crowd and Politics in Imperial Japan: Tokyo 1905-1918”
- Smith, “Tokyo as an Idea” pp. 57-68
- Jinnai, *Tokyo*, pp. 171-216
Readings:
- Hammer, *Yokohama Burning*, pp. 111-135
- Sata, “Elegy”
- Smith, “Tokyo as an Ideal,” 68-73
- Weisenfeld, “Imaging Calamity”
- Castle, “Tokyo To-Day”

12 (W, Oct. 20) Urban Women and Urban Consumption
Readings:
- Kishida, “Modannajo—Short-Haired Missy”
- *Modan Tokyo* (English language text and skim plates)

13 (M, Oct. 25) Strategies of Representation --The Avant Garde before the War
Readings:
- Clark, “Artistic Subjectivity”
- Hagiwara, selected works
- Koishi, *Early Summer Nerves*
- *Tokyo: The Imperial Capital* (scan plates)

**Unit Four: Wartime City, Rubble, and Reconstruction**

Reading: Mansfield, *Tokyo*, pp. 182-219

14 (W, Oct. 27) The Wartime City and the Tokyo Fire Bombings
Readings:
- Richie, *This Scorching Earth*, pp. 50-59
- Smith, “Tokyo as an Ideal,” 73-74
- Werrell, *Blankets of Fire*, pp. 150-168

15 (M, Nov. 1) Memory, Obliteration, Cityscape
Readings:
- Foard, “The Universal and the Particular”
- Hein, “Hiroshima”
- Rubenfien, *Skin of the Nation*, plates 36-47
- Tsuchida, *Hiroshima*
16 (W, Nov. 3)  Rebuilding Tokyo and Americanization

Readings:
- Bognar, “Cities in the Air”
- Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, pp. 121-167
- *Hayashi Tadahiko sakuhin zenshu*, skim plates
- Hiroo, “Reconstructing Tokyo”
- Ishikawa, “The Jesus of the Ruins”

17 (M, Nov. 8)  Life in the Reconstructed City

Viewing:
*Tokyo Story* (Ozu Yasujirō; 126 min, 1953)

**Unit Five: Politics or Economics: The Postwar Metropolis**

Reading: Mansfield, *Tokyo*, pp. 219-224

18 (W, Nov. 10)  The 1964 Olympics

Viewing: *Tokyo Olympiad* (Ichikawa Kon, 1965; 170 min, selections)

Readings:
- Igarashi, “From the Anti-Security Treaty to the Olympics”

19 (M, Nov. 15)  High Growth and its Price

Readings:
- Berg, “Down to the Waterline”
- Phillips, *Daido Moriyama* (skim plates)
- *Shashin Tokyo*, sections on Nagano Shigeichi, Miyamoto Ryūichi,
- Hayashi Takanobu

20 (W, Nov. 17)  City of Pleasure (Guest Lecture by Prof. Timothy Van Compernolle)

Viewing:
*When a Woman Ascends the Stairs* (Naruse Mikio, 1960; 111 min.)
Unit Seven: Tokyo as a World City

Reading: Mansfield, Tokyo, pp. 225-258

21 (M, Nov. 29) The Permeable City

Viewing:
- Akihabara Geeks (Kobayashi Satoshi and Sato Seisuke, 2007; 44 min.)
- Shaking Tokyo (Bong Joon-ho, 2008)

Readings:
- Bognar, “Architecture in the ‘City of Creative Chaos’”
- Inaba, “Morning Comes Twice a Day”
- Shashin Tokyo, sections on Ushioda Tokuko, Seto Masato

22 (W, Dec. 1) The Globalized City--Roppongi Hills, Tokyo Midtown, Omotesandō

Viewing:
- Bathing Ape video
- Harajuku Girls (music video)
- Louis Vuitton “Superflat Monogram” (YouTube)

Readings:
- Official English-language web sites of these developments:
  http://www.omotesandohills.com/english/
- Aoki, Fresh Fruits (skim plates)
- Bognar, “The Cities of Fiction and Illusion”
- Bognar, “The City of Desires”
- Cybriwsky, “Shibuya Center, Tokyo”
- Ishimoto, Shibuya, Shibuya (skim plates)
- Shashin Tokyo, section on Yamazaki Hiroshi, Tamura Akihide

23 (M, Dec. 6) Presentations

24 (W, Dec. 8) Presentations
Conclusion: The Future Metropolis

25 (M, Dec. 13) Future Visions

Viewing:

*Extreme Engineering*
Kanye West, *Stronger* (music video)

Readings:
- Bognar, “Cities to be Built”
- Bognar, “Cities of Techno-Utopia”
- Bognar, “Tokyo as it Will Be”
- Tsuzuki, *Happy Victims* (skim entries)

26 (W, Dec. 15) Nostalgia for the “Old” City

Viewing:

*Tokyo-ga* (Wim Wenders; 92 min., 1985)

Readings:
- Bestor, "Rediscovering Shitamachi: Subculture, Class, and Tokyo’s Traditional’ Urbanism"
- Sand, “Street Observation Science and the Tokyo Bubble”
- Say, *Kamishibai Man*
- *Shashin Tokyo*, sections on Kikai Hiroshi, Narahara Ikkō
Bibliography


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Richie, Donald. *This Scorching Earth*. Rutland: Tuttle, 1956, pp. 50-59. COPY


