



EASC 499 Spring 2023

JAPANESE DESIGN AND GARDENS IN LOS ANGELES

Instructor: Miya Elise Desjardins
(Adjunct Associate Professor of Art History and East Asian Languages and Cultures)
Location: USC and Huntington Gardens
Time: Fridays 10-1

**Program details are subject to change.*



Course Description:

In 2017 the Japanese Foreign Ministry opened JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles to showcase Japan—"the very best of Japanese art, design, gastronomy, innovation, technology and more"—with the stated aim of "laying the groundwork for winning international understanding of Japan." The inauguration of JAPAN HOUSE in Hollywood provides the perfect opportunity to examine the history of the cultural relationship between Japan and Los Angeles, which began more than 100 years ago—Los Angeles has long been considered one of the primary gateways for Japanese art and culture in the United States—and the ways in which Japanese design and garden culture in particular have served as primary channels for how Japan has come to be "understood" across the twentieth century in Los Angeles and far beyond.

This course will begin with the era of Japonisme, Japan's participation in World's Fairs, and the history of Japanese Americans in Los Angeles, and consider the ways in which the cultural artifacts of Japanese design and gardens have exceeded the materiality of the spaces they occupy, transforming the perception of Japan and the cultural arena of Los Angeles. We will make the [Huntington Gardens](#) our base, focusing our studies on: [Huntington Heritage House](#) (Magistrate's House, Marugame, Kagawa Prefecture, Japan (1690s and 2022)); [Huntington Japanese House](#) (1903, commissioned by George T. Marsh); [Huntington Japanese Garden](#) (9 acres, 1912); [Huntington Arbor of Pure Breeze](#) (Teahouse Seifu-an; constructed in Kyoto, assembled at the Pasadena Buddhist Temple in 1964); [Huntington Bonsai Collection](#) (1968); [Huntington Camellia Garden](#), and the [Huntington Suseki Court and Zen Court](#) (stone gardens). Several field trips to supplement our examination of Japan at the Huntington Gardens will be selected from the following list: [Gamble House](#) (Charles and Henry Greene, 1908); [Yamashiro](#) (Franklin M. Small, 1914); [Hollyhock House](#) (Frank Lloyd Wright, 1919-21); [Schindler House](#) (Rudolph M. Schindler, 1921-22); [USC Pacific Asia Museum, The Grace Nicholson Building](#) (1923); [Neutra VDL Studio and Residences](#) (Richard Neutra, 1932; rebuilt 1964); [Storrier Stearns Japanese Gardens](#) (Kinzuchi Fujii, 1935-40); [Isamu Noguchi Garden/Irvine California Scenario](#) (1979-82); [Pavilion for Japanese Art, Los Angeles Country](#)

[Museum of Art](#) (Bruce Goff, 1988), and [JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles](#).

This class explores the transmigration of Japanese art and aesthetics and the politics of their adaptation and assimilation in Los Angeles/United States by surveying various design practices and topics: Japanese gardens, architecture (private homes and teahouses), interior design, tea ceremony, food, *ikebana* flower arranging, calligraphy, the influence of Japanese art and architecture on the mid-century modern style, and Japanese art collections in Los Angeles. The class will feature lectures by curators at the Huntington, field trips to related sites (hosted by curators), and experiential workshop sessions in *ikebana*, tea ceremony, food design, and calligraphy. We will read critical essays and short fictional works; survey works of art and design; and view short and feature-length documentary films.

Logistics: Class will meet on campus at USC, at the Huntington Gardens, or at a field trip site.

Campus sessions: lecture by the instructor, followed by discussion and group activities.

Off-campus sessions: tour/lecture by our host, or a workshop session, followed by discussion.

Class sessions are 3 hours but please be aware that transportation to our field trip sites will require additional time; students will be required to meet at various locations in Los Angeles and Pasadena.

Please allow for travel *before AND after* the scheduled class time of Fridays 10-1 on site visit days.

Some sessions will be held on campus and will not require travel.

Please speak with the instructor about scheduling needs.

Learning Objectives: In this class students will develop their critical, collaborative, writing, and presentation skills, working toward a final paper or creative project. Through exposure to works of Japanese design the objective is to explore how traditional Japanese design and aesthetic concepts have been transmitted and received within a transnational framework—with particular attention to our locale, Los Angeles—and examine Japan's contribution to global culture. The mode of analysis employed will reflect the fluidity and hybridity of Japanese cultural production, positioning it as one possible alternate module to Euro-American culture, further adding to and enriching the cultural archive of students engaged in a liberal arts education.

Course Notes: The course will focus on reading scholarly critical texts, literary texts, viewing films, and the examination of visual culture. Sessions will typically be structured as follows:

an introductory lecture by the instructor that includes a presentation with visual aids

student-led discussion and group activity

guest lecture and/or short film/documentary viewing

Final Assignment: Students will work throughout the term toward a *mock* exhibition proposal (team work; a collaborative class project) for an exhibit of Japanese culture and design to be held at Huntington Garden's Marugame House. For their portion of the exhibition proposal students are encouraged to explore examples of contemporary Japanese design, popular culture, and subculture in Los Angeles (for instance, fashion, food, furniture, textiles, paper, tattoo, graphic design, lighting design, industrial design, product design, etc.).

Exhibition projects are to be submitted Wednesday, May 10 (midnight).

Covid Policy: Please see the Covid-19 Resource Center the <https://coronavirus.usc.edu/>

We encourage USC students, faculty and staff to practice good hygiene when coming to campus and interacting with each other. [Test if you may have had an exposure](#), and test before and after attending a gathering or returning from travel (days 3-5 after potential exposure are recommended.) Wear a high-quality mask when indoors or in crowded settings to keep yourself and others safe from transmission. [Vaccines are available at no cost, and are the best tools for protecting yourself and others](#) from severe illness and hospitalization.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/ Software Required:

Students will need to access Blackboard regularly to post their weekly assignments.

All assignments will be submitted and returned via SLACK.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials:

All readings, except for the texts below, will be made available on Slack and Blackboard.

***You MUST have a copy (hard copy or digital copy) of the assigned preparatory reading accessible during each class; we will regularly refer to the readings during class discussion.**

Weekly Journal:

Brief and informal weekly class and reading response journals should be posted to Blackboard by 12 noon Thursday, the day **BEFORE** our class meeting on Fridays. Students can opt out of 3 of the 11 possible assignments (8 must be submitted), but the expectation is that students come fully prepared to each class session. Blackboard assignments must be submitted on time to receive full credit; late postings will only receive half credit.

Write a full one-paragraph response to the class session.

Suggested content for the class response (you do NOT have to answer all these questions):

What did you learn that was new to you? What most left an impression and why?

How is what you learned different/same as in the American/local context?

How might you take what you learned and apply it to your personal life or academic field of study and make it useful or pleasurable?

What further questions do you have/how might you try and answer them?

Any ideas for a final paper or creative project?

Suggested format for the response to the readings:

a few sentences summarizing what each reading is about.

a few sentences about why you think we are reading this/what is important.

what did you learn/what stood out to you?

REQUIRED:

Rank the reading on a 1-10 (10 being the best) and state why, briefly.

Mark at least 1 passage from each reading that you think is key and merits further

attention/discussion, comment briefly on it (or be ready to comment on it in class)

Pose 2 thoughtful questions you would like to have answered/for discussion and post them to SLACK

Each assignment is worth 3 points and will be graded:

“complete” (2.5 points) or “excellent” (3 points)

Midterm Presentations:

Team midterm presentations of approx. 30 minutes per team, to serve as a survey of Japanese garden design highlights.

Final Assignment and Final Presentation:

A final Powerpoint presentation of an exhibition proposal consisting of approximately 35 slides will be submitted by email.

You can work solo, or in teams.

The final presentation must also be supplemented with:

Exhibition Proposal Statement (2 pages)

Bibliography (1 page minimum)

“Culminating Statement” (2-pages, 500 words) that reflects on the overall learning experience.

The course will end with a brief final presentation (approx. 10 minutes).

The topic of the final in class presentation and your exhibition proposal are the same; the objective is to share your exhibition proposal with the class.

Assignment Submission Policy:

All assignments are to be posted to Blackboard or submitted by SLACK only; please be sure to confirm receipt.

Additional Policies:

Extra credit opportunities will be provided throughout the term; students are encouraged to work with the instructor to meet their personal goals for the course.

If you fall behind, please contact me at your earliest convenience so that I can help you stay on track; we can discuss alternatives to making up missed work.



One absence will be permitted; thereafter, any unexcused absences will result in a lowering of the preparation and participation portion of your grade.

Class Schedule at a Glance <i>*Please see below for a more detailed version</i>		
	Topic	Location
Week 1 January 13	Site Visit	Location #1 Japan House, Los Angeles Location #2 Yamashiro Hollywood
Week 2 January 20	Lecture – Discussion – Class Activity	USC
Week 3 January 27	Site Visit	Location #1: Huntington Japanese Garden Location #2 Huntington Seminar Room (Melanie’s Classroom)
Week 4 February 3	Site Visit Robert Hori	Location #1 Huntington Heritage House Location #2 Huntington Seminar Room (Stephen’s Classroom)
Week 5 February 10	Lecture – Discussion – Class Activity Meher McArthur & Storrier Stearns/Zoom	USC
Week 6 February 17	Site Visit James Greaves	Location #1 Huntington Suseki Court and Zen Court Location #2 Huntington Seminar Room (Stephen’s Classroom)
Week 7 February 24	Shiki Exhibit at the Descanso Gardens https://www.descansogardens.org/shiki/	Descanso Gardens
Week 8 March 3	Site Visit Ted Matson Andrew Mitchell	Location #1 Huntington Bonsai Collection Location #2 Japanese House Location #3 (Melanie’s Classroom)
Week 9 March 10	Lecture – Discussion – Class Activity	USC
Spring Break		
Week 10 March 24	Site Visit Phillip Bloom	Location #1 Huntington Chinese Garden Location #2 Huntington Seminar Room (Stephen’s Classroom)
Week 11 March 27-31	Individual Meetings SignUp Link	USC
Week 12 April 7	Sam Francis exhibit, LACMA (opens April 9)	LACMA
Week 13 April 14	Site Visit Tim Thibault rthibault@huntington.org Ikenobo School of Ikebana	Location #1 Huntington Camellia Garden Location #2 San Marino Ikebana League

	San Marino Ikebana League San Marino League Ikebana Class 11:00 am at Huntington Botanic Garden Brody's Lab Room	Ikebana House at the Huntington
Week 14 April 21	Site Visit tea hosted by Robert Hori/Rebecca Corbett	Location #1: Huntington Garden Arbor of Pure Breeze Location #2 Huntington Seminar Room (Stephen's Classroom)
Week 15 April 28	Final Presentations of the collaborative exhibition proposal and individual work-in-progress research paper or creative project	USC

Class Schedule

**details are subject to change based on the availability of guest lecturers, workshop artists, and the hosts of our field trip.*

<p>Week 1 January 13: Location: Japan House, Los Angeles (2018) LIFE CYCLES A Bamboo Exploration with Tanabe Chikuunsai IV Host: Trast Howard, Senior Gallery and Exhibition Manager, Japan House (2020-2022) Visit Yamashiro Hollywood (1911-14) Concept: <i>kanso</i> (simple)</p>	 
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Week 2

Location: USC

lecture, discussion, activity

Topic: Historical Overview

From Yamashiro to Japan House Los Angeles

**Concept: *ichigo ichie* and *geidō*
(way of the arts)**

HARA Kenya, "Origins of Japanese Design" (2014)

Christine GUTH, "Design Matters" (2012)

Dianne Lee SHEN, "Yamashiro: Imagined Home and the Aesthetics of Hollywood Japanism" (2020)

Liliana MORAIS, "Traditional Japanese Arts and Crafts: Historical and Political Trajectories from the Meiji Period Until Today" (2019)

AKUTAGAWA Ryūnosuke, "The Ball" (1910)



Week 3

Location: [Huntington Japanese Garden](#)

(9 acres, 1912)

Topic: History and Aesthetics of Japanese Gardens

Concept: *ma* (space/time)

Kendall H. Brown, "Territories of Play: A Short History of Japanese-Style Gardens in North America" & "Huntington Japanese Gardens, San Marino, California" & "Places to Dream North American Japanese Gardens as History" & "Japanese Gardens at the Huntington Botanic Garden"

Please watch:

Japanology Plus Japanese Gardens (NHK) (30 minutes)

<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x7k3fh3>

In addition, please skim (you don't have to address these in your reading responses):
Yeonsoo CHEE, "USC Pacific Asia Museum: Its Historic Building and Collection" and
Christina YU YU, "Building Asia in Early 20th Century Pasadena"

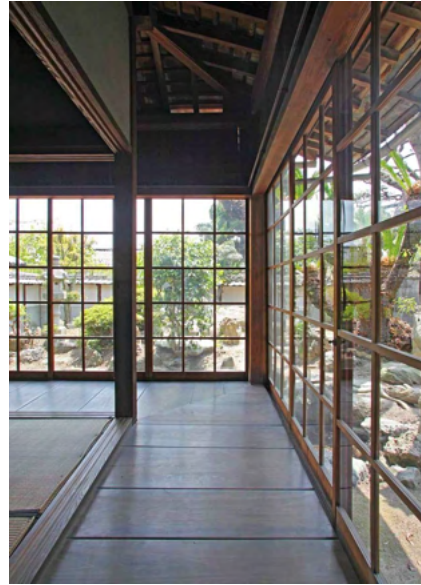


Week 4

Location #1: [Huntington's Heritage House](#)
Magistrate's House, Marugame, Kagawa
Prefecture, Japan
(1690s and 2022)

Location #2: [Huntington's Japanese House](#)
(1903, commissioned by George T. Marsh)
Host: Robert Hori, Gardens Cultural Curator and
Program Director
Concept: *shizen* (without pretense)

Lafcadio HEARN, "In a Japanese Garden"
(1892).
Toshio WATANABE, "The Modern Japanese
Garden" (2011)
Alan Weiss, "Transformations of Vision" (2013)



Week 5

Location: USC
lecture, discussion, activity
Topic: Japan Housed in LA, 1900-1930
Japan and Mid-Century Modern
Gamble House & Hollyhock House
**Concept: *shibui* (elegant simplicity) and
miyabi (refinement, courtliness)**

Anna Hosticka Tamura, "Gardens Below the
Watchtower: Gardens and Meaning in World War
Two Japanese American Incarceration Camps"
(2004)
William A Callahan, "Cultivating Power: Gardens
in the Global Politics of Diplomacy, War, and
Peace" (2017)

To Skim:
Kevin Nute, "Wright the Architect"
"Similarities Between R. M. Schindler House and
Descriptions of Traditional Japanese
Architecture"



Week 6

Location #1 [Huntington Suiseki Court and Zen Court](#)

Location #2 [Huntington Chinese Gardens](#)

Concept: *datsuzoku* (freedom from habit and formula)

Brett Esaki, "Multidimensional Silence, Spirituality, and the Japanese American Art of Gardening" (2013)

Skim:

selections from *Japanese Stone Gardens*



Week 7

Location:

Descanso Garden Exhibit

Week 8

Golden State Bonsai Federation (GSBF)

Location #1: [Huntington Bonsai Collection](#)(1912)

Host: Ted Matson, Curator, GSBF Collection

Location #2: Huntington Seminar Room

Concept: *hari* (balanced tension)

Yasuko Suga, "Branded Heterotopia: Omiya Bonsai Village in Japan, from 1925 to the Present Day" (2019)

Yanagi Soetsu, "Patterns" (Unknown Craftsman, A Japanese Insight into Beauty) (1972)(6 pages)

"Japanese Aesthetics," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2014) (15 pages)



Week 9

lecture, discussion, activity

Location: USC

Topics:

forest therapy

postmodern gardens

Isamu Noguchi

[Isamu Noguchi Garden/Irvine California Scenario](#)

(1979-82)

Mirei Shigemori

Imura Takashi and Isozaki Arata,

MA Space/Time in the Garden of Ryoanji

Concept: *yūgen* (profound grace and subtlety)



Week 10

Location: [Huntington Chinese Garden](#)

Host: Phillip Bloom, curator

concept: *basara*

Aike P. Rots, "Trees of Tension: Re-making Nature in Post-Disaster Tohoku"

Introduction and Conclusion to Paul Roquet, *Ambient Media: Japanese Atmospheres of Self*



Week 11

**Individual Meetings
Preparatory Assignment**

1-hour (per student) mandatory final project research support meeting by Zoom.
Abstract of the exhibition proposal (250 words) and a preliminary bibliography (1 page) should be prepared for the meetings.

Week 12

Location: LACMA exhibit




Sam Francis and Japan: Emptiness Overflowing

Concept: *shōnen* (mindfulness) and *ensō* (circle)

Noriko Murai, "Contemporary Ikebana and the Potential of Art: History at the Boundary of Art" (2009)

The Japanese Artist Who Sends His Work to Space, documentary film (28 minutes)



<p style="text-align: center;">Week 13</p> <p>Tim Thibault, Camellia Gardens at the Huntington</p> <p>Location: Huntington Camellia Garden San Marino Ikebana League Ikebana Workshop at the Huntington</p> <p>Concept: <i>fukinsei</i> (asymmetry or irregularity)</p> <p>No preparatory reading: Work on Final Project</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Week 14</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Tea Practice Workshop</p> <p>Location: Huntington's Arbor of Pure Breeze Hosts: Robert Hori & Dr. Rebecca Corbett, tea practitioner</p> <p>Concept: <i>mono no aware</i> (pathos of things), <i>iki</i> (refinement with flair), <i>wabi sabi</i> and <i>jo-ha-kyū</i> (beginning, break, rapid)</p> <p>No preparatory reading: Work on Final Project</p>	 
<p style="text-align: center;">Week 15</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Final Presentations</p>	<p>Prospectus of the exhibition proposal (350 words) and a working bibliography (1 page) are due.</p>

Grading Breakdown

Attendance and Participation	15 points	15%
Daily Class Response & Reading Response Journals Due: 9am before each weekly class session	15 points	15%
Midterm Presentation (Team Presentation) Week 7	10 points	10%
Individual Research/Exhibition Proposal Meeting— Abstract (1-2 paragraphs) & Preliminary Bibliography (1 page) Due: to be prepared for your individual research meeting in Week 10 <i>Graded Complete/Incomplete</i>	5 points	5%
Finalized Exhibition Abstract (2 pages) and Working Bibliography (1 page) Due: Week 14 <i>Graded Complete/Incomplete</i>	5 points	5%
Final Presentation (Individual) Week 15	15 points	15%
Exhibition Proposal Statement (2 pages)	10 points	10%

Due: May 10 by midnight		
Exhibition Project Due: May 10 by midnight	25 points	25%
		TOTAL: 100

Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale:

Letter grade	Corresponding numerical point range
A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

OVERVIEW

WEEK	TOPIC	PLACE	ASSIGNMENT
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Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Integrity:

The University of Southern California is a learning community committed to developing successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the dissemination of ideas. Academic misconduct, which includes any act of dishonesty in the production or submission of academic work, comprises the integrity of the person who commits the act and can impugn the perceived integrity of the entire university community. It stands in opposition to the university's mission to research, educate, and contribute productively to our community and the world.

All students are expected to submit assignments that represent their own original work, and that have been prepared specifically for the course or section for which they have been submitted. You may not submit work written by others or “recycle” work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s).

Other violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), collusion, knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university. All incidences of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see [the student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity’s website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

Students and Disability Accommodations:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University’s educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Support Systems:

[Counseling and Mental Health](#) - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services \(RSVP\)](#) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#) - (213) 740-5086

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

[Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment](#) - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

[The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

[USC Campus Support and Intervention](#) - (213) 740-0411

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) - (213) 740-2101

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

[USC Emergency](#) - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

[USC Department of Public Safety](#) - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information.

[Office of the Ombuds](#) - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

[Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#) - (323) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.