



FACULTY-LED
STUDY ABROAD

KIIS Japan Program, Summer 2027

ART 496: Japanese Art & Architecture

Instructor: Prof. Miyuki Akai Cook

Email: cookm@marshall.edu

Instructor's office hours: on-site and by appointment

Syllabus subject to change

1. Course Description:

This course introduces students to the visual traditions and culture of Japanese art and architecture through travels in Japan. It is designed for students from all majors. The course combines on-site learning with discussions, sketching, and close observation to connect artistic expression with historical context. By visiting temples, shrines, castles, and historic districts, students will encounter works ranging from ancient sculptures and paintings to contemporary designs and architecture. Through reflective assignments and travel-based observations, students will develop a deeper understanding of how geography, religion, politics, and daily life have shaped Japanese visual culture. Students will gain a broad yet nuanced appreciation of Japanese art across various disciplines.

2. Overall KIIS Program Student Learning Outcomes:

KIIS Study Abroad Mission Statement:

KIIS provides high-quality education abroad programs for students from all diverse backgrounds that promote deep international learning, are integrated into the curriculum, and encourage critical and creative thinking. Our goal is to help students understand the wider world and develop personal and professional skills for lifelong enrichment. We strive to go beyond generalizations and cultural stereotypes to help foster a nuanced appreciation of the world in which we live.

Students participating on KIIS study abroad programs aim to:

- 1) Understand contemporary issues of their host country/countries (i.e. KIIS program location).
- 2) Develop skills to interact comfortably in a global setting.
- 3) Understand other cultures.

Prior to your KIIS study abroad program, and again at the conclusion of your program, KIIS will ask each student to a) answer a few multiple-choice questions, and b) write a short reflective essay (two paragraphs in length) related to the elements detailed above. There is no right or wrong answer, and your responses will not affect your grade in any way. The purpose of the exercise is to help KIIS measure the effectiveness of its study abroad programs.

3. Course Objectives and Specific Learning Outcomes:

In this class, students will:

- Explain how Japanese art and architecture reflect historical, religious, philosophical, and cultural contexts.
- Document and critically reflect on firsthand encounters with Japanese art and architecture through sketches, photographs, field notes, journals, or other visual documentation.
- Develop the ability to describe what you see in art terms.
- Compare Japanese artistic and architectural traditions with those of the United States and other cultures.

4. Major Topics covered in the Course:

- The architectural development and historical contexts of Tokyo, Takamatsu, Gifu, and Nara
- Civilization, technical, and material development related to art and architecture
- Japanese religion, agriculture, economy, and industries that shaped art and architecture
- Explore various art of Japan including sculpture, painting, ceramics, lacquer, and textiles.

5. Required Readings and Materials:

The course will use online sites such as Google Forms, National Diet Library Digital Collection, and YouTube, as well as articles from the site's official websites and online sources.

- A. Bring a smartphone or a digital camera with ample storage (8GB SD card minimum or cloud storage) and a camera USB cable. Students will be expected to use Instagram and Google Classroom.
- B. Bring your laptop or tablet, so you can access Google Classroom for assignment submission and test easier than a phone.
- C. It is not required to submit your notebook, but taking notes in a small notebook or sketchbook might be helpful.

6. Graded Assignments:

Assignment	Purpose	Points
Japan Through My Eyes – Photo Journal	Observation & reflection	200pts
One Site: Three Perspectives	Art analysis	150pts
Slow Looking Reflection	Visual analysis	100pts
Before & After: Changing View of Japan	Intercultural reflection	100pts
Online Test	Knowledge	200pts
Final Reflection / “What Will I Take Home?”	Synthesis	150pts
Active Participation: excursions and discussions		100pts
Total		1000pts

- 200pts – Japan Through My Eyes – Photo Journal (Instagram)
Post pictures each week with #artandarchitecture #kiis27japan on Instagram, and submit the link.
In the description, write
 - Location/site
 - Indicate what you looked for from the following list
 - What you initially thought
Look for
 - A relationship between architecture and nature
 - An example of *ma* (negative/empty space)
 - Something that demonstrates craftsmanship
 - An interesting use of wood, stone, paper, or metal
 - A seasonal element
 - Something that surprised you
 - Something you initially misunderstood
 - A visual experience that would be difficult to reproduce in a photograph
- 150pts – One Site: Three Perspectives
Analyze a site from three perspectives. Write three sentences in each perspective.

1. **Art historian:**
What is historically and artistically significant?
2. **Visitor:**
What did I experience while being there?
3. **Cultural outsider:**
What might I misunderstand about this place because I am viewing it through an American cultural perspective?

▪ **100pts – Slow Looking Reflection**

Choose one artwork or architectural feature and spend 10 full minutes looking at it without researching it. Write down everything you observe during those 10 minutes.

▪ **100pts – Before & After: Changing View of Japan**

There are two entries for this assignment.

In the first week, write “What do you think Japanese art and architecture are?”

In the last week, write “What is Japanese art and architecture to you now?”

Compare your responses.

▪ **200pts – Online Test**

▪ **150pts – Final Reflection / “What Will I Take Home?”**

“If you could bring ONE Japanese artistic or architectural idea back to the United States, what would it be?” Explain how that idea could influence American life, art, architecture, or your own creative practice.

▪ **100pts – Active Participation: excursions and discussions**

Work will be graded on this scale:

900 – 1000 A

800 – 899 B

700 – 799 C

600 – 699 D

Below 600 E (F)

(Note KIIS/WKU does not award +/- grades, only full letter grades.)

7. Attendance Policy:

KIIS program participants are expected to be punctual to and in attendance at all classes, presentations, meetings and required excursions, and to remain with the program for the full academic period. Unexcused absences from classes and/or mandatory meetings will result in a lowering of the student’s final grade, as will excessive tardiness. Multiple unexcused absences could result in expulsion from the program. Any absence from an academic class session must be excused for medical reasons.

8. Disability Accommodation:

KIIS will make every reasonable effort to provide accommodations for program participants with special needs or disabilities, but we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Be aware that many foreign countries do not have comprehensive legislation comparable to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a result, businesses and other establishments operating in foreign countries may not be able to provide accommodations.

If you have a disability accommodation need, we recommend you contact your KIIS Campus Representative, <https://www.kiis.org/about-kiis/contact-us/campus-representatives/> early in your program selection process so that s/he has time to discuss any specific needs, including which KIIS programs may be best suited. You also are welcome to contact KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, maria.canning@wku.edu, to discuss your disability accommodation needs (e.g. housing, transportation, excursions, class schedule, etc.).

Immediately after acceptance, notify KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, haley.mctaggart@wku.edu, if you have a special need or disability that might require any form of accommodation abroad. Failure to notify KIIS may prevent you from participating on your KIIS program.

If you require any accommodations abroad, you must provide KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, an accommodation letter from your home campus' disability accommodation office that lists the accommodations you are eligible to receive. Please do not request accommodations directly from your KIIS Program Director or other KIIS Faculty; the KIIS Office will notify your KIIS Program Director and/or Faculty after we have received your above accommodation letter.

In some cases, you may need to make arrangements for a caregiver to join you on your KIIS program, should your physician, campus disability accommodation office, or KIIS make such a recommendation or require it.

9. Title IX / Discrimination & Harassment:

Recent attention to gender discrimination and sexual harassment at colleges and universities reminds us of the importance of adhering to standards of ethical and professional behavior. KIIS Study Abroad is committed to supporting and encouraging safe and equitable educational environments for our students, faculty, and program directors. Students, faculty, and program directors are required to be civil and treat each other with dignity and respect. As such, harassment and/or discrimination of any kind will not be permitted or tolerated.

Sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, sexual assault, and sexual/dating/domestic violence) and sex discrimination are violations of KIIS policies. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to a) KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning (+1-859-200-1000) or KIIS Executive Director, John Dizgun (+1-270-227-2288), b) WKU's Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir (270-745-6867 / ena.demir@wku.edu) or WKU's Title IX Investigator, Michael Crowe (270-745-5429 / michael.crowe@wku.edu). Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a KIIS program director and/or faculty member, KIIS program directors and faculty are considered "Responsible Employees" of Western Kentucky University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator.

If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center, <https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/> at 270-745-3159.

For more information on KIIS Title IX, see <https://www.kiis.org/students/health-safety/title-ix-clery/>; additional Title IX resources can be found here <https://www.wku.edu/titleix/titleixbrochure2020.pdf>.

Everyone should be able to participate on a KIIS program, attend a KIIS event, or work in a KIIS environment (e.g. KIIS office) without fear of sexual harassment or discrimination of any kind. Be respectful of each other.