



Art of Tea in Japan

Syllabus: ARH485/585 Art of Tea in Japan

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Creation Date: March 2024

Keywords: history, art, and architecture of chanoyu; history and types of Japanese gardens; hands-on; group project; field trips

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Target Audience:

Undergraduate students, Graduate students (but may be adapted to high-school class activities)

Course Duration:

10 weeks

Credits:

4

Background Information for Instructors:

This course was designed as an advanced seminar for a US-based university and was taught entirely in English. The student body was about 2/3 undergraduate and 1/3 graduate. The course utilized local resources including the collections in the university's museum and libraries, a local

collection of tea utensils, collaboration with an in-town first-degree certified instructor of the Urasenke School of Tea, and nearby sites (Portland Japanese Garden and the tearoom inside the in-town instructor's residence). Instructors will want to adapt their own course offerings to take advantage of local resources. The course was designed around one term-long group assignment to create a proposal for the university museum to introduce the art of ensemble (*toriawase*) for a tea gathering. The course began with common perceptions and English terminologies associated with Japanese tea cultures (e.g. tea ceremony or *wabi sabi*). Over the course of the term, students learned the history and aesthetic principles behind chanoyu, as well as the inaccuracies of certain popular English expressions surrounding tea culture.

ARH485/585 Art of Tea in Japan

Description and Prerequisite(s):

Why or how is the Japanese practice of drinking tea a "tea ceremony?" What does *wabi sabi* mean? Spending most of the class sessions in the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art (JSMA) or the library's Special Collections closely examining works of art firsthand, this course explores the arts of Japanese tea drinking holistically, from garden designs, tearoom architecture, and interior design to tea utensils. Throughout the term, students in this course will develop installation ideas for displaying tea utensils for the JSMA's Japanese gallery.

No prerequisite.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Discuss the key aesthetic principles that have come to define Japanese tea culture today.

2. Explain the historical development of the culture of tea drinking in Japan and its key characteristics.
3. Introduce the basic protocols of a tea gathering and the key utensils used.
4. Think of a theme suitable for a tea gathering and assemble the alcove decorations and utensils appropriate for that theme.
5. Demonstrate one's familiarity with key considerations for planning a museum exhibition.

Class Format:

This is a four-credit seminar. The class meets once a week for three hours. Each week, we will first meet in a classroom for about one hour for a lecture or other preparatory activities, then we will move to either the university museum or library to conduct discussions with actual works of art.

In Week 2, we will visit the home of the in-town certified instructor for a "thin tea" experience. The visit will take place during regular class time, and is thus mandatory. On Saturday of Week 7, we will take a day-long excursion to the Portland Japanese Garden for another "thin tea" demonstration and partake in activities to learn about the history of Japanese gardens. Because the field trip will take place on a weekend, visiting the garden is mandatory for the course, but you will have the option to visit on your own if you are unavailable to join the group trip.

All expenses will be paid. There are no additional course fees and no required textbook. All of the weekly assigned readings and videos will be provided through Canvas.

Schedule/Content:

Week 1

Topic & Readings: Introduction; What is the "way of tea?"

- Morgan Pitelka, "Famous Objects: Treasures, Trophies, and Warrior Power," in *Spectacular Accumulation: Material Culture, Tokugawa Ieyasu, and Samurai Sociability* (Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press, 2016), 17–41.

Assignments & Due Date:

4/4, in-class: Week 1 Reflection Note

Note: Must come to class having completed the assigned reading.

Week 2

Topic & Readings: "Thin tea" experience (in-class excursion)

- Kumakura Isao, "Sen no Rikyu: Inquiries into his Life and Tea," in *Tea in Japan: Essays on the History of Chanoyu*, edited by Paul Varley and Kumakura Isao (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1989), 33–69.
- Watch "Way of Tea: Celebrating the Art of Craft Focusing on 'Now,'" (about 13 minutes), <https://youtu.be/O4tEdaNmwzA?feature=shared>

Assignments & Due Date:

4/11, 10 am: Week 2 Reflection Notes (reading, video)

Note: Submit through Canvas.

Week 3

Topic & Readings: Tearoom architecture; Architectural models

- Kazuo Nishi and Kazuo Hozumi, trans. H. Mack Horton, "The Architecture of The Tea Ceremony," "Designing the Teahouse," "Sōan Teahouses," and "The Tea Garden," in *What is Japanese Architecture?* (Tokyo, NY, London: Kodansha International, 1985), 106–119.

Assignments & Due Date:

4/18, 10 am: Week 3 Reflection Notes (two readings)

In-class: Project Progress Tracking Method

Note: Submit through Canvas.

Week 4

Topic & Readings: NO IN-CLASS MEETING (professor away)

NO READING ASSIGNMENT

Week 4 Assignment: Use the regular class time to work on your group project. First, discuss among your group to decide: (1) the venue (among the Maccha Café projects); and (2) the tearoom (among the DSGN paper models) for your tea gathering. Make sure to record what you discussed on your progress tracking method. Then, as a group, conduct a cursory online search to gather digital images of your tearoom and place what you think to be the best 10 images that can help you think further about your tea gathering into your progress tracking method.

Assignments & Due Date:

4/25, during class time: Decide on your group's Venue + Tearoom

Note: Conduct your group discussion using your Progress Tracking Method (make sure to record the process of your discussion as well as your decision).

Week 5

Topic & Readings: Seasons and occasions

- Haruo Shirane, "Poetic Topics and the Making of the Four Seasons," in *Japan and the Culture of the Four Seasons: Nature, Literature, and the Arts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 25–55.

- "Feeling Seasons in a Tearoom,"
<https://teaceremony-kyoto.com/tea-ceremony/708>

Assignments & Due Date:

5/2, 10 am: Week 5 Reflection Notes (two readings)

5/4, 5 pm: Group Project Benchmark: Decide on the season and theme of your tea gathering

Note: Submit Reflection Notes through Canvas. Group Project: Continue adding the process of discussion and decisions to your Progress Tracking Method (make clear who contributed what; do not erase the record of your previous discussion).

Week 6

Topic & Readings: Choosing Tea bowls

- "Know Your Chawan: A Guide to the Famous Matcha Bowl Styles,"
Tezumi,
<https://www.tezumi.com/blogs/tezumi-insights/know-your-chawan-a-guide-to-the-famous-matcha-bowl-styles>
- John Baymore, "What Makes a Teabowl a Chawan?"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FUDzdk5Mqs>

Assignments & Due Date:

5/9, 10 am: Week 6 Reflection Notes (two readings + video)

Note: Submit through Canvas.

Week 7

Topic & Readings: Portland Japanese Garden visit (no regular class meeting this week)

- Marc Peter Keane, "An Invitation to Tea," "Cultural Background," and "Parts of a Tea Garden," in *The Japanese Tea Garden* (Berkeley: Stone Bridge Press, 2009), ix–xii and 197–236.

Assignments & Due Date:

5/16, regular class time: No in-class meeting.

Each group must schedule a 15-minute Zoom check-in meeting with the professor during the regular class time to discuss the progress on your Exhibition Planning project.

5/18, End of the day: Week 7 Reflection Note

Note: Check-in meeting: Sign-up sheet will be circulated during Week 5 class.

Reflection Note: You will fill out the Reflection Note as you study the garden. You must come to the field trip having completed the Kean readings. Submit your Reflection Note at the end of the field trip. Please bring your notebook and pencil.

Week 8

Topic & Readings: Water and tea

- Definition of "*chanoyu-no-dougu*" in Japanese Architecture and Art Net Users System (JAANUS):
<https://www.aisf.or.jp/~jaanus/deta/c/chanoyunodougu.htm>. Please make sure to click on hyperlinks to read more on each of the key tea utensils.
- Placement of the kettle from summer to winter:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gy_Z-pQ7Pgs
- Summer tea ceremony (example):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lg7xhbMxSQo>

- Winter night-time tea ceremony (example):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_YKenbtgX4

Assignments & Due Date:

5/23, 10 am: Week 8 Reflection Notes (three videos)

In-class: Select two additional or alternate objects for your group's ensemble.

Note: Submit through Canvas.

Week 9

Topic & Readings: Accoutrements; Final decision on your group's ensemble

- Louise Allison Cort, "About Chigusa," in Louise Allison Cort and Andrew Mark Watsky, *Chigusa and the Art of Tea* (Washington, DC: Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 2014), 30–71.
- Tea preparation backstage (*kuchikiri*; opening of the tea jar in November): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uWgsuarQlvA>

Assignments & Due Date:

5/30, 10 am: Week 9 Reflection Note (one reading)

6/1, 5 pm: Preliminary presentation outline + PowerPoint slides

Note: Reflection Note: Submit through Canvas.

Presentation: Add to your group's Progress Tracking Method (make clear who contributed what; do not erase the record of your previous discussion).

Week 10

Topic & Readings: Lightning Presentation; Group assignment feedback session

- NO READINGS THIS WEEK.

Assignments & Due Date:

6/6, 10 am: Complete PowerPoint presentation slides

In-class: Lightning presentation

Note: Submit through Canvas (one member can submit for the entire group).

Finals Week

Assignments & Due Date:

6/13, 2:30 pm: Final draft of the Instillation Proposal

6/16, 11:59 pm: Complete Installation Proposal due

Note: Add to your group's Progress Tracking Method (make clear who contributed what; do not erase the record of your previous discussion). Make sure to decide among your group who is submitting the complete proposal on Canvas.

Methods of Assessment:

Participation (14 points)

- Participation grades will be based on your contributions to the weekly class discussions and the quality of your questions during student presentations.
- Attending all weekly sessions is mandatory and assumed for this course, so without your contribution during class discussions, your maximum participation grade will be a C-.
- GRADS: For graduate students, the participation grade also includes

attendance and participation in the weekly Grad Sessions (day/time TBD).

- The excursion to the tearoom of the in-town certified instructor of the Urasenke School of Tea (Week 2) will take place during class time.
- Visiting the Portland Japanese Garden is a requirement for this course. If you have a scheduling conflict with the group visit day (Saturday, May 18), you may make it up by visiting the garden on your own on another day and submitting a report (please contact Prof. Walley for more details on the report content and format). However, May 18 is the only day during our spring term when the garden is hosting a tea demonstration and an important point of visiting the garden as a group is to hold a class discussion in the garden. So, if possible, please rearrange your schedule so that you are visiting the garden on Saturday, May 18.

Fourteen Reflection Notes on Assigned Materials (28 points)

- These are individual assignments.
- The assigned materials (readings and videos) establish the foundational shared knowledge for class discussions and your group project, and they are an important starting point for your research. For this reason, an active engagement with the assigned materials is mandatory for this course.
- For **each** of the assigned materials on Weeks 2, 3, and 5-9, you must submit responses to the following three questions:
 1. In your opinion, what is the most important takeaway point of the assigned material? This could be what you understood to be the central argument of the author/creator or a point that piqued your interest the most. Please list the page numbers (reading) or time stamp (video) of the relevant section(s) of the assigned material.
 2. How would you convey the most important takeaway point you identified in Q1 to your audience through an art exhibition in the large

Preble/Murphy gallery? What tea utensils or other artwork would you select from JSMA or other collections, and why? How and where would you display it in the Preble/Murphy gallery space (be sure to check the size and format of the object)?

3. Based on what you have learned in class so far and (when applicable) through the preparatory recorded lecture for the week, briefly explain (in roughly 50 words) why what you identified as the most important takeaway point in Q1 helps us gain a deeper understanding of the Japanese tea ceremony and its art.

- For the weeks when you have multiple assigned materials, you must prepare a separate Reflection Note for each of the readings or videos.
- The Reflection Notes are due **by 10 am on the day of the class** when we will be discussing the assigned material(s).
- You must respond to all three prompts to receive any credit for this assignment.
- The purpose of the Reflection Notes is to provide focus as you go through the assigned materials on your own and to encourage your informed participation in the in-class discussions and the group project. Thus, you will not be penalized for misunderstanding the content, but your responses must demonstrate that you've: (a) read/watched the assigned materials to the end; (b) taken some time to think about how they relate to the course content.
- There are a total of 14 assigned materials. You will receive an automatic 2 points for each of the Reflection Notes as long as you respond to all three prompts as instructed above and you submit your Reflection Notes on time. Incomplete or late submissions will receive an automatic zero.
- If you miss a Reflection Note: Don't panic. Please read Option (a) under "Grade Booster Optional Assignments" (below).

"Big" Exhibition Planning Group Project (58 points)

- This is a **group** assignment.
- Beginning in Week 3, each week's course content will be geared toward planning different aspects of this exhibition group project.
- At every benchmark assignment of this project, I will assess the quality and coherence of your group's project and your individual contribution to the project.
- **Key points of assessment:** The appropriateness and thoughtfulness of your theme and selection of objects; evidence of a clear grasp of the course content; the accuracy of your research and writing; and overall coherence and quality of your presentation and final written product.
- The **benchmark assignments** and their due dates are as follows:
 - W3 (in class) Progress tracking method.
 - W5 (5 pm, 5/4) Decide on the season and theme of the tea gathering and the tearoom for your gathering.
 - W7 (class time) 15-min group Zoom meeting with Prof. Walley to discuss project progress. You must have your objects and gallery space selected.
 - W8 (in class) Propose two additional or alternate object options for your installation based on the in-class viewing and discussion.
 - W9 (5 pm, 6/1) Upload your group's presentation outline and preliminary PowerPoint presentation (a partial or unpolished draft is fine) to your tracking method.
 - W10 (10 am, 6/6) Submit your group's finalized PowerPoint presentation to Canvas.
 - W10 (in class) Group presentation.
 - 6/13 (2:30 pm) Upload the final **draft** of your group proposal to your progress tracking method.
 - 6/16 (11:59 pm) Submit your finalized group proposal to Canvas.
- **Point distribution:**
 - Individual contribution to the planning process (23 points)
 - Group presentation (10 points)
 - Final proposal (25 points)

- **Project description:**

- In a small group, you will plan an installation of tea utensils and *tokonoma* alcove decorations for one of the four spaces within the large Preble/Murphy gallery: (1) the "vista" case at the entrance to the large Preble/Murphy gallery; (2) the "alcove" at the east end of the gallery; (3) the temporary wall with a platform at the north side of the central display space; (4) the inside of the south display case.
- Each group member must be responsible for researching at least one object within your installation, but your installation should be coherently tied together around a theme appropriate for a tea gathering.
- Your ensemble of objects must at least include: (a) Two tea bowls; (b) a hanging scroll; (c) one other suitable item for an alcove decoration (flower vase, incense container, other seasonal objects, etc.); (d) one more appropriate tea utensil (e.g. tea kettle, water jar, tea caddy, etc.).
- Among the pieces you select for the installation, at least three of them must be from either the JSMA collection or a local collection.

- **Decisions you must make as a group:**

1. By Week 5

- Choose a coherent and appropriate season and theme for your imaginary tea gathering with two guests.
- Choose a venue for your imaginary tea gathering from among the *Maccha Studio* projects. Within this venue, the actual tearoom for your gathering must be selected from one of the pop-up paper models we examined in Week 3.

2. By Week 7

- Put together a preliminary ensemble of utensils and alcove decorations for your tea gathering based on the season and theme you selected that

at least includes: (a) Two tea bowls; (b) a hanging scroll; (c) one another suitable item for the alcove decoration (flower vase, incense container, other seasonal objects, etc.); (d) one more appropriate tea utensil (e.g. tea kettle, water jar, tea caddy, etc.). At least three of the objects in your ensemble must be from either the JSMA or Ms. Hue-ping Lin's collection.

- Decide who will be responsible for researching and writing on which object(s) in your ensemble. Each student in your group must be responsible for researching and writing on at least one object.
- Choose the space within the large Preble/Murphy gallery where you will display your ensemble.
- NOTE: You can still change your mind until Week 9. Once you have made the decisions on the above points, you will produce the following as a group:

- **One Lightning Presentation:** a 7-minute presentation introducing your theme and ensemble of objects with PowerPoint slides (Draft due W9, Final submission due W10)

- **One installation proposal** that integrates the following two components:

Group collaborative writing: An introduction that clearly articulates the season and theme of your gathering, the choices you made for your venue and tearoom, and the ensemble of objects (about 1,000 words). You must adequately illustrate your introduction with relevant figures, appropriately cite all sources in footnotes, and include a bibliography (not included in the 1,000 words). One of your figures must be a diagram of the exhibition layout of your ensemble that demonstrates your understanding of the benefits and quirks of the Preble/Murphy gallery space that you selected for your installation.

Individual writing: A "chat" label of about 150-200 words for each of the objects within the ensemble, tying the piece to your group's overall theme. Your writing must be short and accessible to a general

audience but solidly rooted in your scholarly research. To each of the chat labels, you must add a bibliography of all the sources you referenced (not included in the 150-200 words).

- **More on the Lightning Presentation:**
 - The Lightning Presentations will take place in class on Thursday of Week 10 (June 6).
 - Each group will give a 7-minute presentation on your installation proposal.
 - You must upload your group's presentation PowerPoint slides to Canvas by 10 am on the day of the presentation.
 - During the presentation, all members of the group must contribute equally and meaningfully by introducing an aspect of your project.
 - Your group presentation will be assessed on the accuracy of the information, quality of your PowerPoint slides, and coherence and organization of delivery.
 - Please keep to your allotted time. If you go too much over 7 minutes, I will have to interrupt you, and it will affect your assessment.
- **More on the Installation Proposal:** Your proposal must cite **all** the sources you looked at, including online sources. Failure to cite any source will be considered plagiarism. Your final product will be assessed according to the coherence and overall quality of the concept, content, and research. I will not be taking points off for writing incongruities as long as I can understand your meaning. I would much rather see your writing than something filtered or generated by a generative AI system. If you utilize an AI program for any part of your project, however, you must clarify your contribution and cite the program you used, and you will still be responsible for the quality of information of your product.
- **Importance of the collaborative process:** For this "big" assignment, your collaborative process is just as important as the final product. I expect each of the group members to pull equal weight in the decision-

making process, research, writing, and editing so that the overall product is coherent and polished. For this reason, your planning process will be an important part of your final evaluation.

- In the first group meeting during the Week 3 session (April 18), each group must decide how you will regularly communicate as a group on this project, and how you will track your progress and each member's equal contribution. You must inform Prof. Walley of your method. Please be sure to grant Prof. Walley access to your progress tracking method.
- I will check your tracking method on Saturday of Week 5 (May 4) to evaluate your progress, by which time each group should at least have collectively decided the following: season and theme of your tea gathering; the venue and tearoom of your imaginary gathering.
- During the regular class time in Week 7 (May 16), each group will schedule a 15-min group Zoom check-in meeting with Prof. Walley to discuss the progress of your project using your tracking method.
- At the end of the class session on Week 8 (May 23), each group must submit to Prof. Walley two additional or alternate object options for your installations from among the pieces you studied in class that day.
- On Week 9 (June 1), your group must upload your presentation outline and a preliminary draft of the PowerPoint presentation.
- On June 13 of Finals Week, your group must upload the final draft of the installation proposal into your progress tracking method. I will give each student a provisional grade based on the final draft. Each student will have the **option** to revise their contribution before the project submission date of June 16 on Canvas.

Grade booster *optional* assignments: up to 10 points

In accordance with the University of Oregon's "reason-neutral" absent and late-submission policy, this course has strict attendance and late

submission policies (for details, see "Making up absences and missed assignments" under the Course Policies). Adhering to this new university-wide policy, when you miss a class session or a Reflection Note, you are not obligated to inform Prof. Walley of the reasons. The course is graded on 110 points total (anything above 97 points will be considered an A+). The sets of optional assignments below are provided for you so that you can make up the points you lose if/when you have to miss a Reflection Note or a class session.

NOTE: The Grade booster assignments cannot be used to make up for missing or falling behind on your contribution to the Exhibition Planning Group Project. If you miss a deadline your group agreed upon in order to make progress on your group project, you must immediately notify your other group members and propose a reasonable shift to the future workload so that you are back on track and continue to contribute equally. Please do not hesitate to contact Prof. Walley if I can help in any way to facilitate communication among your group.

If you submit all your assignments on time and attend all classes, you may still take advantage of the assignments (b), (c), (d) below as extra credit opportunities.

A student may earn up to 10 points from these booster assignments.

1. Make up your Reflection Notes (up to 2 points per submission; but no more than a total of 10 points)

If you miss any of the Reflection Notes, you are welcome to make up for the ones you missed. This is a make-up, not an extension. Because you will have the benefit of learning more about the assigned materials through in-class discussion before working on your make-up, I expect the content of your make-up submission to be elevated. Instead of receiving an automatic 2 points, your submission will be graded for accuracy. If there is an issue with accuracy, you may not receive the full

2 points.

The final day to submit make-up Reflection Notes on the assigned materials for Weeks 2, 3, and 5 is 11:59 pm, Sunday, May 12. The last day to submit make-up Reading Notes on the assigned materials for Weeks 6-9 is 11:59 pm, Sunday, June 9. After the final deadline, you will receive an automatic zero and will receive no other opportunity to make up your Reflection Notes (you are welcome to work on other grade booster opportunities, however).

2. **Your Best *Wabi Sabi* Snapshot (up to 3 points)**

This is a creative optional assignment based on the class content and assigned readings/videos.

For this assignment, you must first take a snapshot using whatever device is readily available to you (camera [digital or otherwise], smartphone, laptop, tablet, etc) of something that is in your surroundings that you think best reflects the aesthetic concept of *wabi sabi* or "refined rusticity."

You will then write a short statement about your snapshot (no more than 500 words) that demonstrates your understanding of the *wabi sabi* ideal and explains why the motif you selected and the way you photographed it embodies that ideal.

This is a creative assignment but not an art assignment. Although I will be admiring your artistry, that is not what you will be graded on. The point is to produce something that communicates your understanding of the key concept, *wabi sabi*, as it was conveyed to you in the class discussions and assigned materials. You are evaluated on how your statement articulates your understanding of *wabi sabi* grounded in both the course discussions and assigned materials. A successful statement, therefore, would cite specific lecture content and assigned readings/videos to convey its points.

Deadline: 11:59 pm, Monday, May 20. Submitted via Canvas.

3. **Build Your Own 3D Paper Model of Kashintei Tearoom (up to 3 points)**

This is a grade booster opportunity tied to the Portland Japanese Garden field trip. Based on the notes and photographs you took during your field trip, create your own 3D paper model of the Kashintei Tearoom, following the examples of the paper models at the DSGN special collection.

Because you will not be able to get any measurements or access all of the spaces in the tearoom, your paper model may not be as complete as the ones in the DSGN library collection. However, it should at least recreate the general layout of the tearoom (e.g. the directionality of the *tatami* mats, location of the alcove and the hearth, access into the room, etc.) correctly. Please also add notations about any architectural traits you noticed or learned about during the visit, such as the use of unusual materials or other decorative details.

Your model will be graded for accuracy. Points may be deducted if you mistook any readily accessible aspects of the architecture.

Deadline: 11:59 pm, Thursday, June 6. Please bring your model to class. You must submit your model before the beginning of the class session on June 6. If you arrive to the class late, you will not receive any credit for your effort.

4. Mini video introducing Japanese tea culture (up to 3 points)

Create a short video that introduces the Japanese "way of tea" that accompanies your group's JSMA installation. You may shoot the video using a device or program readily accessible to you (smartphone, Zoom, PowerPoint, Panopto, etc.). You must save your video as an mp4 for submission.

Your video should be less than 1 minute. It must include your narration and appropriate visuals. Your narration should be clearly audible and in a language easily accessible to a general audience.

An exceptionally well-crafted video may be exhibited together with the group's JSMA installation.

Due: 11:59 pm, Monday, June 17. Submit via Canvas. (Note: This is Commencement Day.)

Sample In-class Activity Sheets:

Below are examples of activity sheets the class used to facilitate students' active engagement with works of art and weekly assigned readings in preparation for in-class discussion.

- **Week 1 Handout: Museum Activity Sheet**
- **Week 3 Handout: Tearoom Architecture**
- **Week 6 Handout: *Toriawase* and Teabowls**
- **Week 8 Handout: Water and Tea (+ Museum Labels)**
- **Week 9 Handout: Tea Utensils and Accoutrements (+ Wall Text & Presentation Practice)**