

IDS 360 Contemporary Japan and Its Roots
IDS 460 Contemporary Japan and Its Edo Past
College of Mt. St. Joseph
Spring Semester 2012

Your pre-assignment is due in class on Thursday January 19, 2012 and has two parts. Each part should be typed and you are to bring your printouts to the first class. If you have any questions, please contact any instructor. Late assignments will not be accepted.

Part I: Research on Tokyo and Kyoto

You are to research Tokyo and Kyoto based on your interests and what you hope to get out of this class and trip. We will be in Tokyo May 17-20 and again May 27-29. We will be in Kyoto May 24-27.

Write a two-page paper that first states your goals for the class. Then describe four places that you would like to visit. Be specific about why you want to visit these sites and how the visits would support your goals for the class. You should use online resources. Please cite all links used in a separate reference page of your paper. You can begin with links from the course website:

http://helenrindsberg.web.iglou.com/IDS_360/FAQ00023.htm.

Part II: Reflections on the Textbook Reading

The Japanese Mind: Understanding Contemporary Japanese Culture

Edited by Roger J. Davies and Osamu Ikeno

This is a series of essays written by Japanese college students with the goal of helping non-Japanese people understand selected aspects of Japanese culture. You will be reading two to three short essays before each class.

You are to read two essays from the textbook:

Page 35-38 *Bigaku: The Japanese Sense of Beauty*

Pages 223-230 *Wabi-Sabi: Simplicity and Elegance As Japanese Ideals of Beauty*

After reading the essays, write a one-page paper that answers this question:

Every culture's sense of beauty and aesthetics are always changing. Why should young Japanese students and adults study and practice their traditional Japanese arts and learn the subtleties of their unique sense of beauty?

You may concentrate on one or two arts they should study (painting, literature, music, drama, fashion, calligraphy) and what aesthetic sensibilities they should preserve (hidden meanings, unexpressed feelings, contemplation, silences, emptiness, subjective point of view, austerity, simplicity, asymmetry, imperfections of nature, transitory nature of life)