

Arch 3309/4409/6309

Elements, Principles, and Theories in Japanese Architecture and Gardens



For early 20th century architects like Bruno Taut, Walter Gropius and Frank Lloyd Wright, visiting Japan and imbibing Japanese design sensibility was both a revelation and a confirmation of much of their thinking regarding the direction of their own work. The course is an introduction to and an analysis of the architecture and gardens of Japan. Interpreting the unique geopolitical situation of Japan, as a sheltering archipelago longing for continental sophistication, will suggest how isolation and borrowings continue to shape the forms of Japanese architecture and gardens. In a related context we will investigate how the revered and ethereal craft of shaping paper, wood, stone and water has transformed the simplest of materials into archetypical constructions. Cultural phenomena such as *ma* (space-time continuum) *oku* (the inner depth) *yohaku no bi* (the beauty of extra whiteness), *shakkei* (borrowed landscapes), and others will be explored to reveal the forces shaping structure and space. Since an understanding of the evolution of social and political discourse in Japan is necessary to fully comprehend the unique meaning of its constructed environment, additional attention will be given to these aspects of the culture—especially the spiritual—as they exert an influence on various expressions of form. Class format will consist of lectures, films, discussions and readings. Two exams will be given during the semester. In addition, each student will be required to complete either a project that represents an exploration of a concept, form, characteristic or influence associated with Japanese architecture and gardens, or a topically related research paper.

Leonard Mirin

Thursday 12:20 – 2:15

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3 Credits