

Japan Studies Institute: Incorporating Japanese Studies in to the Undergraduate Curriculum

M. Robyn Wall, Delta State University, Cleveland, MS

Assistant Professor of Art: Printmaking, Fiber Design, Foundations

Course Information

The experience at the Japan Studies Institute at San Diego State University is integrated into my ART 406/407 Fiber Design I and II courses. Fiber design is a craft course required for studio art majors with an emphasis in crafts or printmaking. The introduction level course is open to all students at Delta State University

Fiber design courses explore materials and processes creating two and three dimensional work, functional or sculptural objects, textile construction and surface techniques. Students are introduced to the context of fibers through related theory and history, current practices and themes within the discipline. These courses are for beginning and intermediate levels of students exploring the processes of weaving, papermaking, book forms and a final proposed projects based on the students' material and content interests.

Course Integration

Information from the JSI has been implemented in two of the five projects starting at the beginning of the Fall 2022 semester.

The first project consisted of making Japanese paper:

- A lecture introducing a brief history of papermaking, movable type and printing
- Execution pulling sheets of Japanese washi paper
 - Preparation of fiber: boiling fiber with soda ash, straining material, hand beating pulp
 - Sheet Forming: pulling sheets, pressing, drying

Students created a hand bound book for the second project:

- Handmade paper was used to bind a Japanese stab bound sketchbook.
- This book was used through the remainder of the course for brainstorming ideas.

Project Outcomes

- Appreciation for culturally significant process of making washi.
- Develop an understanding of fiber materials in a historic and current context.
- Understand the application of paper as a means of production and artistic creation.
- Develop craft to a professional level for presentation of work.
- Verbalize intentions during critiques using course terms and analyzing content of work.

Summary

My participation as a JSI fellow has greatly expanded my appreciation for the complexity of Japan. As a result of my fellowship, I have expanded lectures highlighting Japanese traditions and global cultural exchange to provide more comprehensive knowledge within studio processes. The textbooks read prior to my visit, presented lectures, workshops and expansive book collection at the SDSU library has enriched the undergraduate curriculum at my institution and I will continue my research in this area. Thank you for providing the opportunity to participate in the 2022 AASCU Japan Studies Institute cohort.