Poetics and Politics of the Imagining(s) of Japan

This conference on Japan explores the transdisciplinary theme of the interactions in poetics and politics that manifest as imagining(s). Imagining(s), or the act of producing ideas, visions, and understandings, appears in various shapes and fields, including international relations, governance projects, economic schemes, and urban planning, as well as literature, art objects, commodities, architecture, etc. In other words, these forms embody poetics—the juxtaposition of different elements to create affect—and politics—the dominant structure of power that is embedded in a given context. While poetics and politics began as a theme within the humanities as a literary analysis of allegory, it can also be applied broadly to other fields to understand the interface of social, political, and cultural realms.

We seek to apply poetics and politics to understand the elements and networks that design and produce Japan. The effects of sumptuary laws during Tokugawa era, which curated one’s everyday aesthetic choices, are the poetics and politics of imaginings. The designing of the Olympic stadium and the route the torch travel is also the workings of politics and poetics. More recently, the selection of Reiwa for the new era is an example of poetics and politics of imagining, especially as it is connected with neo-nationalism of Abe regime. So are the contents of popular animations and its global market strategy of productions.

Examining modern and pre-modern topics in Japan through the theme of poetics and politics, we seek to explore 1) how the poetics and the politics of imagining(s) work in the construction of an ideology, identity, memory, or space, 2) where, why, and how poetics can be found in the politics, and visa-versa, and 3) how self-awareness of our own imaginings of poetics and politics influences our research.

In order to present a range of approaches, we encourage a variety of disciplinary participation including, but not limited to, history, art, literature, linguistics, religious studies, sociology, anthropology, political science, economics, business studies, and gender studies. Please e-mail submissions and queries to the conference committee at uclajapanesegradconference@humnet.ucla.edu. Successful applications will be notified by August 20th. The organizing committee anticipates providing accommodation for all presenters and travel funding for those traveling within the United States.

ABSTRACTS (250 words) DUE BY: Friday, August 2, 2019

NOTIFICATION OF ACCEPTANCE BY: Tuesday, August 20, 2019
CONFERENCE DATE: Monday, October 28, 2019 (Royce Hall, Room 314)

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Announcement coming soon