One-Offs, Islands, and Nomads: Experimental Japan

**Dates of Travel**  
May 14th - June 7th

**Destination(s)**  
Tokyo, Naoshima and Teshima, Hokkaido

**Course Deliverables**  
Short films

**Description**

Experimental Japan focuses its inquiry on those whose creative energies engage the world’s largest city, Tokyo. Utilizing the modalities of architecture, urbanism, design, art, music, and curatorial practice, this course looks at individuals and groups who are seeking new approaches to cultural production, or tweaking old ones. Participants will explore Tokyo’s urban experiments, digital nomadism, one-off realizations, phenomena, trends, and programmatic mashups.

This course asks, how can contemporary documentary filmmaking produce new narratives about, and within, design? In order to answer this question participants in this course will seek out, engage with, and document their interactions with Tokyo’s experimental practitioners and their work.

Before traveling to Japan students will participate in a documentary filmmaking workshop.

In contrast to the experiences of Tokyo, participants will travel to Naoshima and Teshima, Japan’s “art islands”, where major architectural works by Tadao Ando, Sanaa, Sou Fujimoto, and Ryue Nishizawa play host to major works by artists Yayoi Kusama, James Turrell, Li Ufan, and others. Additionally, the course will venture to the dramatic landscapes of Japan’s northernmost island, Hokkaido.

The course will conclude with the participants hosting a screening event in Tokyo highlighting their inquiries.

Experimental Japan welcomes participation from across the University of Michigan.