Cultural Performances of Asia:
Themes of the Class

Image of Crazy-A removed for copyright reasons
Performance / Cultures / Asia

• What defines "Asia"?

• What is "culture"?

• How does "performance" give us a certain perspective on both?
"Asia"

- Anything that stands for Asia or Asianness
- Japan, China, Korea, Taiwan, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Asian-American, etc.
- Is "Asian" always "non-Western"?
- But in this course, mostly Japan.

Image of Wu Wear, a clothing line by Wu Tang Clan (an American hip-hop group) removed for copyright reasons.
Which is more "Japanese"?

Image of Geisha (lit. "art person") removed for copyright reasons

Image of Contemporary photography removed for copyright reasons
"Culture"

- What is culture?

- Humanist
  - Arts, theater, letters

- Anthropological
  - Meanings and lifeways

- Historical
  - Traditions, institutions
Cultural anthropology

• Fieldwork
  – Participant-observation

• Ethnography
  – Communicate what it is like to live in another culture

• Theory
  – What does this tell about culture, society, and power
  – Professor Condry's research history . . .

Image of Kohel
Japan removed for copyright reasons

How Japanese is Japanese hip-hop?
Performance

• popular entertainments
• speech acts
• folklore
• political demonstrations
• conference behavior
• rituals

• medical and religious healing
• aspects of everyday life

Film Discussion

• What does the film “King of Masks” show us about the power of performance?
• To what extent can people escape their assigned roles? What are some of the limitations?
• Why does the King of Masks reject working with the opera star?
• What does the film say about “tradition”?