

Monsters, Ghosts and the Making of Modern Japan

Section B

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Course Outline / Description

The Japanese popular imagination has always been haunted by myriad monsters, ghost, demons, and goblins that have always both frightened and entertained. But these are by no means the only two roles that such creatures have played in Japanese history. In this class we will study the many ways that monsters and ghosts have symbolized and personified the issues, problems, hopes and fears that have shaped modern Japan. We will begin by looking at the importance of the horrific and grotesque in the creation of Japanese popular culture in the 17th century. We will then discuss how 19th century Meiji modernizers created the scientific study of “monsterology” to debunk peasant superstition and to redirect supernatural belief toward a divine emperor. We will also examine how artists like Kawanabe Kyōsai, and writers such as Izumi Kyōka used monsters and ghosts to both resist and satirize modernization. We end the first half of the semester by looking at how the Western observer Lafcadio Hearn used Japanese ghost stories to feed a foreign appetite for images of a mysterious Orient. Of course, this class will also examine modern uses of monsters and ghosts. We will begin the second half of the semester by examining how manga author Mizuki Shigeru used yōkai to help provide continuity with the past in a postwar Japan that had been torn from its traditions. We will discuss the political origins of Godzilla and read manga by authors such as Hino Hideshi and Umezu Kazuo who used horror to express their anxieties about the state of Japanese society in the 1960s, 70s and 80s. The course will finish with a look at recent Japanese TV and movie monsters from adult horror films like *The Ring* to popular children’s animation like *Pokémon*. Our main concerns will be what such media say about Japan today, and how their popularity abroad shapes foreign preceptions of the country.

Course Objectives/Goals/Learning Outcomes

At the completion of this course, students will be able to explain and discuss many of the social, economic and political conditions that have shaped Japanese history and identity from ancient times to the modern day. They will also learn a great deal about Japanese, folklore, religion, art and popular culture, and be able to recognize the socio-political subtexts that inform them.

Class Schedule/Class Environment, Literature and Materials

Mon. 8/31 On-Demand:	Visit Blackboard and find and review the course syllabus in the “Documents” you may have regarding the course.
Wed. 9/2 Zoom Class:	Course Introduction: Why Study Monsters?
Mon. 9/7 On-Demand:	<u>Recorded Zoom Lecture (link to be provided via email)</u> <u>Reading Assignment:</u> (1) and (2) “Introduction” from <i>Japanese Ghosts and Goblin</i> by Pat Fister, from <i>Japanese Ghosts and Demons</i> .

Wed. 9/9 Zoom Class:	<u>Reading Assignment:</u> (7) “Natural History of the Weird” from <i>Pandemonium and Parade</i> by Toriyama Sekien beginning on page 107 is most important).
Mon. 9/14 On-Demand:	<u>Recorded Zoom Lecture (link to be provided via email)</u> <u>Reading Assignment:</u> (10) “One Hundred Demons and One Hundred Supernatural Tales” from <i>and Demons</i> .
Wed. 9/16 Zoom Class:	<u>Reading Assignment:</u> (12) “Kuniyoshi’s Minamoto Raikō and the Earth Spider: Demons and the Spider” by Melinda Takeuchi in <i>Ars Orientalis</i> , Vol. 17.
Mon. 9/21: On-Demand:	<u>Watch:</u> <i>Yotsuya Kaidan Anime</i> and leave a comment on the “Discussion Board” on Blackboard. <i>Yotsuya Kaidan</i> is available on vimeo.com: https://vimeo.com/440505670 <u>Reading Assignment:</u> (8) “Vengeful Spirits,” from <i>Archetypes in Japanese Film</i> , by Gregory Black.
Wed. 9/23 Zoom Class:	<u>Monster Presentations 1 and 2</u> <u>Reading Assignment:</u> (14) “Science of the Weird,” from <i>Pandemonium and Parade</i> by Michael.
Mon. 9/28 On-Demand:	<u>Recorded Zoom Lecture (link to be provided via email)</u> <u>Reading Assignment:</u> (17) <i>The Legends of Tono</i> , by Yanagita Kunio.
Wed. 9/30 Zoom Class:	<u>Monster Presentations 3 and 4</u> <u>Reading Assignment:</u> (20) “Of Ghosts and Goblins,” by Lafcadio Hearn from <i>Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan</i> .
Mon. 10/5 On-Demand:	<u>Watch:</u> “Mimi-nashi Hoichi” segment of the film <i>Kwaidan</i> , 1964, and leave a comment on the “Discussion Board” on Blackboard. <i>Mimi-nashi Hoichi</i> is available on vimeo.com: https://vimeo.com/433492180 <u>Reading Assignment:</u> (23) and (24) “Reconciliation” by Lafcadio Hearn, from <i>Shadowings</i> and “Yuki Onna,” by Lafcadio Hearn from <i>Kwaidan</i> .
Wed. 10/7 Zoom Class:	<u>Monster Presentations 5 and 6</u> <u>Reading Assignment:</u> (25) “The Human Chair” and “The Caterpillar” From <i>Japanese Tales</i> by Lafcadio Hearn and Rampo.
Mon. 10/12 On-Demand:	<u>Quiz 1:</u> Available in the “Assignments” section of Blackboard for 24 hours 11:59 PM October 11 to 11:59 PM October 12.
Wed. 10/14 Zoom Class:	<u>Monster Presentations 7 and 8</u> <u>Reading Assignment:</u> (26) Butoh: Twenty Years Ago We Were Crazy, Dirty and Mad,” <i>The Lullaby of the Lullaby</i> by Rampo.
Mon. 10/19 On-Demand:	<u>Recorded Zoom Lecture (link to be provided via email)</u> <u>Reading Assignment:</u> (27) “Momotaro (The Peach Boy) and the Spirit of Japan: Concerning Nationalism of the Early Shōwa Age” by Klaus Antoni, in <i>Asian Folklore Studies</i> , Vol. 50, No. 1.
Wed. 10/21 Zoom Class:	<u>Monster Presentations 9-15</u>
Mon. 10/22	<u>Watch:</u> <i>Gojira</i> (Godzilla), Honda Ishirō, dir., 1954, and leave a comment on the “Discussion Board” on Blackboard.

On-Demand:	<p><i>Gojira</i> is available on vimeo.com https://vimeo.com/399883201 <u>Reading Assignment:</u> (28) “The Birth of Gojira,” from <i>Godzilla on My Mind</i>, by William Tsutsui</p>
Wed. 10/28	<u>Monster Presentations</u> 16 and 17
Zoom Class:	<u>Reading Assignment:</u> (29) “The Godzilla Franchise” from <i>Godzilla on My Mind</i> , by William Tsutsui
Mon. 11/2	<u>Watch</u> <i>GeGeGe no Kitaro</i> , 2008, and leave a comment on the “Discussion Board” on Blackboard
On-Demand:	<p><i>GeGeGe no Kitaro</i> is available on vimeo.com: https://vimeo.com/439892872 <u>Reading Assignment:</u> (31) <i>Ge Ge Ge no Kitarō and the Goblin Castle</i> (manga), by Mizuki Shigeru</p>
Wed. 11/4	<u>Monster Presentations:</u> 18 and 19
Zoom Class:	<u>Reading Assignment:</u> (35.1) “Media of the Weird,” from <i>Pandemonium and Parade</i> by Michael S. S. Green
Mon. 11/9	<u>Watch:</u> <i>The Suicide Charge that Kitaro Saw (Kitarō ga Mita Gyokusai)</i> , 2007, and leave a comment on the “Discussion Board” on Blackboard.
On-Demand:	<p><i>The Suicide Charge that Kitaro Saw</i> is available on vimeo.com https://vimeo.com/446111939 <u>Reading Assignment:</u> (34) “Monstrous Loss: The Dismemberment and Reanimation of t Horror Manga,” by Mark Hollstein.</p>
Wed. 11/11	<u>Monster Presentations</u> 20 and 21
Zoom Class:	<u>Reading Assignment:</u> (32) “Haunted Travelogue: Hometowns, Ghost Towns and Memo <i>Mechademia</i> , Volume 4.
Mon. 11/16	<u>Quiz 2</u>
On-Demand:	Available in the “Assignments” section of Blackboard for 24 hours 11:59 PM November 11 t
Wed. 11/18	<u>Monster Presentations</u> 22 and 23
Zoom Class:	<u>Reading Assignment:</u> (35) and (36) “Unusual Fetus: My Baby” from <i>Lullabies from Hell</i> by Ito Junji <i>Chapters 1 & 3</i> by Umezu Kazuo.
Mon. 11/23	<u>Watch:</u> <i>Uzumaki</i> , Higuchinsky, dir. 2000, and leave a comment on the “Discussion Board” o
On-Demand:	<p><i>Uzumaki</i> is available on vimeo.com: https://vimeo.com/manage/433504320/general <u>Reading Assignment:</u> (38) “The Spiral Obsession,” in <i>Uzumaki</i>, by Ito Junji.</p>
Wed. 11/25	<u>Monster Presentations</u> 24 and 25
Zoom Class:	<u>Reading Assignment:</u> (39) “Spiraling into Apocalypse” by Jay McRoy From <i>Nightmare Japa</i>
Mon. 11/30	<u>Watch:</u> <i>Ringu</i> , Nakata Hideo, dir. 1998, and leave a comment on the “Discussion Board” on
On-Demand:	<p><i>Ringu</i> is available on vimeo.com: https://vimeo.com/433506204 <u>Reading Assignment:</u> (40) “Ghosts of the Present, Specters of the Past: <i>Kaidan</i> and the H Hideo and Shimizu Takashi” from <i>Nightmare Japan: Japanese Contemporary Horror Cine</i></p>

Wed. 12/2 Monster Presentations 26 and 27

Zoom Class: **Reading Assignment:** (41) “Floating Water” from *Dark Water* by Suzuki Koji.

Mon. 12/7 **Watch:** *Jellyfish Eyes* and leave a comment on the “Discussion Board” on Blackboard.
On-Demand: *Jellyfish Eyes* is Available on vimeo.com:
<https://vimeo.com/439862409>

Wed. 12/9 Monster Presentations 28 and 29

Zoom Class: **Reading Assignment** (47) “Skulls and Flowers” by David Pilling._

Zoom Class: **Monster Presentations 30 and 31**

(Class will
be recorded
for those
who cannot
attend live)
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Reading Assignment: (44) “Pokemon: Getting Monsters and Communicating Capitalism” from
the Global Imagination, by Anne Allison.

Wed. 12/16 **Final Quiz:**

On-Demand: **Available in the “Assignments” section of Blackboard for 24 hours 11:59 PM Dec. 15 to 11:59 PM Dec. 16**

Textbooks/Reading Materials

All reading assignments will be available in the “Reading Assignments” folder in the “Assignments” section of Blackboard. They can be downloaded and printed or read online. The number in parentheses beside each reading assignment in this syllabus [for example: (44) “Pokemon: Getting Monsters and Communicating Capitalism”] corresponds to the number of the reading as listed in the reading folder.

Learning Assessments/Grading Rubric

Quiz 1: 20 percent

Quiz 2: 20 percent

Quiz 3: 20 percent

Participation: 10 percent

Class Presentation: 15 percent

Presentation Essay: 15 Percent

Quizzes:

Three quizzes will be given over the course of the semester; they will be comprised of about 30 true-or-false and multiple-choice questions as well as one short answer question which will require you to write about one full paragraph. You will have 70 minutes to complete each quiz. The quizzes will be available in the “Assignments” section of Blackboard for a 24-hour period on the quiz day. Please remember that all given dates and times are for Japan Standard Time.

Participation:

Your participation grade will be determined by both your attendance and participation in all Zoom classes, as well as your participation in the required Discussion Board comment assignments regarding class films.

Monster Presentation:

You will be required to make a brief (about 5-7 minutes) presentation to the class on a particular monster of your choice. Two or more students will make a presentation at the beginning of most class periods. A sign-up list with possible presentation dates will be made available to students early in the semester. Your presentation may be about any supernatural being **as long as it is Japanese in origin**. In other words, you can choose to explain one of the hundreds of traditional *yōkai*, any ghostly character from folklore or even a ghost/monster from a contemporary Japanese monster movie, television show, J-horror film, manga or anime. Your presentation should include visual aids such as (but not limited to) PowerPoint slides containing images relevant to your topic. You must also provide a list of sources that you used in preparing your presentation.

Presentation Paper:

You must write up the information you provide in your presentation in the form of a double-spaced typed, four to six-page paper. The paper is due at the end of the semester; however, you may turn it in at any time after your class presentation. Both your presentation and essay should explain the basic physical and psychological characteristics of your monster or ghost as well as other basic information such as from where the creature came; what kind of social situation may have engendered it or what social or psychological fears it might represent or what societal role it might play; the period or years it was popular or prevalent; how it evolved over time; its special characteristics or powers and from where these powers come; the kinds of media it appears in; how you can protect yourself from its powers; how it is related to other kinds of Japanese or foreign ghosts or monsters, etc. You should also include some of your own reaction to it such as why you picked it; what about it is interesting or important to you? You must reference your sources in the text of your paper and provide a works cited page that includes a full citation at the end.