

Japanese Popular Media and Society

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Course Description:

This course examines the structure and development of Japanese popular media from premodern times to the present day, with special attention paid to how these media have helped Japanese deal with a variety of social issues and historical transitions. We will begin by tracing the path of traditional Japanese comic art from its origins as entertainment and advertising in the Edo Period to Western-influenced editorial cartooning and political satire in the Meiji and Taisho Eras. We will then examine the rise of militarism in the early Showa Period and the forces that transform Japanese comic art from social criticism to nationalistic wartime propaganda. We will spend considerable time discussing the emergence of postwar story *manga* and its darker, more complex cousin *gekiga*. Of particular interest will be how these media helped calm a war-traumatized nation and facilitated an exploration of the meaning of the conflict, Japan's postwar identity and the nation's place in the new world order. We will next look at the structure of the publishing and television industries in Japan and consider how they have dealt with a variety of social issues; these include the dangers of nuclear power, the treatment of people with physical disabilities, The death penalty, LGBT rights, Japan's relationship with South Korea and discrimination against Korean nationals in Japan. The course will finish with a look at the popularity and uses of Japanese popular media abroad and how they are influencing foreign understandings and attitudes about the country.

Section 2**Course Objectives:**

This course will enable students to go beyond the entertainment value of Japanese popular media to discover their social and historical significance. Upon completion of this course, students should also be able to explain the major ideological and ontological debates that have shaped Japan's postwar society, and discuss in detail some of the relevant social issues facing Japan today.

Section 3

Lecture 1: Course Introduction

Development of Modern Manga and Anime

Lecture 2: **Read:** (0) "The Unseamly Silverpiped Swingers," by Santo Kyōden, from *Manga of the Floating World*, by Adam L. Kern.

Lecture 3: **Read:** (1) "A Thousand Years of Manga," by Frederik L. Schodt, from *Manga! Manga! The World of Japanese Comics*.
(2) "The Introduction to Mr. Punch," From *The Great Genius of Mr. Punch*, by Jozef Togala.

Lecture 4: **Read:** (3) "Saseo Ono: An Artist's Odyssey" by ONO Kosei.

Lecture 5: **Read:** (5) "Osamu Tezuka: A tribute to the God of Comics" by Frederik L. Schodt, from from *Manga! Manga! The World of Japanese Comics*.

- Lecture 6: **Read:** "Tormenting Affairs with Animation," by Natsu Power, from *God of Comics: Osama Tezuka and the creation of Post-WWII Manga*.
- Lecture 7: **Read:** (5.3) "Movie in a Book," by Natsu Onoda Powers, from *God of Comics: Osama Tezuka and the creation of Post-WWII Manga*
Optional Reading: (6) and (7) "Chapter I, Once Upon a Time," in *Princess Knight*, by Tezuka Osamu; and "All the Way from the Future" and "I Can't Take a Test Without 'Anki-pan,'" in *Doraemon: Gadget Cat From the Future*, by Fujiko F. Fujio.

Manga vs. Gekiga

- Lecture 8: **Read:** (8) "From a Darker Place" by Paul Gravett, from *Manga: 60 Years of Japanese Comics*.
Optional Reading: (9) "The Terateogenous Cystoma" in *Black Jack*, by Tezuka Osamu.
- Lecture 9: **Read:** (10) and (10.1) "Abandon the Old in Tokyo" and "Eel" by Tatsumi Yoshiharu, from *Abandon the Old in Tokyo and Other Stories*; and "Screw Style" by Tsuge Yoshiharu, from *The Comics Journal* no. 250.
Optional Readings: (11) and (12) "Tatasumi's Long Journey" by Kai-Ming Cha, from *Publishers Weekly* August 1, 2006, and "On Top of the Mountain: The Influential Manga of Yoshiharu Tsuge" by Beatrice Marechal, from *The Comics Journal: Special Edition* Vol.5.

- Lecture 10: **Quiz 1 and Discussion**

Manga, Anime and Japan's Postwar Identity

- Lecture 11: **Read:** (13) Excerpt from *Barefoot Gen*, by Keiji Nakazawa.
- Lecture 12: **Read:** (12) "Remaking Master Narratives: Anime Confronts History" and "No More Words: Barefoot Gen, Grave of the Fireflies and 'Victims' History" by Susan J. Napier, from *Anime: From Akira to Howl's Moving Castle*.
Optional Reading: (15) "Transcending the Victim's History: Takahata Isao's *Grave of the Fireflies*" by Wendy Goldberg, from *Mechademia, Volume 4*.
- Lecture 13: Manga and the 3/11 Disasters
Read: (16) "Cleansing History, Cleansing Japan: Kobayashi Yoshinori's Analects of War and Japan's Revisionist Revival" by Rebecca Clifford, Nissan Occasional Paper Series No. 35.
Optional Reading: (17) "Three Views of the Rising Sun, Obliquely: Keiji Nakazawa's A-bomb, Osama Tezuka's *Adolf*, and Yoshinori Kobayashi's Apologia" by Sheng-mei Ma, from *Mechademia, Vol. 4*.
- Lecture 14: **Read:** (17.1) "Oishimbo's Fukushima Elegy: Grasping for Truth about Radiation in a Food Manga," By Lauri Brau, from *Fukushima and the Arts: Negotiating Nuclear Disaster*.

Manga and Anime as Art and Business

- Lecture 15: Pop Culture as Fine Art
Read: (18) “Making Murakami” by Paul Schimmel, from *Murakami*, Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art; New York: Rizzoli, 2007.
- Lecture 16: Manga Production: Professional vs. Dōjinshi
Read: (20) “The Manga Production Cycle” by Sharon Kinsella, from *Adult Manga*.
- Lecture 17: **Read:** Excerpts from *Bakuman*
- Lecture 18: The Anime Production Cycle
- Lecture 19: **Read:** (20.1) “Miyazaki and Takahata Anime Cinema,” by Tse-Yue G. Hu, from *Frames of Anime: Culture and Image-Building*.
- Lecture 20: **Quiz 2 and Discussion**

Television Drama and Japanese Social Issues

- Lecture 21: NHK’s Morning Dramas
Read: (21) “Interpreting *Oshin*—War History and Women in Modern Japan” by Paul A.S. Harvey, from *Women Media and Consumption in Japan*.
- Lecture 22: Trendy Dramas
Read: (22) “Producing (Post-) Trendy Japanese TV Dramas” by ŌTA Tōru.
- Lecture 23: **Read:** (23) “The Representation of Femininity in Japanese Television Dramas of the 1990s” by ITO Mamoru, from *Feeling Asian Modernities: Transnational Consumption of Japanese TV Dramas*.
- Lecture 24: **Read:** (24) “Empowering Love: The Intertextual Author of Ren’ai Dorama” by Eva Tsai.
- Lecture 25: The Media and Japan’s Controversial Death Penalty
Read: (25) “The Mass Media and Japan’s Invisible Death Chamber Drama” by Mark Hollstein
- Lecture 26: **Read:** (25.5) Recent newspaper articles about the death penalty in Japan. The Power of Japanese Drama, Manga, and Anime Abroad
- Lecture 27: The Fight for LGBTQ Rights and the Media in Japan
Read: (26) “Chapter 1: The Black Ships Arrive,” and “Chapter 2: Tempera Sushi,” in *My Brother’s Husband*, by Gengoroh Tagame, Patheon, 2017.

The Power of Japanese Popular Culture Abroad

- Lecture 28: Japan-South Korean Relations and the Popular Media
Read: (26.1). “Cultural Contact with Japanese Dramas: Modes Reception and Narrative Transparency” by Dong-Hoo Lee, from from *Feeling Asian Modernities: Transnational Consumption of Japanese TV Dramas*.

Lecture 29: **Read:** (27) “Popular Cultural Capital and Cultural Identity: Young Korean Women Women’s Cultural Appropriation of Japanese TV Dramas” by Dong-Hoo Lee, from *East Asian Pop Culture: Analyzing*

Lecture 30: **Read:** (30) “The Americanization of Anime and Manga Negotiating Popular Culture” by Antonia Levi, from *Cinema Anime: Critical Engagements with Japanese Animation*.

Reading Materials:

All reading assignments will be available in the “Assignments” section of Blackboard from which they can be downloaded and printed or read online.

Section 4

Grading:

2 Quizzes: 50%

Essay: 15 %

Final Exam: 25%

Class Participation: 10%

Section 5

Quizzes/Final Exam:

Two quizzes and a final exam will be given over the course of the semester; they will be comprised of 25 true-or-false and multiple-choice questions. You will have about 35-40 minutes to answer, after which we will correct and discuss the answers in class.

Essay:

A set of essay question will be provided on Blackboard at least on month before the due date. You will be asked to pick one question to answer in four to five to six (about 1,000-1,200 words) typed pages. In your essay you should demonstrate that you have done the appropriate assigned readings by paraphrasing and directly quoting the author(s). You do not have to do any independent research for this assignment. Your completed responses should be uploaded to the essay assignment page on Blackboard by the due date.

Course Readings and Other Materials:

There will be a reading assignment for each day of class. These can be found on Blackboard in the “Assignments” folder. PowerPoint presentations used in class, the course syllabus, instructions for the final paper and other relevant course materials will also be posted in either the “Assignments” or “Documents” folders on Blackboard.

Participation:

Attendance will generally be taken by circulating a roll during class. If you come late, it is your responsibility to make sure you sign the roll. If you must be absent, please talk to me before the class you will miss to see if your absence can be excused. Your score in this category depends upon BOTH regular attendance and regular participation.