



## **AN 362 JAPANESE POPULAR CULTURE**

IES Abroad Tokyo

### **DESCRIPTION:**

This course examines contemporary Japanese popular culture from historical, social, and anthropological perspectives. The course will examine very recent topics in an attempt to understand Japanese culture as it exists today. The scope of topics examined will be wide ranging, including folklore, anime, manga, advertising, cinema, music, food and politics. As this last year was the 70th anniversary of the end of the end of World War II and an important year of reflection in Japan, special emphasis will be given to war memory, militarism, and pacifism in Japan's postwar popular culture.

The objective of this course is to provide students with an academic understanding of Japanese popular culture & mass culture through the study of scholarly perspectives from the fields of anthropology, sociology, and media studies.

**CREDITS:** 3

**CONTACT HOURS:** 45

**LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION:** English

**INSTRUCTOR:** TBD

**PREREQUISITES:** None

**ADDITIONAL COST:** Students are required to pay for their transportation to excursion sites and may also have to pay modest entrance fees to events and exhibitions.

### **METHOD OF PRESENTATION:**

Class sessions will consist of active group discussions and student presentations. Assignments for the course consist of weekly responses to each week's class, short response papers about class field trips, a final paper, and a final presentation.

### **REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:**

- Class Participation – 25%
- Presentation (Mid-term Exam) - 20%
- Weekly Responses - 25%
- Research Paper & Presentation (Final Exam) - 30%

### **COURSE PARTICIPATION**

Students are expected to attend all class meetings. The first and most important assignment is to read and reflect on the readings and come to class prepared to talk about them. One missed class turns an A into an A-, two missed classes turns it into a B-, three turns it into a C-, and so on.

### **MID-TERM EXAM**

Each student's midterm exam will be in the form of an in-class presentation.

Each student will choose a reading from a list of academic articles and book chapters provided by the professor (TBA). Each week (starting with the 3rd week of class), one or two students will deliver a presentation summarizing the contents of the reading and offering opinions/analysis. After the presentation, the student will be expected to lead a short class discussion. Discussion questions should be prepared in advance and the presenter should be prepared to answer questions from the audience. Each class, students assigned for the day's presentation are responsible for introducing the material and leading the discussion, as well as submitting your presentation (Power Point-style presentation) with discussion questions on Moodle two days before the class (SUNDAY). Students are also responsible for sending me the final version after the presentation if you revise the previous version.



Students who are assigned for the weekly presentation do not have to post your discussion responses that week, but are expected to lead discussions. I am happy to look at the presentation in advance and also to consult with you during the process. (Presentation length: 30-40 minutes)

### **WEEKLY RESPONSES**

Every week (starting from the second week of class), students will post an original discussion response to Moodle. Discussion responses are due by 5:00 P.M. on Thursday before each class. Responses should consist of 1) the student's thoughts on the previous Friday's lecture/discussion, and 2) at least two discussion questions about the next lecture's topic/readings. Discussion questions are not referential questions about the information in the texts, but analytical questions. Good questions are not simply asking questions, but rather taking up some issues to deal with and proposing potential answers. Your assignments will be evaluated by: 1) the analytical content and your analysis and arguments (50%), 2) writing style (20%), and 3) punctuality (30%). In the case of field trips, students will be expected to write short response papers about their experience.

### **FINAL EXAM**

The final exam will consist of a combination of a research paper and an in-class presentation about the research paper, which will be delivered on the final day of this course.

"Pilgrimage Project." - In this project (which may be a group or individual project, depending on the number of students enrolled) you will do something similar to an "anime pilgrimage" by visiting sites in Tokyo and vicinities that have a close relationship to particular anime/manga/videogame/film works. You will perform an in-class presentation reporting your experience to class; every member of the group must demonstrate their contribution to the group (e.g. consider having everyone speak; allocate different tasks, etc). And you will (individually) write a project report (max 5000 words, or about 10 pages, not including images) based on your experience, drawing upon material covered in readings and class discussions.

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of social theories and approaches to popular/mass culture and the culture industry.
- Students will also be able to construct analytical essays, give power-point presentations, and lead academic discussions.

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

Following the attendance policy of IES Abroad Tokyo, attendance to all class meetings is strictly required for the students. In other words, students are required to attend every class meeting including excursions because there will be important information regarding marketing, economics and business strategy to learn but also it is fair that your classmates have your critical observations and insight in the class.

The three-hour format for classes makes missing a single class equivalent to missing a full week during a regular semester. Unexcused absences will therefore result in significant grade penalties. The first unexcused absence will result in a penalty of one-third of a letter grade from your final grade; additional unexcused absences will result in a penalty of one letter grade for each additional absence. That is, one missed class turns an A into an A-, two missed classes turns it into a B-, three turns it into a C-, and so on. An absence is considered "excused" only if it is unavoidable due to illness or other health conditions, or for other reasons approved by the instructor in advance.

### **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

You may use your laptop or tablet in their capacity as e-readers, and to take class notes. Students are required to turn cell phones to silent (not just vibrate) in the classroom. Looking at non-related websites, and checking your phone will affect your participation grade. Any student expecting an urgent call or text message should notify the instructor before class begins.

### **IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT TRIGGER WARNINGS AND COURSE CONTENT**

Students are expected to be respectful of the instructor and their peers, and to contribute to creating an inclusive learning environment. I have refrained from including explicit trigger warnings because I understand that any topic has the potential of being triggering. It is impossible to pinpoint exactly what may trigger an individual—we all have different backgrounds, and

emotional reactions to different content. Please come prepared to each class and complete your reading assignments, then you will have a clear idea of the themes that will be discussed in class. If you feel uncomfortable or if you believe that a certain topic may be triggering for you, please email the instructor before class.

#### CONTENT:

Week	Content	Assignments
<b>Week 1</b>	<p><b>Introduction to Culture</b></p> <p>This week will introduce the outline of the course. It will also introduce basic concepts in the academic study of culture (High Culture, Mass/Popular Culture, Sub-culture).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strinati, Dominic. "Mass Culture and Popular Culture." An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture. London: Routledge, 2004. 1-45.</li> <li>• Horkheimer, Max, and Theodor Adorno.</li> <li>• "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception." The Cultural Studies Reader. Ed. Simon During. London: Routledge, 1993. 31-41. Print.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 2</b>	<p><b>Popular &amp; Mass Culture - The Case of Japan</b></p> <p>This week will discuss popular &amp; mass culture from the Edo period until the early postwar period of Japanese history.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gordon, Andrew. "Formations of Mass Culture." Postwar Japan as History. Berkeley: U of California, 1993. 239-58.</li> <li>• Sacred Pilgrimages Paper</li> <li>• Weekly Reading Response</li> </ul>
<b>Week 3</b>	<p><b>Music &amp; Theater</b></p> <p>This week will discuss Japan's music industry and its fans, as well as understanding musical theater and gender.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Karen Nakamura and Hisako Matsuo, "Female Masculinity and Fantasy Spaces: Transcending genders in the Takarazuka Theater and Japanese Popular Culture," in James E. Roberson and Nobue Suzuki (eds.), Men and Masculinities in Contemporary Japan, pp. 59-76, ( London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003)</li> <li>• Aoyagi, Hiroshi. "Pop Idols and the Asian Identity." Japan Pop!: Inside the World of Japanese Popular Culture. Ed. Timothy J. Craig. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2000. 309-26. Print.</li> <li>• [Presentation] Darling-Wolf, Fabienne. "SMAP, Sex, and Masculinity: Constructing the Perfect Female Fantasy in Japanese Popular Music." Popular Music and Society 27.3 (2004): 357-70.</li> <li>• [Presentation] Doerr, Norika Musha and Kumagai, Yuri. 2012. "Singing Japan's Heart and Soul: A Discourse on the black enka singer Jero and race politics in Japan." International Journal of Cultural Studies</li> </ul>

		<p>15(6):599-614. Singing Japan's Heart and Soul File</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [Presentation] Stevens, Carolyn. "Buying Intimacy: Proximity and Exchange at a Japanese Rock Concert." In Fanning the Flames of Fandom: Fandoms and Consumer Culture in Contemporary Japan, edited by William Kelly. New York: SUNY Press.</li> <li>• Weekly Reading Response</li> </ul>
<b>Week 4</b>	<p><b>Spooky Popular Culture – Folklore &amp; Ghost Stories</b></p> <p>This week will examine Japan's rich culture of ghost stories, both in the form of traditional "yokai" stories and modern urban legends. (We will also watch a short film.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster, Michael Dyland. 2009. "Media of the Weird: Mizuki Shigeru and Kuchi-sake-onna." In Pandemonium and Paradise: Japanese Monsters and the Culture of Yokai. London: University of California Press.</li> <li>• Yoshimura, Ayako. "To Believe and Not to Believe: A Native Ethnography of Kanashibari in Japan." The Journal of American Folklore 128.508 (2015): 146-48.</li> <li>• [Presentation] Miller, Laura. "Japan's Cinderella Motif: Beauty Industry and Mass Culture Interpretations of a Popular Icon." Asian Studies Review 32.3 (2008): 393-409. Web.</li> <li>• Reading Response</li> </ul>
<b>Week 5</b>	<p><b>Manga / Anime</b></p> <p>This week will be an introduction to Japan's vibrant Manga / Anime culture.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kinsella, Sharon. "A Short History of Manga." Adult Manga: Culture and Power in Contemporary Japanese Society. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2000.</li> <li>• [Presentation] Miller, Laura. "Those Naughty Teenage Girls: Japanese Kogals, Slang, and Media Assessments." Journal of Linguistic Anthropology 14.2 (2004): 225-47. Web.</li> <li>• [Presentation] Kawamura, Y. "Japanese Teens as Producers of Street Fashion." Current Sociology 54.5 (2006): 784-801. Web.</li> <li>• [Presentation] Galbraith, Patrick. 2011. Maids in Japan. Intersections 25.</li> <li>• [Presentation] Condry, Ian. 2010. Dark Energy: What Fansubs Reveal about Copyright wars." Mechademia, Volume 5, 2010, pp. 193-208.</li> <li>• Reading Response</li> </ul>
<b>Week 6</b>	<b>Course-Related Trip to the Tokyo Design Festa</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short Response on the course-related trip</li> </ul>

	We will visit the Tokyo Design Festa (at the Tokyo Big Sight)	
<b>Week 7</b>	<b>War Memory &amp; Popular Culture #1</b>  This is the first of two weeks examining postwar and present-day war memory in Japan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hashimoto, Akiko. 2015. "Defeat Reconsidered: Heroes, Victims, and Perpetrators in the Popular Media." In <i>The Long Defeat: Cultural Trauma, Memory, and Identity in Japan</i>. Oxford University Press.</li> <li>• [Presentation] Kelly, William H. 1998. "Japan's Empty Orchestras: Echoes of Japanese Culture in the Performance of Karaoke." in <i>The Worlds of Japanese Culture</i>. Ed. D.P. Martinez, pages 75-90. New York: Cambridge University Press.</li> <li>• [Presentation] Yano, Christine R. 2003. "The Burning of Men: Masculinities and the nation in Japanese Popular Song" in <i>Men and Masculinities in Contemporary Japan: Dislocating Beyond the Salaryman Doxa</i>. Ed. James E. Roberson &amp; Nobue</li> <li>• Reading Response</li> </ul>
<b>Week 8</b>	<b>Course-Related Trip to the International Tokyo Toy Show</b>  Instead of normal class, we will board a train to the International Tokyo Toy Show	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short Response on the course-related trip</li> </ul>
<b>Week 9</b>	<b>Contemporary War Films</b>  <b>Watch Barefoot Gen</b>  We will watch and discuss the film "The Eternal Zero" (Eien no Zero), which topped Japanese box offices in 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [Presentation] Fukutomi, Satomi. "Bottom-up Food: Making Rāmen a Gourmet Food in Tokyo." <i>Food and Foodways</i> 22.1-2 (2014): 65-89.</li> <li>• Response for Barefoot Gen</li> </ul>
<b>Week 10</b>	<b>Soldiers, Royals, and History Girls</b>  This week will examine Japan's military (Self-Defense Forces), the peace culture of postwar Japan, and Japan's imperial family.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fruhstuck, Sabine. 2007. "Military Manipulations of Popular Culture." In <i>Uneasy Warriors: Gender, Memory, and Popular Culture in the Japanese Army</i>. London: University of California Press. 116-148</li> <li>• [Presentation] Mōri, Yoshitaka. "Winter Sonata and Cultural Practices of Active Fans in Japan." <i>East Asian Pop Culture</i> (2008): 126-41. Web.</li> <li>• Reading Response</li> </ul>
<b>Week 11</b>	<b>Popular Culture, Globalization, and Soft Power</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [Presentation] Allison, Anne. 2006. "New-age fetishes, monsters, and friends: Pokémon capitalism." In <i>Japan after Japan: Social and</i></li> </ul>

	<p>This week will discuss the overseas consumption of Japan's popular culture, including the notion that Japan can use "soft power" to further its diplomatic/political goals.</p>	<p>Cultural Life from the Recessionary 1990s to the Present. Ed. Tomiko Yoda and Harry Harootunian, Pages 331–57. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [Presentation] Allison, Anne. 2006. "Fierce Flesh: Sexy Schoolgirls in the Action Fantasy of Sailor Moon" in <i>Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination</i>, Pages 128-162. California: University of California Press.</li> <li>• Yano, Christine. 2013. "Global Kitty: Here, There, and Nearly Everywhere." In <i>Pink Globalization</i>. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.</li> <li>• Weekly-Response: Film</li> </ul>
<b>Week 12</b>	<p><b>Final Presentation</b></p> <p>Students will deliver final presentations on their research papers.</p>	

#### COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:

- Tokyo Design Festa
- International Tokyo Toy Show

#### REQUIRED READINGS:

- Allison, Anne. 2006. "New-age fetishes, monsters, and friends: Pokémon capitalism." In *Japan after Japan: Social and Cultural Life from the Recessionary 1990s to the Present*. Ed. Tomiko Yoda and Harry Harootunian, Pages 331–57. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press
- Aoyagi, Hiroshi. "Pop Idols and the Asian Identity." *Japan Pop!: Inside the World of Japanese Popular Culture*. Ed. Timothy J. Craig. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2000. 309-26. Print.
- Condry, Ian. 2010. "Dark Energy: What Fansubs Reveal about Copyright wars." *Mechademia*, Volume 5, 2010, pp. 193-208.
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- Doerr, Norika Musha and Kumagai, Yuri. 2012. "Singing Japan's Heart and Soul: A Discourse on the black enka singer Jero and race politics in Japan." *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 15(6):599-614.
- Foster, Michael Dyland. 2009. "Media of the Weird: Mizuki Shigeru and Kuchi-sake-onna." In *Pandemonium and Paradise: Japanese Monsters and the Culture of Yokai*. London: University of California Press.
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- Fruhstuck, Sabine. 2007. "Military Manipulations of Popular Culture." In *Uneasy Warriors: Gender, Memory, and Popular Culture in the Japanese Army*. London: University of California Press. 116-148
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- Karen Nakamura and Hisako Matsuo, "Female Masculinity and Fantasy Spaces: Transcending genders in the Takarazuka Theater and Japanese Popular Culture," in James E. Roberson and Nobue Suzuki (eds.), *Men and Masculinities in Contemporary Japan*, pp. 59-76, ( London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003)
- Kawamura, Y. "Japanese Teens as Producers of Street Fashion." *Current Sociology* 54.5 (2006): 784-801. Web.
- Galbraith, Patrick. 2011. *Maids in Japan*. Intersections 25.
- Kelly, William H. 1998. "Japan's Empty Orchestras: Echoes of Japanese Culture in the Performance of Karaoke." in *The Worlds of Japanese Culture*. Ed. D.P. Martinez, pages 75-90. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Kinsella, Sharon. "A Short History of Manga." *Adult Manga: Culture and Power in Contemporary Japanese Society*. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2000.
- Miller, Laura. "Japan's Cinderella Motif: Beauty Industry and Mass Culture Interpretations of a Popular Icon." *Asian Studies Review* 32.3 (2008): 393-409. Web.
- Miller, Laura. "Those Naughty Teenage Girls: Japanese Kogals, Slang, and Media Assessments." *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 14.2 (2004): 225-47. Web.
- Mōri, Yoshitaka. "Winter Sonata and Cultural Practices of Active Fans in Japan." *East Asian Pop Culture* (2008): 126-41. Web.
- Stevens, Carolyn. "Buying Intimacy: Proximity and Exchange at a Japanese Rock Concert." In *Fanning the Flames of Fandom: Fandoms and Consumer Culture in Contemporary Japan*, edited by William Kelly. New York: SUNY Press.
- Strinati, Dominic. "Mass Culture and Popular Culture." *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture*. London: Routledge, 2004. 1-45.
- Yano, Christine R. 2003. "The Burning of Men: Masculinities and the nation in Japanese Popular Song" in *Men and Masculinities in Contemporary Japan: Dislocating Beyond the Salaryman Doxa*. Ed. James E. Roberson & Nobue
- Yano, Christine. 2013. "Global Kitty: Here, There, and Nearly Everywhere." In *Pink Globalization*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Yoshimura, Ayako. "To Believe and Not to Believe: A Native Ethnography of Kanashibari in Japan." *The Journal of American Folklore* 128.508 (2015): 146-48.

#### RECOMMENDED READINGS:

- Shimazu, N. "Popular Representations of the Past: The Case of Postwar Japan." *Journal of Contemporary History* 38.1 (2003): 101-16. Web.
- Kinsella, S. "Pro-establishment Manga: Pop-culture and the Balance of Power in Japan." *Media, Culture & Society* 21.4 (1999): 567-72.