Anthropology 484
JAPANESE POPULAR CULTURE
(Writing Intensive)

Spring 2017

GENERAL INFORMATION

Instructor   Dr. Christine Yano
Class meetings    TuTh 9:00-10:15am, Saunders 345
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Phone     956-4447
E-mail     cryano@hawaii.edu
Office hours   TuTh 2-3 pm or by apt

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course takes popular culture in Japan as a springboard for discussing contemporary issues such as social class, gender and sexuality, nationalism, globalization, emotion, and consumer culture.  This is NOT a survey course of different forms of popular culture in Japan. Rather, through those various forms, we will explore the issues around which Japan shapes itself and is shaped.  Our goal is to rethink Japan – as a modern nation-state, as a site of harmony and conflict, as a site of global and local popular culture flows, as an object and force of consumption. In the 21st century, Japan is both source and recipient of global products, processes, ideas, and people.  The course will be organized around films and readings, following characterizations of consumer culture in Japan, whose market cleavages do not follow ethnic or class lines so much as age-graded segments.  For this reason, I have organized our subject matter through the life course, beginning in childhood, following through early adulthood, and ending in old age.  My point is that popular culture and its consumption are not only a function of youth, but are part of a person’s life from beginning to end.  Popular culture in Japan, as elsewhere, forms and is formed by issues of identity that keep shifting and gaining new meanings.

In any course on popular culture, one of the problems is the nature of the subject itself, which is constantly changing.  One keeps chasing after the thing (that is, pop culture), only to find the thing running far faster and in different directions than we could ever conjure.  I don’t claim to know the absolute latest of what is going on.  But we will together attempt to analyze some of what is going on – as well as has gone on in the recent past -- with the tools of theory.  I welcome students in the class to share their knowledge of Japanese popular culture.  Some of you may be fans.  Others may know next to nothing of what is going on in Japan, but be fans of a Japanese pop culture form as it exists in the U.S.  All of this is great and I hope you add to our discussion by speaking both from readings, as well as from personal experience.  What this class brings to the discussion is critical thinking surrounding cultural and political issues and theories that transcend particular genres or manifestations in time.

Course Outcomes

The goal of this course is to provide tools by which students may interpret and understand contemporary Japanese society through the popular culture that is part of everyday life.  As a result of this course, the student should be able to interpret aspects of contemporary life in Japan
with critical thinking skills. These include:

1. the development and characteristics of consumer culture in Japan;
2. the role of gender as a formative structure of production and consumption;
3. the interlocking aspects of global and local forces vis a vis consumer culture; and
4. the applicability of anthropological concepts to the study of popular culture in Japan, including rites of passage, age-graded behavior, ideology, resistance, and agency.

This course also aligns its learning objectives with that of the university (Institutional Learning Objectives – ILO):

1. Breadth and depth of knowledge
   Developing an understanding of the world with emphasis on Asia (Japan)
2. Intellectual and practical skills
   Thinking critically and creatively
3. Personal and social responsibility
   Developing excellence, integrity, and engagement through critical thinking

BOOKS: these are required and available at the bookstore.

*A note on readings. Lectures and readings do not necessarily overlap. Each one is considered a different source of material, information, and engagement with ideas. If you have questions on the readings, please do ask for clarification in class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Grading:

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<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading responses (3X10)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper #1</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper #2</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam/paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>(5 points for discussion leader; 5 points for attendance, video sheets, class participation, etc.)</td>
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** PLEASE NOTE: for all papers and due dates, turning in anything late will result in a lowered grade: -1 point for every class day. E.g. if a reading response is due on Thurs, 1/28 and you hand it in on Thurs, 2/4, TWO points will be deducted.

**ADDITIONAL NOTE: If you do not take part in the peer review of papers, then ONE point will be deducted from your paper grade.

READING RESPONSES  (10 points each)
This is the section of the course that gives you practice in writing as thinking. These written responses ask you to reflect upon questions related to readings. I will pose questions on the assigned readings. You are asked to address these questions. The easiest way to do this is to download the questions and embed your answers directly after the question. Note: you should keep up with the readings according to the schedule and simply add to the document as you progress through the assignments. This is not meant to be completed all at once. These notes are primarily for yourself to help you think through the readings, but I will collect these notes toward the end of each unit and before that unit’s paper is due. See calendar below for due dates. There is no page requirement for these reading responses, but I expect your writing to be thoughtful and complete, without being excessively lengthy. In most cases, the questions require a paragraph to answer. Please single-space and italicize your answers. You will be graded generously.

**PAPERS:** approx. 5-7 pages (20 points each)

Papers will attempt to integrate films that we watch with lectures, class assignments, videos, discussions, and, to a lesser extent, readings. (I fully acknowledge that this integration is not always possible with the variety of readings.) The paper topic will be handed out at the beginning of the unit, so that your notes on lectures can address the topic most directly. In your papers I expect you to use lectures (and readings) as much as possible to comment on the film. These are not research papers and you are not expected to do any outside reading for them.

Any paper that you write should have a thesis, an argument. “In this paper, I argue that . . .” Please underline your thesis statement. It should occur in the first or second paragraph. And the rest of your paper should be support for your thesis.

**On Writing**

This course is designated writing-intensive for good reason. My firm belief is that good writing makes for good thinking and vice versa. Disciplining one’s writing is akin to disciplining one’s thinking. Writing will be an integral part of your learning process in several ways: 1) Short papers incorporating readings, lectures, and fieldwork; 2) reading responses; and 3) in-class writing. Common to all three of these is the requirement that your writing be clear, succinct, and grammatical. I expect any piece of writing that has been done on a computer to be spell-checked and proofread. You should approach these three types of writing in different ways.

1) The papers are the most formal pieces of writing that you will do. We will do peer reviews of each of the papers and you should write knowing that not only I, but also your peers, will be reading these. Our TA, Michelle Daigle, is here specifically to help improve your writing. You must make at least ONE appointment to see her during the semester. Please do make use of the Writing Workshop at Kuy415 (956-7619) where you can sign up for half-hour appointments with writing tutors.

2) The reading responses are less formal. I will pose questions on the readings and ask you to respond. In many cases, the questions I pose will be big ones that could be answered by quoting the entire book or chapter. Do not do this. Instead, summarize briefly what the author says. In addition, inject some of your own thought to this. Do keep in mind that this should be a response, not a regurgitation.

3) In-class writing is even less formal. For one thing, it is not done on computer and I don’t expect the kind of “perfection” that instant editing, spell-checkers, grammar-checks easily provide.

The bottom line is that writing will be a self-conscious and fully integrated part of this course.
Thus, not only will you learn something about consumer cultures through taking this course, hopefully you will end up writing with greater clarity, thought, and care.

The format of papers is as follows:
- 1" margins, all around
- 12-point font, Times New Roman (i.e., what I have used in this syllabus)
- double-spaced
- pages numbered
- no title page for this length of a paper
- no folders or binders (this is a short paper)
- stapled

These approximate standard university requirements and should be followed not only in this course but in others as well.

In addition, PLEASE UNDERLINE YOUR THESIS STATEMENT in your introduction, as well as its restatement in your concluding paragraph. The thesis statement should answer the question: what is the point you are trying to make in this paper?

Each paper has two due dates: 1st draft and final draft.
* Note: for the 1st draft papers, please bring in 2 copies of your paper. We will conduct a peer review in class.
* When you hand in your final papers, please include your 1st drafts, your peer reviews, and your final drafts.

Late papers are highly discouraged. I will deduct 1 point per class day past due. This holds true for 1st and final drafts.

N.B. If you do not take part in the peer review (i.e. 1st draft paper), then 1 point is deducted from your paper grade. If you hand in your final draft paper 1 day late, then 1 point is deducted. If you hand in your final draft paper 2 days late, then 2 points are deducted. Etc. Do the math!

CLASS PARTICIPATION (10 points)
In a highly interactive course such as this, each student’s daily presence and participation is critical. You will be assessed on the basis of attendance, verbal participation, and completion of in-class worksheets. 5 points for leading class discussion + 5 points for class participation (including any in-class writing).

Class discussions on readings will be led by students. Sign up for groups in class. If you are a discussion leader, you must send me your answers to the reading questions by 12n the day before your assigned discussion. As leader you will be conducting a small group discussion on the reading, followed by a full-class discussion. You will be evaluated based upon your ability to LEAD the discussion. Your goal is not to provide answers to the questions posed. Rather, it is to generate and shape the discussion itself.

FINAL EXAMINATION: Tues, May 9 9:45-11:45am (20 points)
TAKE-HOME OPTION: Fri, 5/5, 3pm, emailed or in my mailbox

The final examination will be closed book, on the date given above. It will cover all the material of the course. I will hand out the exam questions on the last day of class (Tues 5/2), and
you will have the opportunity to discuss them. On the day of the exam, however, you will not be allowed to bring in any notes or books.

An alternative to this is a take-home exam on the same questions as distributed on the last day of class. I expect the take-home to be approx. 5-7 pages long. It is due on Fri, 5/5, 3pm emailed to me or in my mailbox. Failure to make this deadline means that you will have to take the exam as scheduled.

**EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITY!!

The annual KAWAI-KON is happening April 7-9 at the Hawaii Convention Center!
http://kawaiikon.com/

- Attend at least one day (2 hours minimum) of the convention.
- If you don’t want to pay the entrance fee, you can sit outside w/o going in and observe.
- Write up your observations and analysis USING CONCEPTS FROM THIS CLASS.
  Underline the concepts.
- 2-3 pg paper. Worth up to 3 extra credit points.
- Due 4/13 in class.

On electronic seductions and classroom etiquette

Rudeness has existed since time immemorial. However, I think that technology has contributed to our further devolution as beings that do not recognize common courtesy in a group setting, such as the classroom. Therefore, I feel the need to lay out some ground rules for the class. A lot of this is kindergarten stuff, yet it still needs saying. Maybe we all need reminders of the manners we supposedly learned in elementary school. Forgetting comes easy.

Bottom line: I believe that we have all become a more distractable bunch, and I think that technology contributes to it. Our attention spans are short. Electronic seductions call us constantly. These seductions make reading a book particularly difficult. They make listening to a lecture challenging. I will try to do my part to make the classroom time intellectually rich and of interest. I ask your cooperation in meeting me half way. This means stemming the tide of distraction. For 75 minutes, twice a week, for 16 weeks, I ask that you recover (or discover) your powers of focus and attention. We’ll be better thinkers for it.

1. Come to class on time. In fact, come to class at least one minute before class is supposed to start. It won’t kill you.
2. Turn off electronic distractions (I-phones, Blackberries, etc). Put them away. Don’t look at them, try not to think about them.
3. Don’t talk to neighbors while someone else is officially speaking in class (this could be me, or it could be another student).
4. Recapture the notion of undivided attention. (THIS is something that I feel is being lost through technology.)
5. If you are using your computer to take notes in class, don’t browse the Web, play games, chat, email, etc. Eliminate distractions – especially electronic ones. We have to relearn how to focus.
6. Use the bathroom before coming to class. There should be no reason – other than an emergency – for people getting up in the middle of the class and leaving the room. (I find this embarrassing to have to say.)
I call these ground rules of classroom courtesy, and in some ways I find it incredible that they need be stated in a university-level syllabus. So be it. At the same time, I do not necessarily want to lay out explicit and punitive means for enforcing them. I detest taking that position. I would prefer to think that in a university setting, we are all mature adults who come together willingly (even excitedly) in the spirit of mutual respect and eager learning. Therefore, these are old-fashioned rules designed to make our time together hashing out newfangled ideas the most productive that they can be. We are here to learn and to think. Join me in this endeavor.
CALENDAR (subject to change)

UNIT I  1/10-1/12  GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THEMES OF THE COURSE
1/10  What is popular culture and why study Japan through this lens?
1/12  Brief crazy history of modern Japan and its popular culture as pendulum swings

UNIT II  1/17-2/14  CHILDHOOD:  FEMININITY, CUTENESS
READING:  YANO – PINK GLOBALIZATION
1/17  NOSTALGIA AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF CHILDHOOD
1/19  CONSUMER CHILDHOODS:  MCDONALD’S,  DISNEYLAND
1/24  GIRL CULTURE
1/26  CUTENESS AND ITS TRANSNATIONAL CONSUMPTION
1/31  Reading discussion group #1; READING RESPONSES DUE
2/02  FILM:  TONARI NO TOTORO (1988, dir. Miyazaki Hayao)
2/07  FILM:  TONARI NO TOTORO -- discussion
2/09  Paper #1 peer review  BRING TWO COPIES
2/14  Paper #1 due

UNIT III  2/16-3/23  YOUNG ADULTHOOD – MASCULINITY
READING:  MODEN – JAPANESE FASHION CULTURES
2/16  OTAKU CULTURE AND MASCULINITY (video: “Otaku no Video”)
2/21  FILM:  “Densha Otoko”
*2/23  FILM:  “Densha Otoko”
2/28  MOE-BASED SEXUALITY AND ITS IDOLS
3/02  BŌSŌZOKU:  MOTORCYCLE MASCULINITY
3/07  HIP-HOP JAPAN
3/09  Reading discussion #2  READING RESPONSES DUE
*3/16  FILM:  SHALL WE DANSU -- discussion
3/21  Paper #2 peer review  BRING TWO COPIES
3/23  Paper #2 due

3/27-31  SPRING BREAK

UNIT IV  4/04-4/27  LATE ADULTHOOD – “TRADITION” AND NOSTALGIA
READING:  YANO – TEARS OF LONGING
4/04  MISORA HIBARI:  NOSTALGIA FOR POSTWAR JAPAN
4/06  BUTTERFLIES IN DRAG:  GENDERED KATA
*4/11  VIDEO:  DREAM GIRLS
*4/13  GUEST SPEAKER DEIRDRE CLYDE; EXTRA CREDIT KAWAII-KON DUE.
4/18  TORA-SAN:  JAPAN’S EVERYMAN PAST
4/20  Reading discussion #3  READING RESPONSES DUE
*4/27  FILM:  ZATOICHI – discussion

UNIT V  4/26-5/3  WRAP=UP
5/02  GLOBAL JAPAN; HAND OUT FINAL EXAM