ANTHROPOLOGY 484
JAPANESE POPULAR CULTURE
(Writing Intensive)

Spring 2010

GENERAL INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Christine Yano
Class meetings: TuTh 10:30-11:45am, Saunders 345
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Office hours: TuTh 1-2pm, or by appt

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 manga, anime, esute, pop music, food, and other forms of everyday life, 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. A particular focus of the course will be the simultaneous processes of globalization and nationalism, as played out in popular culture. 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.

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. Therefore, 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 from personal experience. What this class bring to the discussion are cultural and political issues 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 culture and 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 some critical thinking skills. These include understanding: 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; 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.

**ON WRITING**

This course is designated as writing intensive; therefore, you can expect to use writing in a number of ways. We will approach writing in three ways: 1) writing as thinking on paper; 2) writing as communicating; and 3) writing as crafted product. First, we will consider writing as a means by which one may give birth to and clarify one’s thoughts. I will give you opportunities to think through writing, in effect, communicating with oneself. Second, we will consider writing as a means of communicating with others. To this end, in particular kinds of writing, I will emphasize clarity of expression, which will include not only the mechanics of writing, but also the organization of it. These first and second aspects of writing are not unrelated. Thinking well and writing well go hand in hand. Third, we will consider writing as a process of interaction between you, your peers, and myself. We will craft your writing through peer-reviewed and teacher-critiqued drafts, hopefully resulting in a better product.

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. Please do make use of the Writing Workshop at Kuy415 (956-7619) where you can sign up for half-hour appointments with writing tutors. In addition, make use of my office hours during which I will be glad to read rough drafts of papers. 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.

In sum, writing will be a self-conscious and fully integrated part of this course. Thus, not only will you learn something about Japanese popular culture 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
10- or 12-point font (i.e., what I have used in this syllabus)
double-spaced
These are 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.

In addition, if anyone wants me to look over and comment on your 1st draft papers, I will give you opportunities to do so IF you hand in your paper to me the day BEFORE 1st drafts are due. You may submit these electronically up to 6pm on that day. I will give you comments within 24 hours (keep in mind that the extent of my comments depends in part on how many students take advantage of this opportunity).

Late papers are highly discouraged. I will deduct 1 point per 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!

COURSE WEBSITE
I will be using the course website created through Laulima in various ways. I will post handouts, lecture notes, announcements, etc, so please do check regularly. If the email that is listed on Laulima is not the one you prefer to use, please let me know and I will add your secondary email to the list. I regularly use the email available through Laulima to communicate with the class, including announcements, reminders, and deadlines.

BOOKS: these are required and available at the bookstore. In addition, copies are on reserve in Sinclair Library.
- Miller, Laura 2006 *Beauty Up; Exploring Contemporary Japanese Body Aesthetics.*
- Yano, Christine 2002 *Tears of Longing; Nostalgia and the Nation in Japanese Popular Song*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Grading:
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Reading responses 30%
Paper #1 20%
Paper #2 20%
Final exam 20%
In-class 10%

(5 points for facilitation team; 5 points for attendance, video sheets, class participation, etc.)

READING RESPONSES (in conjunction with discussion)
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. 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. You will be graded generously.

PAPERS: 5-7 pages
Papers will attempt to integrate films that we watch, with readings and lectures. The paper topic will be handed out at the beginning of the unit, so that your notes on lectures and readings can address the topic most directly. In your papers I expect you to use lectures and readings extensively to comment on the film. Failure to do so will result in a lower grade. Therefore, if you write a wonderful paper on Zatoichi but never mention readings or lectures, the highest grade you can receive is a B.

Please note that each paper has TWO due dates. The first one is for a first draft and will be submitted to in-class peer review. On the first draft due date, please bring in two copies of your paper.

Also note that I will comment on any first drafts that are handed in electronically 24 hours before the first draft due date. This means Mon or Wed at 9am prior to the first due date. I will comment and hand back to you in class. I encourage all of you to take advantage of this opportunity.

CLASS PARTICIPATION (5 + 5 = 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 facilitation team + 5 points for class participation.
FACILITATION TEAMS: each student will belong to a facilitation team of 7-8 students. This team will be required to lead the discussion for the reading in the unit. I strongly encourage members of the discussion team to meet outside class to decide how you will lead the discussion, divide responsibilities, etc.
One recommendation: begin the class with a brief presentation of the main ideas of the readings, then break up into small groups, led by one member of the
facilitation team plus 2 other students. End the class with a recap of the small group discussions.
- Note: graduate students should distribute themselves equally among teams and expect to take a leadership role.
- All members of the team will receive the same grade. Maximum number of points: 5 for facilitation.
- Sign-up for facilitation teams will be on 1/14.

FINAL EXAMINATION: Tues, May 11, 9:45-11:45am
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, 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. 6-7 pages long. It is due on Friday, 5/7 12n in my mailbox. Please have your exam date/time-stamped before placing in my box. Failure to make this deadline means that you will have to take the exam as scheduled.

TAKE-HOME OPTION: Fri., 5/7, 12n, in my mailbox
IN-CLASS OPTION: Thurs, 5/13, 9:45-11:45am, Saunders 345

Research Paper alternative to the final exam
All graduate students are required to write a research paper in lieu of the final exam. Undergraduates who have achieved 18 or better on both papers are also invited to write a research paper. The choice of topic is open, but must be approved by me. All papers must include some key concepts from the course. Failure to do so will result in a lowered grade.

Each student who writes a research paper will give a brief 10-minute presentation on their paper at the end of the semester.

Paper length: graduate students 10-15 pgs; undergraduate students 7-9 pgs.

Deadlines:
4/1 one paragraph on topic, emailed to me
4/8 one page on methods, bibliography
4/22 outline of paper
5/4 in-class presentations; papers due.

Note: if there are more than five students writing papers, presentations will be on 4/29 and 5/4.

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. If we do not find something immediately entertaining or if we find something too difficult, we mentally switch channels. In fact, we channel surf through our realms of attention, searching through multiple signals and messages. Electronic seductions call us constantly – and I include myself in this. These seductions make reading a book particularly difficult. They make listening to a lecture hard. I will try to do my part to make the classroom time intellectually challenging and of interest. I ask your cooperation in meeting me half way. I ask your help in 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: 1/12 -1/14 INTRODUCTION; GENERAL THEMES OF COURSE
Reading: Tobin, Ch 1

1/12 INTRODUCTION OF ISSUES
- WHAT IS POPULAR CULTURE AND WHY IS IT WORTH STUDYING?
- CONSUMER CULTURE
- GLOBALIZATION
- NATIONALISM
- GENDER/SEXUALITY
1/14 MODERN JAPAN, FOREIGN-DOMESTIC PENDULUM SWINGS, AND POPULAR CULTURE

UNIT II: 1/19 - 2/11 CHILDHOOD, ADOLESCENCE: CUTE CULTURE
Readings: Tobin, Ch 3 (Allison), 4 (Iwabuchi), 5 (Katsuno and Maret), 6 (Yano), 13 (Tobin)
Discussion of readings 1/28; written exercise due 2/02
* Paper #1, 1st draft due 2/09 (bring two copies)
  Final draft due 2/11
1/19 HELLO KITTY
  Reading: Ch3 (Allison), 4 (Iwabuchi)
1/21 MCDONALD’S, DISNEYLAND
  Reading: Ch5 (Katsuno and Maret), 6 (Yano)
1/26 MANGA/ANIME
  Reading: Ch 13 (Tobin)
1/28 DISCUSSION OF READINGS
2/02 FILM: TONARI NO TOTORO (1988, Hayao Miyazaki)
  * Written exercise on reading due
2/04 FILM: TONARI NO TOTORO & discussion
2/09 PAPER #1: 1ST DRAFT PEER REVIEW
2/11 PAPER #1: FINAL DRAFT DUE

UNIT III: 2/16-3/18 ADOLESCENCE/ ADULTHOOD: GENDER SYSTEMS
Readings: Miller: Introduction, Ch1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8
Discussion of readings 03/09; Written exercises due 03/11
Paper #2: 1st draft 03/16, final draft 03/18

2/16 GIRL CULTURE
  Reading: Miller, Introduction, Ch1
2/18 OTAKU AS ICON
  Reading: Miller Ch 3-4
2/23 VIDEO: OTAKU NO VIDEO
  Reading: Miller Ch 5
2/25 BOSOZOKU
Reading: Miller Ch6
3/02 FILM: DENSHA OTOKO (TRAIN MAN; Shosuke Murakami, 2005)
Reading: Miller Ch8
3/04 FILM: DENSHA OTOKO
3/09 DISCUSSION OF READINGS
* Written exercise on reading due
3/11 DRINKING CULTURE AND MASCULINITY (Paul Christensen)
3/16 PAPER #2: 1ST DRAFT PEER REVIEW
3/18 PAPER #2: FINAL DRAFT DUE

SPRING BREAK 3/20-3/28

UNIT IV: 3/30-4/29 LATE ADULTHOOD: “TRADITION”
Readings:
   Yano, Prologue, Ch. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, Epilogue
Discussion of readings 4/20; Written exercises due 4/22

3/30 BUTTERFLIES IN DRAG: GENDERED KATA
Reading: Yano, Prologue, Ch. 1
4/01 TAKARAZUKA
Reading: Yano, Ch. 3, 4
4/06 VIDEO: DREAM GIRLS (Wong AVC #11682)
Reading: Yano, Ch 5
4/08 COVER VERSIONS
Reading: Yano, Ch. 6
4/13 NOSTALGIA FOR JAPAN: ENKA
Reading: Yano, Ch7
4/15 TRANSNATIONAL NOSTALGIA: KOREAN DRAMAS
Reading: Yano, Epilogue
4/20 DISCUSSION OF READINGS
4/22 FILM: ZATOICHI (2003, Takeshi Kitano)
* Written exercise on reading due
4/27 FILM: ZATOICHI

UNIT V: 4/30-5/05 WRAP-UP
4/29 Global Japan
5/04 HAND OUT FINAL EXAM

FINAL EXAMINATION: Tues, May 11, 9:45-11:45am (closed book)