

Syllabus

Cool Japan: Pop Culture

Instructor: María José González Muñoz

Syllabus Information

Course Objectives

The purpose of this course is for students to become acquainted and/ or deepen their existing knowledge of anime and manga and how they conform one of the most important cores of pop culture, both in Japan and abroad. Students will learn about the history and characteristics of anime and manga and their inherent transmedia qualities together with how they shape or are shaped by other fields such as games, live action films, television dramas or even kabuki and advertising.

Learning Goals

By the end of the course participants will be able to

- 1) Demonstrate a better knowledge about Japanese pop culture from a manga and anime perspective
- 2) Understand and analyze the history, "grammar", characteristics and techniques behind manga and anime
- 3) Discern how anime and manga influences are ubiquitous in all aspects of Japanese society, culture and business.

Course Schedule (tentative)

- Class 1:

Introduction to the course and its proceedings. Students' Pop Culture Interest Inventory. Sharing interests with other students. Definition of Pop Culture. Exporting Cool Japan and *Kawaii*. Pair/ Group discussions of Current Pop Culture Trends in other countries compared to Japan: what is currently cool/ fashionable/ popular/ etc. Students Perception of *Otakus* and *Weeabos*

- Class 2:

Defining Pop Culture. Icons of Manga and Anime.

Manga at the heart of pop culture: reasons. Popularity of *Yaoi* / BL (Boy Love) and *Yuri*. *Isekai*. Pair/ Group discussion of images. Viewing of relevant clips.

- Class 3:

History of Manga (1): *Choju- Jinbutsu Giga Emaki*, *Hokusai Manga*, *Ukiyo-e*. European Japonisme.

- Class 4:

History of Manga (2): From Girls' magazines into *Shojo manga*. *Shonen manga*.

Kamishibai. *Gekiga* and counterculture in the 60s. Year 24 Group.

Manga genres and examples. Study cases: *Ashita no Joe* and *The Rose of Versailles*.

- Class 5:

Manga grammar. *Manpu*: Manga iconography

Speech bubbles, background designs, faces, expressions, designs. Examples.

Manga reading direction. *Yon-koma* manga.

- **Class 6:**

International recognition of manga as Art Number 9. The marketing of manga. Main publishers. From manga/ anime into *ra-nobe* (Light novels) and musicals. Manga and technologies/ social media. Webtoons. Fan media. Games.

- **Class 7:**

History of Anime (1)

Early animation techniques: *Chiyogami Eiga*, Silhouette, Cel and Stop Motion. The birth of Japanese animation and relation to its global context.

The pioneers: Shimokawa, Kitayama, Kouchi, Maekawa, Ofuji, Masaoka, Murata and Seo.

Animation genres in interwar Japan. Viewing of some relevant examples and clips.

- **Class 8:**

History of Anime (2)

Anime and propaganda. Case studies.

Influence on the "God of Manga", Tezuka Osamu. Anecdotes by Tezuka himself.

Toei Manga Eiga Studios. Postwar anime and colour: *Hakujaden* (The White Serpent)

Mini-presentations: My favourite manga/ anime / game

- **Class 9:**

Tezuka Osamu: biographical details

Tezuka and the Takarazuka Revue

Astro Boy : from serialised manga into animated television series. Establishment of conventions for animation weekly series. Advertising, sponsorship and *Manga Eiga*. Toys.

Anime Tourism: popularity abroad, students's own experiences and wishes/ plans.

Seichi (Sacred spots) around Kwansei Gakuin University and Kansai.

- **Class 10:**

Field Trip to the Osamu Tezuka Museum in Takarazuka. Stroll around the Takarazuka Grand Theatre and station area if possible, searching for Pop Culture elements and contents studied in class.

- **Class 11:**

Anime Icons:

Dystopian Japan: Neo- Tokyo 2019 and *Akira*.

International recognition of anime: the case of Otomo Katsuhiro's *Akira*.

Apocalyptic manga, anime and film in Japan. *Godzilla*.

Studio Ghibli's *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* (1984).

Neon Genesis Evangelion (1995- 1996).

Makoto Shinkai's works

- **Class 12:**

Akiba Culture (Cosplay, Maid Cafés, etc.) and *Otome Road*. Discussion of student's impressions, likes and dislikes.

Seiyuu (Voice actors) as pop idols.

Voice acting in Japan: historical background

Voice acting academies. Famous voice actors and sample clips.

- **Class 13:**

Field Trip to Kyoto

- **Class 14:**

Students' presentations on Pop Culture and discussion

- **Class 15:**

Students Presentations on Pop Culture and Discussion

Course Summary and Wrap-up

Evaluation

Active participation in class discussions work on assignments: 20%

Presentation : 50%

Field Trip Report (2-3 pages) : 30%