EALL 375 Japanese Cultural Studies (Manga and Anime) Syllabus

Instructor: Chris Smith
Office: Lincoln Annex 2-4
Phone: 956-2086
Email: cssmit@hawaii.edu (best contact method)
Office Hours: Tuesday 2-3pm or by appointment (Skype appointments possible)
Alternate class meeting location: The outside tables at Paradise Palms

Course Description

EALL 375 is a survey of Japanese manga (comics) and anime (animation) from their beginnings in the middle of the 20th century to the present. Although manga and anime are enjoyed by an international audience, this course will explore them as a Japanese medium and critically examine how they interact with ideology and history in Japan.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

1) Students will be able to critically analyze works of manga and anime.
2) Students will be able to identify major works of manga and anime and describe their contributions to the medium.
3) Students will be able to explain general historical trends and the ways they affect manga and anime throughout the period in question.
4) Students will be able to describe major trends in the style and content of manga and anime.
5) Students will be able to write persuasively about manga and anime.

Textbooks and other materials


Tezuka, Osamu Astro Boy Vol. 1&2 Dark Horse [K][G]
Tezuka, Osamu Phoenix Vol. 1 VIZ Media [K][G]
Tezuka, Osamu Phoenix Vol. 3 VIZ Media [K][G]
Tezuka, Osamu Phoenix Vol. 7 VIZ Media [K][G]
Tezuka, Osamu Phoenix Vol. 8 Viz Media [K][G]
Kishimoto, Masahi Naruto Vol. 1 VIZ Media [K][G]
+1 TBD

Additional materials will be uploaded to Laulima. Laulima can be accessed through MyUH or at laulima.hawaii.edu.

**If I need to contact you individually or as a class about assignments, class cancellations, due date changes, etc., I will do it through Laulima. Make sure Laulima sends email to an account you check. By default it sends email to your hawaii.edu account, but you can change that in My Workspace -> Account. You are responsible for communication transmitted this way.**
Grading
Grades will be assessed according to the following breakdown. See below for descriptions:

Discussion leader day - 15%
Class Participation - 10%
Reading Journal - 10%
One 8- to 10-page final essay - 20%
Midterm - 20%
Final - 25%

Absences

An absence will, of course, result in a zero for your participation grade for that day. There will be no makeups for missed exams without a valid, documented excuse (i.e., a doctor's note).

Late Work

Essays are due at the assigned time and date. Late essays will be marked down one letter grade for every day late. All assignments must be completed to pass the class.

Long Term Crises and Makeup Work

If you suffer a major life crisis during the semester (car accident, death in the family, etc.) that necessitates a long-term absence, I am of course willing to work with you so that you can make up work you miss without penalty. Keep in mind, however, that in the interest of fairness you must complete all the assignments that other students do. Therefore, please don’t wait until you’ve already missed weeks of class, but contact me early on so that we can arrange your makeup work.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty, either in the form of cheating or plagiarism, will not be tolerated. Any proven instances may result in an automatic grade of "F" for the course and WILL result in referral to the Office of Student Affairs.

Additional Information

Cell phones and other mobile devices should be silenced or turned off during class. You can use laptops in class for reading PDFs or taking notes, but please refrain from activities that will distract your classmates.
If you have a disability with related academic access needs, you are encouraged to contact the KOKUA Program, Student Services Center, Room 013, (V/T) 956-7511. KOKUA is our campus program that serves students with disabilities.

No animals are allowed in the classroom except service animals approved by the KOKUA program.

**Course Philosophy**

When we talk about manga and anime with our friends or on blogs, internet forums, etc., we usually take the perspective of a reviewer. We are concerned with evaluating a work: is it good or bad? Did we like it or not? Did it make us happy or depressed? Would we recommend it to our friends? In this class, however, we need to shift our perspective to that of the scholar. We’re not interested in reviewing the works in this course. What we’re interested in here is analysis: we’re trying to find something below the surface of a text, something that is not immediately obvious. We’re trying to dig a little deeper to find hidden themes, symbols, and reflections of the history and philosophy of the time works were written.

Japanese manga and anime are well established in US bookstores, on US television and, of course, on the English internet. This course anticipates that many students will be familiar with some manga and anime already. However, this course is designed to take a critical look at manga and anime as narrative art that is produced in Japan and is the product of specific historical processes. We will examine the history of manga and anime production, as well as how manga and anime produce history. Although manga and anime are entertainment products, they do more than innocently entertain. We will look at how they are enmeshed in Japanese political and social ideology.

Contemporary manga and anime were developed in the tumultuous postwar period, and they often take as their subject matter dark episodes in Japanese history. Therefore, as we examine manga and anime, don’t expect happy endings. These works will (hopefully) entertain you, in the sense that they will engage you emotionally and intellectually, but we will be examining works quite different from the positive stories you typically encounter in the anime displayed on American TV.
Assignments

Discussion Leader Days

Every student will be assigned one day to be the discussion leader. When you are the discussion leader you should prepare to give a quick, informal presentation to the class, about 5 minutes. Your presentation should focus your classmates’ attention on specific features of the day’s text(s). Point out key features, either visual or narrative; identify key plot or character development moments; compare and contrast to earlier works; show us anything you found surprising or interesting. You should prepare a visual aid to help present your ideas (i.e., Powerpoint).

After this quick presentation, you should be prepared to lead the class in a discussion. Rather than a presentation, this part should be more of a dialog. At the end of your presentation you should have 2-3 discussion questions about the text ready that can serve to spark class discussion. These should be questions you don’t know the answer to. After all, the whole point is to get a good discussion going. You should ask your classmates for input, and be prepared to field questions from both your classmates and me, and hopefully get a lively discussion going.

Some days will have two discussion leaders.

Final Essay

This essay should be 8-10 pages, double spaced, in 12-point type. This is a persuasive essay that presents a thesis and defends it by citing from the readings or viewings. For this essay at least two secondary sources are required.

The goal of this paper is to give you a high degree of freedom to explore topics and works that interest you, using the knowledge and analytical skills you have learned in class. You should pick your own work of manga or anime and develop a thesis about that work you wish to write about. You can choose to further examine one of the works we have gone over, or a work of your own choosing (within reason). You must submit your paper abstract by the “final essay abstract due” date. I will then review your abstract and suggest changes; we will go back and forth however many times necessary to hammer out a solid thesis. Then a draft of the essay will be due by the “final essay due” date. You will have an opportunity to revise your draft for a higher grade if you wish. However, in order to do so you must schedule a meeting with me to go over your essay and talk about how it can be improved. No revisions will be accepted without a meeting. The final revised draft will be due by the “final essay revision” due date.

You will also have to give a 5 minute presentation on your paper topic during the last week of class as part of your essay grade.
Reading Journal

You will be required to keep a reading journal. For each day’s reading(s) or viewing(s), you should jot down about a paragraph (you can certainly write more, but it is not expected). This is a learning tool that will help you reflect upon the readings. Unlike the essay, this does not have to be well written, convincing, persuasive or profound. But it should be substantive, i.e., it should be about how you are processing the reading. Perhaps the reading (or viewing) sparked an idea. Perhaps a connection with something you learned in another class clicked in place for you. Perhaps something in the work really stuck out to you. But no plot summaries (I’ve already read the text, thank you), and don’t review the work (i.e., write about whether it was good or bad, interesting or boring, etc., see the course philosophy). Rather, write a quick paragraph about how you are reacting to or processing the work.

This will become a journal of your thoughts that might be useful when writing the essay. Also, if class discussions stagnate, you can always refer to your journal for something to talk about. I will collect journals every few weeks via Laulima.

Exams

The midterm and final exams will be taken in class, closed book and closed notes. The final will be cumulative.