

## Contemporary Culture in Japan

### Instructor :

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Lesson : Monday, Thursday 14:30-16:00

Office: N/A

Office Hours : by appointment, after class

Subject code : 1034

### Course Description:

Much of contemporary Japanese culture has been identified with ubiquitous genres of popular culture such as comics (manga), animation, fashion and music. Considering the scope of their influence and relevance especially among the youth around the world, it is worth exploring how these genres have developed and the role they played in shaping the image of contemporary Japanese culture and thereby help students gain a deeper understanding of Japanese culture in a modern context.

The course will be conducted as a seminar-style class meant to encourage critical thinking. The course will survey and examine the genres of popular culture and allow students to critically study these from the perspective of their own culture and also to consider their significance and impact in relation to perceptions of Japan. Students will be given ample opportunity to exchange ideas and promote discussion by drawing on their own experiences and observations about popular culture as well as different trends and phenomena associated with it.

They will be asked to select a genre according to their interest and conduct a mini research for the duration of the course to conclude with a presentation and submission of a final paper. The medium of instruction will basically be English but some Japanese especially for terminologies will be used.

### Resources

The teacher will provide hand-outs. Additional references will be announced in class.

## Evaluation

Attendance is important but must be accompanied by active participation in class discussions. As a rule, a student who has been absent 5 or more times without approval will automatically fail the class and no make-up work will be given for unexcused absences.

Students' evaluation will be based on: attendance (20%), active participation (25%), reports (20%), presentation (15%) and final paper (20%).

## Course Requirements

Students are expected to conduct research on a topic of their choice from among the following genres:

- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| • アニメ                           | • Animation  |
| • 漫画                            | • Manga (comics)   |
| • ファッション                        | • Fashion  |
| • 流行                            | • Trends   |
| • CM (コマーシャル)                   | • Advertisements/commercials   |
| • 音楽 (J-pop、ビジュアル系、歌謡曲、演歌等)     | • Music (J-pop, visual-kei, <i>kayoukyoku</i> , <i>enka</i> , et al) |
| • テレビ (ドラマ・ワイドショー・サスペンス・バラエティ等) | • TV (drama, <i>waido</i> show, suspense, variety, et al)            |
| • キャラクター                        | • Characters   |
| • テーマパーク                        | • Theme parks  |
| • オタク (アキバ系・鉄道オタク等)             | • <i>Otaku</i> ( <i>Akiba-kei</i> , train <i>otaku</i> , et al)      |
| • アイドル (タレント等)                  | • Idols (talents & personalities)                                    |
| • ゲーム (ソフト、ゲームセンター、携帯ゲーム機等)     | • Games (software, arcade, mobile phone games, et al)                |

For the duration of the semester, students will be asked to give regular progress updates of their research through oral reports. Following the reports, students will engage in discussions about their findings towards more critical and objective analysis of their research topic. At the end of the semester, they must make a presentation about their research for about 10-15 minutes and then submit a final paper.

## Course Schedule (Tentative)

Week 1 September 9	Orientation Introduction to the course Definition of popular culture
Week 2 September 13・16	Overview of genres of Japanese popular culture Perceptions of Japanese popular culture in Japan and overseas Selection of research topic
Week 3 September 27・30	Lectures Free discussion <i>(Selected genres, to be decided later)</i>
Weeks 4 ~ 7 October 4・7 October 14 October 18・21 October 25	First phase of progress reports Student-led discussions
Weeks 7 ~ 10 October 28 November 1・4 November 8・11 November 15	Second phase of progress reports Student-led discussions
Weeks 10 ~ 12 November 18 November 22・25 November 29・December 2	Final research presentations
Week 14 December 13・16	Lectures Free discussion <i>(Selected genres, to be decided later)</i>
Week 15 December 20	Submission of research paper