

The Cultural History of Japan

Instructor: Terry Jackson

Time: TR 10:00-11:40 Jones 305

Office Hours: M 10-11, T 12-1, W 10-11, or I am happy to make an appointment

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Course Description

This course addresses themes related to popular culture in Japan starting with its first big boom in the late seventeenth-century until the present. From the electronics of Play Station and Tamagocchi to the animation of Pokemon and Sailormoon, Japan's pop culture is one of the most pervasive in the world today. We will explore this phenomenon by examining the issues of gender, sexuality, religion, race, technology, social status, and identity as they pertain to popular culture. In doing so, we will use four different approaches in understanding these issues-- historical, sociological, psychological, and artistic. Our research material will include such cultural expressions as woodblock prints, kabuki plays, samurai movies, literature, animation, and music. Some of the larger questions of this course will be: What is popular culture? What does it mean to be Japanese? What does popular culture reflect about society and how does it influence society? And who controls popular culture?

Course Goals and Objectives

Goal/Objective	Assessed Through
To achieve a general understanding of Japanese culture and history over the past 400 years	Class Discussions Homework Exams
To develop tools for interpreting the relationship between culture, history, and society.	Exams Paper Class Discussions
To develop skills for analyzing historical materials, textual and visual.	Homework In-Class Exercises Exams
Development of better techniques for communicating ideas.	Paper Presentation Classroom Discussion

These course goals are shaped by Learning Objectives determined by the history department. See the appendix for an explanation of how departmental goals and the Ribbons of Excellence are related in intent.

History Departmental Objectives (See Appendix)

Constructing Persuasive Arguments

Expressing Ideas Effectively

Formulating Analytical Questions

Considering Various Perspectives

Understanding Important Historical Trends and Their Relationship to Modern Society

Obtaining Knowledge of Local, Regional, and Global Cultural Systems
Developing Visual Literacy

Ribbon Objectives

As you know, Adrian College is guided by Five Ribbons of Excellence. In brief, they are:

Caring for humanity and the world.

Learning throughout a lifetime.

Thinking critically.

Crossing boundaries and disciplines.

Developing creativity.

This course hopes to promote all 5, but will repeatedly challenge you to develop the latter three.

We will regularly discuss the relationship of our subjects of study to these ribbons.

Prerequisites

None.

Designations

This course is designated as “Non-Western”. As a non-western course, students will learn about the values, language, religions, governments, and other aspects of a non-European society and culture.

Texts

Japan Pop! edited by Tim Craig (JP)

Many articles and chapters provided by the professor.

Assignments and Grading

Participation (20%)

Joining into our daily class discussion is essential for those who want to receive a strong grade in this class. It will be impossible for you to meaningfully participate unless you have completed the reading by class time, so make sure that it is done. Your participation grade will be based on the following criteria:

Reading Quizzes and Homeworks (15%)

Homework assignments will typically be short answer questions regarding reading assignments, but may also ask you to do a little of your own research on a topic. Quizzes will be based on the discussion questions provided before class.

“Tie-Together” Homework (15%--3% each)

Slightly more challenging homework assignments will ask you to tie together readings and class discussions over several days into short essays (1-3 pages). They will not ask for outside or extra research, but are intended to encourage students to think more critically about a given topic.

Exams (30%--15% each)

You will have two exams. Each will consist of several short answer questions and one essay question that asks you to tie together issues of history and cultural development.

Research Paper (20%)

This assignment is intended to allow you to learn more about a topic of personal interest. Papers will be approximately 7 pages.

Timely Assignments and Attendance Policy

Assignments cannot be made up unless I agree to it. Make sure to get documentation for

any missed assignments (such as doctor's notes, memorial programs, etc.). Late assignments will lose half a letter grade for each day they are late.

Students are expected to attend all classes, but I realize that illnesses and other unexpected things can occasionally get in the way. Therefore, you are allowed 2 absences with no penalty (assignments are still due and cannot be made up). These 2 absences can be for good or bad reasons. Each absence after the first 2 absences will result in a reduction of **1.5%** from your final grade. So don't use your 2 up on stupid stuff!

Technology and Student Responsibility—Blackboard, Emails, Printers, and Cell Phones

I expect students to behave **RESPONSIBLY** with technology in this course. You are all adults, and should conduct yourself that way.

Blackboard readings You will receive many reading assignments through Blackboard. The pdf's are sometimes large, and this can occasionally cause problems when retrieving them. Therefore, you should get your reading assignments from Blackboard well ahead of time. Inability to open a pdf is not a valid excuse for coming to class unprepared!

Emailed assignments All assignments should be turned in as hard copies and on time. If you email me an assignment and I don't receive it or can't open it—too bad for you! Your email problems are not my responsibility.

Printers Your printer problems are not my problem. Assignments turned in late will be counted as late, even if the printer in the computer lab wasn't working or you ran out of ink.

Cell phones Cell phones are fun and useful, and completely inappropriate to use in class. For each time I catch you looking at your cell phone during a regular class periods, I will remove 1% off of your final grade. You will not be notified every time I catch you. So just because I don't say anything to you when you're doing it, doesn't mean you aren't losing the points. If I catch you looking at your cell phone during a quiz or exam, you will receive a 0 on that quiz or exam.

Academic Honesty

All students are expected to be professional, respectful, and honest in this class. Each student is required to read and sign an Academic Honesty Contract in order to participate and receive a grade. Be aware that plagiarism, the borrowing or stealing of another's ideas or words without recognizing that person, will not be tolerated. Plagiarism in this class will result in a failing grade for the assignment and possibly for the class as well. Don't do it! See the policy in your student handbook or talk to me if you have questions.

Disability Statement

Students with documented disabilities may receive appropriate accommodations. Please talk to me if you have questions.

Instructor Responsibilities

The instructor will provide an encouraging environment in which to learn. Any student who feels confused, uncomfortable, or unsafe in the classroom should bring it to the instructor's attention. The instructor will work to remedy the situation as expeditiously as possible.

The instructor will provide timely feedback on assignments. Students should feel comfortable inquiring about their performance and standing in the class at any time.

The instructor will be available to students. Please feel free to come to office hours or make

arrangements to meet and discuss issues related to the course.

Schedule

(Assignments and their due date may be changed at the professors discretion)

Week	Topic	Reading	Notes	Larger Assignments
8/25	What Is (Japanese) Culture?	“Tokugawa Period” (BB)		
9/1	Japanese Identity And Religion	“Cherry Blossoms and Their Viewing: A Window onto Japanese Culture” BB “Zen and the Samurai” BB	Visual Literacy and Critical Reading	First Tie-Together
9/8	The Nobility Of Farting: Town And Country In Early Modern Japan	“Edo: The Warrior’s City” BB “Edokko: The Townsperson” BB “Hohiron” by Hiraga Gennai BB “Playboy Roasted Edo Style” by Santo Kyoden BB	Possible Research Topics due (Weds.)	
9/15	When Is An Eggplant Not An Eggplant?: Sex And The City	“The World of Sex in Tokugawa and Meiji Japan” www.east-asian-history.net/textbooks/172/ch7.htm “The Pleasure Quarters and Tokugawa Culture” BB “Love: The Contest Between Two Forces” BB “The ABCs of Boy Love” BB “Song for a Woman of the Street” BB	Research Topic due (Weds.)	Second Tie-Together
9/22	The Political Stage: Bakufu, Power, And Social Class	“Bakufu vs. Kabuki” BB “Ancient on-account and modern cash-down” BB “Tears in a Paper Shop” BB	Research Bibliography due	

9/29	Geisha Girls And Jealous Wives: Gender	"Sailor Moon: Japanese Superheroes for Global Girls" JP "Characters of Worldly Young Women" BB "A Wayward Wife" BB		Third Tie-Together
10/6	Giant Catfish Earthquakes: The Cultural Of Revolution	"Edo in 1868: The View from Below" BB		Midterm Exam
10/13	Baseballs and Loincloths: Sports As Tradition And Change	"Baseball and the Quest for National Dignity" BB "Sumo in the Popular Culture of Contemporary Japan" BB	Bibliographical Summaries due (Weds.)	Midterm Break (Monday)
10/20	Modern Legs: Music And Fashion	<i>Japanese Popular Culture and Globalization</i> (5-10 pp.) BB "The Modern Girl as Militant" BB "Can Japanese Sing the Blues" JP	Research Thesis Statement due (Weds.)	
10/27	"Sneaky" Japanese, "Stupid" Chinese, And "Impure" Americans: War And The Enemy	"'There's No Yellow in Red, White, and Blue': The Creation of Anti-Japanese Music During WWII" BB "Master Propagandists and their Craft" from <i>The Thought War</i> BB		Fourth Tie-Together
11/3	"Made In Japan": Technology And Japanese Globalization	"A Karaoke Perspective on International Relations" JP "Japan's Empty Orchestra" and "Pachinko" BB <i>Japanese Popular Culture and Globalization</i> (10-17 & 23-34 pp.) BB		

11/10	Work, Sex, And Family	"From Sazae-san to Crayon Shinchan: Family Anime, Social Change, and Nostalgia in Japan" JP		Fifth Tie-Together
11/17	"I Think I'm Turning Japanese": Japanese Culture As Soft Power	"Doraemon Goes Abroad" JP "A Karaoke Perspective on International Relations" JP "Hello Kitty in America" / "Japanese Dominance of the Video Game Industry" / "South Park Does Japan" BB <i>Japanese Popular Culture and Globalization</i> (59-67 pp.) BB	First Draft due (Mon.) Peer Reviews	
11/24	Turning Japanese Continued	TBA		Thanksgiving Break (Wednesday)
12/1			Presentations (Monday and Tuesday) Papers Due (Tuesday)	
12/10			Final Exam (Wednesday) 3:30-5:30	

Appendix: Grading

1. Class Participation (20%)

History professors believe that if you can't discuss a topic, you can't learn about a topic. Class discussions serve several purposes. They give the professor and opportunity to gauge whether you completed the reading assignments and how well you understood those assignments. They provide students the opportunity to ask questions and learn more about the topic. They help students develop their critical/analytical and communicative skills.

Your participation grade will be based on the following criteria:

Assessment	Explanation	Percentage Rewarded
Excellent	Always attends class, displays a strong understanding of the materials, and offers insightful comments and provocative questions.	19-20
Good	Always attends class, shows an understanding of the materials, and provides comments of substance.	17-18
Adequate	Occasional absences and occasional participation in class.	15-16
Poor	Occasional absences and rarely joins into discussions.	13-14
Failing	Frequent absences and rarely participates.	≤ 12

2. Reading Quizzes and Homeworks (15%)

Nobody loves homework, but students can learn very little from a course which has nothing but lectures from the professor. Homework provides a basis so that students can discuss and better understand issues that come up in lectures. Reading quizzes will only be given as need be (ie., if it seems that the class is not doing the reading, we will start having reading quizzes)

Each homework will be assessed using the rubric below. At the end of the semester homework and quiz points will be converted to a percentage towards the final grade out of a possible 15%.

Homework Rubric

Description	Assessment	Possible Points
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Homework meets all expectations, which include: Typed. Written in the acceptable format (ie., as an essay) with good grammar and spelling. Thoughtfully answer all questions asked. Incorporates details from readings or research effectively and thoroughly. Displays a strong understanding of the readings or research done.	Well done	4
Homework meets only 3-4 of the expectations listed above. Or homework meets all 5, but not all are met strongly.	Satisfactory	3
Homework meets 2 or less of the expectations listed above. Or does a poor job in most categories, though there is indication that some reading was done.	Poor	2
Homework seems to be mostly guesswork with little indication that the readings/ research has been completed.	Unsatisfactory	1
Homework not turned in.	Missing	0

Reading quiz rubric to be provided later if needed.

3. Tie-Togethers (15%--3% each)

Tie-togethers ask students to think more deeply about the readings and discussions and to make connections between them. They also require student take time to write their ideas in a thoughtful and organized way. Tie-togethers are assessed according to the following rubric:

	2	1	0
Thesis	Interesting, original thesis that makes sense.	Thesis that makes sense.	No clear thesis, or thesis makes no sense.
Support	Uses appropriate examples from readings, lectures, etc. to support thesis.	Little use of examples to support thesis.	No support of thesis.
Thoroughness	All aspects of question are addressed fully.	Some aspects of question are not addressed adequately.	Essay does not address question.

Readability	No problems with grammar/spelling. Essay written with flair.	Some grammatical/spelling mistakes. And/or little effort to make the essay interesting to read.	Many grammatical/spelling mistakes.
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4. Exams (30%--15% each)

Exams will consist of short answer and essay questions. Criteria for grading will be provided prior to each exam.

5. Research Paper (20%)

Additional details, including a rubric, will be provided in class.

Appendix: Departmental Objectives and ROE

Objectives and Goals for HIST 239

Departmental Learning Outcomes		Explanation			Ribbons of Excellence	
Constructing Persuasive Arguments	Thesis-driven essay assignments and presentations, supported by appropriate evidence.		X		X	X
Expressing Ideas Effectively	Emphasis on multiple drafts, rhetorical precision, and coherence of argument. Discussion-driven classes.		X		X	X
Formulating Analytical Questions	Open-ended research assignments. Responsibility for leading class discussions. Formulation of thesis statements. Assessment of primary and secondary historical evidence.		X		X	X
Considering Various Perspectives	Comparative analysis of primary and secondary sources. Inclusion of categories of race, class, and gender whenever appropriate.	X	X	X		

Understanding Important Historical Trends and Their Relationship to Modern Society	Assignments and discussions that link past and present.	X	X			X
Obtaining Knowledge of Local, regional, and global cultural systems	Art history periods are paired with case studies to connect international trends with local iterations.	X	X	X		X
Developing Visual Literacy	Study of art and visual culture in order to recognize iconographies and visual grammars that reoccur across materials, cultures, and time.		X	X	X	X

Caring For Humanity Thinking Critically Crossing Boundaries and Disciplines Developing Creativity Learning Throughout a Lifetime

Adrian College History Department Academic Honesty Contract

I. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the theft of another person's words or ideas.

You are plagiarizing if you take ideas, sentences, research, or phrases from a book, internet website, friend, classmate, or another source and then insert them into your paper without citation.

You are also plagiarizing if you use more than two consecutive words from a source and insert them into your paper without putting quotation marks around them in addition to citing them. It is also plagiarism if you paraphrase a source and do not provide a citation.

II. Academic Dishonesty and Cheating

Submitting the same paper for two different classes without clearing it with both professors is academic dishonesty.

Submitting a paper that you did not write yourself is academic dishonesty.

Unless the assignment is specified as a group project, collaborating with friends and classmates is academic dishonesty. If you have any questions about this, ask your professor.

III. Consequences

If you plagiarize or commit academic dishonesty, you will receive a zero for the assignment and possibly fail the class. Your professor will also take official disciplinary action by filing reports with the Deans for Student Affairs and Academic Affairs.