

**Introduction: East Asian Culture: Japan**

Tuesday & Thursday: 11:35am-12:55pm

Instructor: Prof. Yuriko Furuhata

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Office hours: Thursday 1:30pm-2:30pm and by appointment on Zoom

Teaching Assistants:

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**Description**

This introductory survey course on Japanese culture provides a set of intellectual frameworks by which to understand the historical, socio-economic, geopolitical, and popular formations of “Japanese” culture. While the idea of a survey course on a single nation-state such as Japan may connote a unified, homogeneous, and fixed entity, its parameters and definitions are in fact never stable. Given this premise this course will not attempt to cover the entire cultural history of Japan or treat it as a homogeneous entity. Instead, the course is structured along the following threads of inquiry that highlight the cultural heterogeneity of Japan.

These threads are: 1) the gendered power dynamics in premodern and modern Japan; 2) the impacts of imperialism, settler colonialism, and capitalism in Japan and in East Asia; and 3) the developments of the scroll, print, photographic, moving-image, and social media in Japan. The recurrent tropes and themes that bind these three sections together are figures of the marginalized and the mysterious, often appearing in the form of *specters*, *ghosts*, *monsters*, and the *nonhuman* who embody “differences.” Using these figures of the popular imaginary as mediators of our inquiry, this course will explore various aspects of Japanese cultural practices, social structures, and political history through a wide range of literary, historiographical, filmic, and theoretical texts.

**Objectives**

The course is designed to introduce students to a set of interdisciplinary methodologies, scholarly approaches and materials related to the study of Japanese culture. One of the goals of this class is to move beyond culturally essentialist views to Japan, which position Japanese culture as immutable, ahistorical, and unrelated to the political events in the rest of the world. Readings, lectures, discussion, and assignments are also designed to holistically develop your reading, writing, and communication skills.

**Readings**

Readings will be made available on myCourses.

**Office hours**

Office hours will be held on Zoom on Thursday 1:30pm-2:30pm. There will be a sign-up sheet/thread posted on myCourses for 10-minute slots. Depending on demand, office hours may be extended on some weeks. Please sign up for a slot in advance before coming to the office hours. The Zoom link for the office hours will be provided on myCourses. If you have time conflicts and cannot make it to the regular office hours, please email me. We’ll discuss alternative arrangements. I will also stay on Zoom for a few extra minutes right after class on Thursday to answer questions.

### **Course Delivery Guidelines**

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the class will take place both asynchronously and synchronously on Zoom on Tuesdays and Thursdays. However, in order to accommodate for the challenges posed by the remote delivery, the class time will be cut shorter (60 minutes). All the Zoom sessions will be recorded *except* individual Breakout Room sessions. *The attendance in these synchronous class sessions is not mandatory but encouraged.*

Unless announced in advance on myCourses, **Tuesday** classes will be delivered as **pre-recorded** asynchronous lectures. These pre-recorded lectures will be uploaded on myCourses by the start of Tuesday class time.

On **Thursday** we will have **synchronous Zoom** classes; these sessions will mainly be allocated for follow-up comments on the lectures from Tuesday, Q&A sessions with the instructor and TAs, and small group discussions in Breakout Rooms. Students are encouraged to post questions on myCourses by Wednesday 3:00pm EST (see Assignment #1). Based on these pre-submitted questions, the instructor and students will review lectures and course materials together. Please pay regular attention to announcements made on myCourses. Before each quiz, there will be short review sessions held by TAs. More information on these review sessions will be posted on myCourses.

### **Additional Note on Intellectual Property**

Please note that this format for the delivery of this course is unusual. It is explained by our current extraordinary circumstances, and aims to allow you, as students, to complete this term with the requisite knowledge for this course, and to succeed in your assessments. I ask for everyone's collaboration and cooperation in ensuring that video recordings of the class, lecture, and associated material are not reproduced, distributed, or placed in the public domain. This means that each of you can use it for your own personal educational purposes, but you cannot allow others to use it, by putting it up on the internet or by giving it or selling it to others who will copy it and make it available. © Instructor-generated course materials (e.g., handouts, notes, summaries, exam questions, etc.) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of copyright can be subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures. Thank you very much for your help with this.

### **Methods of Evaluation:**

#### **1) Questions-Writing Assignment (Five Questions) (10%)**

For this assignment, please post a short question (composed of maximum 2 sentences) on Tuesday's recorded lectures and the course readings by the following day, Wednesday, at 3:00pm EST on myCourses. Some of these questions may be used to facilitate class discussions on Thursday. Posting *one* question per week will earn you 2 points (2% of your final grade), and you will cumulatively earn 10 points (10% of your final grade) for posting your questions for *five* different weeks. I welcome and encourage you to post more than five questions, but you only need to post five questions (on five different weeks) to receive full points for this assignment. *For the ease of weekly reading, this assignment will be submitted on the "Discussion" page.*

**2) Take-Home Quiz #1 (30%)**

This take-home quiz will consist of a mixture of multiple-choice questions, fill-in-the-blank questions, and short answers. The instructions and questions will be posted on Saturday February 13 by 12:00pm EST and the assignment is due on **Tuesday February 16, at 5:00pm EST**. This is an open-book Quiz. Please submit it via myCourses.

**3) Take-Home Quiz #2 (30%)**

This take-home quiz will consist of a mixture of multiple-choice questions, fill-in-the-blank questions, and short answers. The instructions and questions will be posted on Saturday March 27 by 12:00pm EST and the assignment is due on **Tuesday March 30 at 5:00pm EST**. This is an open-book Quiz. Please submit it via myCourses.

**4) Final Essay Assignment (30%)**

For this assignment, you will be given a set of questions in advance to write an analytical essay, which answers one of these questions. Your essay (approx. 1200-1250 words) should include a clear thesis statement in the introduction, a body of analysis that presents a coherent argument, and a brief conclusion. In writing this essay, you also need to engage substantially with and demonstrate your comprehension of two relevant scholarly readings from the course. Please make sure to provide full citations including the specific page numbers of the readings you reference in your essay. No research outside of class materials is required for this assignment. The instructions for this assignment will be posted on myCourses on Monday April 12. The assignment is due on **Monday April 19 at 5:00pm EST**. Please submit it via myCourses.

**NOTE:** (1) McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see [www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/) for more information). (2) In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. (3) In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change. (4) If you have a disability please contact the instructor to arrange a time to discuss your situation. It would be helpful if you contact the [Office for Students with Disabilities](#) at 514-398-6009 before you do this.

McGill University in Tiohtiá:ke (Montreal) is situated on the traditional territory of the Kanien'kehà:ka, a place which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst many First Nations including the Kanien'kehà:ka of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, Huron/Wendat, Abenaki, and Anishinaabeg. We recognize and respect the Kanien'kehà:ka as the traditional custodians of the lands and waters on which we meet today.

## SCHEDULE

**Jan. 7 (Th):** Introduction: *Synchronous Zoom session.*

### Pre-Modern Myths and Communities

**Jan. 12 (T)** *Asynchronous pre-recorded lecture.*

**Jan. 14 (Th)** *Synchronous Zoom session.*

– *Kojiki*, trans. Donald L. Philippi (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 47-86.

– Michael Dylan Foster, “Introduction to the Weird,” *Pandemonium & Parade: Japanese Monsters and the Culture of Yōkai* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 1-29.

#### Recommended

– Susan L. Burns, “Introduction: Between Community and the Nation,” *Before the Nation: Kokugaku and the Imagining of Community in Early Modern Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 1-15.

### Spirit Possession in Heian literature

**Jan. 19 (T)** *Asynchronous pre-recorded lecture.*

**Jan. 22 (Th)** *Synchronous Zoom session.*

– Murasaki Shikibu, “Evening Faces,” and “Heartvine,” *The Tale of Genji*, trans. Edward Seidensticker (New York: Vintage International, 1990), 26-64, 146-185.

– Doris Bargin, “Enter *mono no ke*,” *A Woman’s Weapon: Spirit Possession in The Tale of Genji* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1997), 1-31.

### Print Culture of the Edo Period

**Jan. 26 (T)** *Asynchronous pre-recorded lecture.*

**Jan. 28 (Th)** *Synchronous Zoom session.*

– Santō Kyōden, “Playboy: Roasted à la Edo,” trans. Adam L. Kern, from *Manga from the Floating World* by Adam L. Kern (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 359-398.

– Katsuya Hirano, “Parody and History in Late Tokugawa Culture,” *The Politics of Dialogic Imagination: Power and Popular Culture in Early Modern Japan* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), 69-193.

#### Recommended

– Maeda Ai, “Modern Literature and the World of Printing,” *Text and the City: Essays on Japanese Modernity*, ed. James Fujii (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 255-272.

### The Solar Calendar, Clock Time, and Cinema

**Feb. 2 (T)** *Asynchronous pre-recorded lecture.*

**Feb. 4 (Th)** *Synchronous Zoom session.*

– Stefan Tanaka, “Prelude: Time, Pasts, History,” *New Times in Modern Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 1-26.

– Aaron Gerow, “The Motion Pictures as a Problem,” *Visions of Japanese Modernity: Articulations of Cinema, Nation, and Spectatorship, 1895-1925* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 40-65.

Enchanted Science in the Meiji Period

**Feb. 9 (T)** *Asynchronous pre-recorded lecture.*

**Feb. 11 (Th)** *Synchronous Zoom session.*

- Gerald Figal, “Modern Science and the Folk,” *Civilization and Monsters: Spirits of Modernity in Meiji Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 77-104.
- Foster, “Strange Games and Enchanted Science: The Mystery of Kokkuri,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 65.2 (May 2006): 251-275.

**\*Take-Home Quiz #1 is due on myCourses on Tuesday Feb 16 at 5:00pm EST. The instructions and questions will be posted on myCourses on Saturday Feb 13 by 12:00pm EST.**

The Modern Girl and Domestic Architecture

**Feb. 16 (T)** *No class – get some rest after completing Quiz #1.*

**Feb. 18 (Th)** *Synchronous Zoom lecture + discussion for full 80 minutes.*

- Jordan Sand, “The Housewife’s Laboratory,” *House and Home in Modern Japan: Architecture, Domestic Space and Bourgeois Culture 1880-1930* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), 55-94.
- Barbara Sato, “The Modern Girl as a Representation of Consumer Culture,” *The New Japanese Woman: Modernity, Media, and Women in Interwar Japan* (Durham: Duke UP, 2003), 45-77.

Recommended

- *Osaka Elegy* (dir. Mizoguchi Kenji, 1936, 71mins). The film is available on the following site.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w497OJtsYxw>

Japan’s Settler Colonialism and the Ainu People

**Feb. 23 (T)** *Asynchronous pre-recorded lecture.*

**Feb. 25 (Th)** *Synchronous Zoom session.*

- Kayano Shigeru, “Lucky Is the One Who Dies First,” *Our Land Was A Forest: An Ainu Memoir*, trans. Kyoko Seldan and Lili Seldan (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 97-109.
- Katsuya Hirano, “Settler Colonialism In the Making of Japan’s Hokkaidō,” *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism*, eds. Edward Cavanagh and Lorenzo Veracini (London: Routledge, 2016), 327-338.
- Danika Medak-Saltzman, “Transnational Indigenous Exchange: Rethinking Global Interactions of Indigenous Peoples at the 1904 St. Louis Exposition,” *American Quarterly*, 62.3 (September 2010), 591-615.

Recommended

- *Ainu Mosir* (dir. Fukunaga Takeshi, 2020, 74min). The film is available on Netflix

**Mar. 2 & 4 (T & Th) – READING WEEK/NO CLASSES**

Wartime Propaganda and Racism

**Mar. 9 (T)** *Asynchronous pre-recorded lecture.*

**Mar. 11 (Th)** *Synchronous Zoom session.*

- Thomas Lamarre, “Speciesism, Part I: Translating Races into Animals in Wartime Animation,” *Mechademia 3: Limits of the Human* (2008): 75-95.
- Takashi Fujitani, “Right to Kill, Right to Make Live: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans During WWII,” *Representations* 99.1 (Summer 2007): 13-39.

Recommended

- John Dower, “Patterns of Race War” and “The Demonic Other,” *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon, 1986), 1-14, 234-261.

War Memories

**Mar. 16 (T)** *Asynchronous pre-recorded lecture.*

**Mar. 18 (Th)** *Synchronous Zoom session.*

- Lisa Yoneyama, “Mnemonic Detours,” *Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space, and the Dialectics of Memory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 112-147.
- John Whittier Treat, *Writing Ground Zero: Japanese Literature and the Atomic Bomb* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 31-43, 155-172.

Music and Travel in the Bubble Economy Era

**Mar. 23 (T)** *Asynchronous pre-recorded lecture.*

**Mar. 25 (Th)** *Synchronous Zoom session.*

- Marilyn Ivy, “Itineraries of Knowledge: Trans-Figuring Japan,” *Discoveries of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 29-65.
- Paul Roquet, “Background Music of the Avant-Garde: The Quiet Boom of Erik Satie,” *Ambient Media: Japanese Atmospheres of the Self*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016
- Rob Arcand and Sam Goldner, “The Guide to Getting Into City Pop, Tokyo’s Lush 80s Nightlife Soundtrack,” *Vice* January 24, 2019. <https://www.vice.com/en/article/mbzabv/city-pop-guide-history-interview>

**\*Take-Home Quiz #2 is due on myCourses on Tuesday March 30 at 5:00pm EST. The instructions and questions will be posted on myCourses on Saturday March 27 by 12:00pm EST.**

Pokémon Capitalism and Child Consumers

**Mar. 30 (T)** *No class – get some rest after completing Quiz #2.*

**Apr. 1 (Th)** *Synchronous Zoom lecture + discussion for full 80 minutes.*

- Anne Allison, “New Age Fetishes, Monsters, and Friends: Pokémon Capitalism at the Millennium,” *Japan After Japan: Social and Cultural Life From the Recessionary 1990s to the Present* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 331-357.
- Ōtsuka Eiji, “World and Variation: The Reproduction and Consumption of Narrative,” *Mechademia* 5(2010):99-116.

Recommended

- Bryan Hikari Hartzheim, “*Pretty Cure* and the Magical Girl Media Mix,” *The Journal of Popular Culture*, 49.5 (2016), 1059-1085.
- Marc Steinberg, “Candies, Premiums, and Character Merchandising: The Meiji-Atomu Marketing Campaign,” *Anime’s Media Mix: Franchising Toys and Characters in Japan* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 37-85.

Affective Labor, the Attention Economy and Social Media

**Apr. 6 (T)** *Asynchronous pre-recorded lecture.*

**Apr. 8 (Th)** *Synchronous Zoom session.*

- Gabriella Lukács, “The Labor of Cute: Net Idols, Cute Culture, and the Digital Economy in Contemporary Japan,” *positions: asia critique* 23, no. 3 (2015): 488.
- Marc Steinberg, “LINE as Super App: Platformization in East Asia,” *Social Media & Society* (April-June 2020): 1-10.

Recommended

- *Followers* (dir. Ninagawa Mika, 2020). The television drama is available on Netflix.

**Apr. 13 (T)** *Synchronous wrap-up Zoom session.*

**\*Final Essay Assignment is due on myCourses on Monday April 19 at 5:00pm EST. The instructions will be posted on myCourses on Monday April 12.**