

## **EAST 306 Current Topics Japanese Studies: Tokyo and Its Mediascapes**

Winter 2021

TR 4:05 – 5:25 P.M.

### **Instructor Information**

Name and Title: Marlowe Gardiner-Heslin, Mr.

E-mail: marlowe.gardiner-heslin@mail.mcgill.ca

Virtual Office Hours: Friday 11:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M

Communication Plans: Students can visit me during virtual office hours over Zoom on Fridays at 11:00. Students can also contact me by e-mail, and if students are overseas or are unable to meet during specified virtual office hours, they can reach out by e-mail to set up an alternative online meeting time.

### **Course Overview**

What does it mean to read, watch, and play the city, and how do these frequently interconnected experiences inform urban life? This course situates topics such as media worlds, platforms, and media cartography in the context of Japanese theoretical writings on urban space from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present. Employing methods ranging from fan studies to digital infrastructure studies alongside close readings of video games, films, and novels, this course looks at the shifting relationship between cities and forms of entertainment media that attempt to depict, capture, stage, and transform urban space.

### **Instructor Message Regarding Remote Delivery**

Due to the continued strains of the global pandemic, this course will be offered remotely over Zoom. Because of the difficulties we are all facing, this class aims to foster a flexible and relaxed atmosphere, while continuing to maintain the rigorous academic standards expected at McGill University. To better enable student learning in a remote environment, links to remote learning resources will be posted in the class's myCourses page. Students struggling with remote learning are also encouraged to reach out to the instructor by e-mail.

### **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this course, students will have acquired a detailed knowledge of Tokyo's media landscape and key novels, films, and video games set and produced in Tokyo from the late 19<sup>th</sup>

century until the present. Students will also acquire familiarity with key debates and theoretical frameworks about Japanese media and Japanese cities emerging during this period from a range of fields including cultural studies, urban studies, and media studies. Students will learn to synthesize readings, analyze a variety of interdependent media forms, and think critically about how media informs a relationship with their own lived environment.

### **Instructional Method**

Fixed synchronous content for this course consists of short lectures over Zoom, followed by questions, and group discussions. On weeks when we are dealing with a film, television, or video game, one of the week's two classes will be devoted to a screening. Lectures will be short and aimed at providing context for our readings, allowing for deeper engagement with in-class discussions that will comprise the bulk of classes. Lectures will provide historical or cultural context that is not included in the readings. However, the lecture component of each class, along with all reading and viewing material will be available on myCourses following the synchronous class session. Accessing course materials within 24 hours of their posting will be regarded as class attendance; however, students who are able to be in class online during the appointed time are strongly encouraged to do so. A large component of class participation will consist of weekly online discussion posts on myCourses. The class will also include one group project, which will be coordinated over myCourses and through Microsoft Teams, or an alternative online meeting platform of the group's choosing. Students in need of help with any of these platforms can access McGill's Learning Resources through a link on the class page of myCourses. Students that are unable to present their group project during one of the designated periods in-class should talk to the instructor about delivering their project asynchronously.

### **Expectations for Student Participation**

Students are expected to complete all readings and viewings in a timely fashion and be prepared to engage with them critically in class and on the online discussion board on myCourses. Weekly posts on myCourses will be themed to each week of the class and will be no longer than 300 words. Additionally, students must find one post per week that has no comments and engage with it critically. Students are invited to ask questions of the instructor and each other during classroom discussion, particularly in breakout rooms, which will give students a chance to discuss course material with their peers. Students should also use the class discussion board to engage in rigorous discussion about course material or subjects related to the class.

### **Recordings of Sessions**

All course materials, including films, will be available asynchronously. Additionally, the lecture portion of each class will be recorded and available online for 24 hours after the end of each class, but the subsequent discussion will not.

Please read the [Guidelines for Instructors and Students on Remote Teaching, Learning and Assessment](#) and the course outline for this course in myCourses. You will be notified through a 'pop-up' box in Zoom if a lecture or portion of a class is being recorded. By remaining in sessions that are recorded, you agree to the recording, and you understand that your image, voice, and name may be disclosed to classmates. You also understand that recordings will be made available in myCourses to students registered in the course.

### **Required Course Materials**

All readings for this course are available online through the Course Reserves for EAST 306 or through general access on McGill University Library website, unless otherwise indicated. Selections from the few texts not available through the McGill Library will be available on the myCourses website. As the group project for the course entails presenting a fictional Japanese media text (e.g. television show, novel, etc.) students in the group are responsible for ensuring that all members have access. Due to the pandemic, this course will not require any purchases. Readings should be completed by the class indicated on the schedule. A full breakdown of course content and required reading materials is included below.

### **Evaluation and Assignment Descriptions**

Attendance: 10%

Weekly Posts: 35% (10 x 3.5)

Mid-term Assignment: 25%

Final Assignment: 30%

Weekly posts on myCourses will be themed to each week of the class and will be no longer than 300 words. Additionally, students must find one post per week that has no comments and engage with it critically in a sentence or two. Together, these two weekly posts are equal to 3.5 percent of your overall grades. Students are not expected to post over Reading Week or during the first or last week of classes. They may also opt to take one week off of their choosing without any effect on their grades. Students will be graded on completion rather than content, but no additional marks will be awarded for posting more than what is required. Interesting submissions will be discussed in class. As this class seeks to foster critical thinking about the student's own experiences with the city, a range of options will be available for assignments themed to each week, and students are encouraged to think about creative ways of completing them (e.g. short films, short stories, etc.). Personal responses will be due by class time on Thursday and replies to classmate's threads will be due by class time on the subsequent Tuesday. Late submissions will not count as part of the student's grade.

The mid-term assignment will be a group-based presentation on a media text of the students' choosing (not already discussed in class). Students must provide a brief summary of the text, explain what it tells us about Tokyo or the city more generally, and provide critical insights by reading it against some of the secondary sources we have read in class. Presentations are to be delivered in class, but students unable to attend the session synchronously will have the option to present it asynchronously either by recording a short video or by alternative means to be discussed with instructor during office hours or over e-mail. Specific prompts will be made available ahead of the assignment.

The final assignment will be a 2,000-3,000-word essay with prompts announced at a later date. It will be submitted online by class time on April 13<sup>th</sup>. Late submissions will be penalized by 5% per day and will not be accepted one week after the due date.

Attendance consists of either live or asynchronous viewing of the course within 24 hours of its posting. Students who can attend during the appointed time are highly encouraged to do so.

Exceptional circumstances such as sickness or caregiving responsibilities will be excused from late penalties.

## **Course Content**

### Introduction

1/7:

Course Introduction and Review of the Syllabus

### Origins

1/12:

Introductions and historical overview

1/14:

Sand, Jordan. "Introduction," *Tokyo Vernacular: Common Spaces, Local Histories, Found Objects*. pp 1-24.

Steinberg, Marc & Alex Zahlten, "Introduction," *Media Theory in Japan*. pp. 1-26.

### New Times in the City: Writing and Discovery

1/19:

Higuchi, Ichiyō *Child's Play* (Takekurabe)." *In the Shade of Spring Leaves: The Life and Writings of Higuchi Ichiyo, a Woman of Letters in Meiji Japan*. pp. 254-287

1/21:

Karatani, Kōjin. "The Discovery of the Child." *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*. 114-135.

Maeda, Ai. "Their Time as Children: A Study of Ichiyō Higuchi's 'Growing Up' (Takekurabe)." *Text and the City: Essays on Japanese Modernity*. pp. 109-143.

### Tokyo in Pictures: Fidelity, Consumption, and Capture

1/26:

Picture day: Picture sharing and a survey of early photography and photographers in Tokyo.

1/28:

Fukuoka, Maki. "Shashin in the Capital." *The Premise of Fidelity: Science, Fidelity, and Representing the Real in Nineteenth Century Japan*. pp. 156-194.

Ross, Kerry. "A Retail Revolution: Male Shoppers and the Creation of the Modern Shop." And "Photography for Everyone: Women, Hobbyists, and Marketing Photography." *Photography for Everyone*. pp.15-40; 41-68.

Weisenfeld, Gennifer. "Introduction" & "The Media Scale of Catastrophe." *Imaging Disaster*. pp. 17-27; 49-96.

### Watching and Reading: Performance, Mass Media, and the Print Landscape

2/2:

Kawabata, Yasunari. Selections from *The Scarlet Gang of Asakusa*

2/4:

Maeda, Ai. "Asakusa as Theatre: Kawabata Yasunari's The Crimson Gangs of Asakusa" *Text and the City: Essays on Japanese Modernity*. pp. 145-161.

Lippit, Seiji. "Mapping the Space of Mass Culture: Kawabata Yasunari's Scarlet Gang of Asakusa." *Topographies of Japanese Modernism*. pp. 130-171.

Huffman, James L. "Introduction." *Creating a Public*. pp. 1-11

Frederick, Sarah. "Reading the Production and Consumption of Women's Magazines." *Turning Pages: Reading and Writing Women's Magazines in Interwar Japan*. pp. 1-25

### Public and Private Spaces: Film, Class, and Tokyo's Suburbs

2/9:

Ozu, Yasujiro. *I Was Born But . . .*

2/11:

Wada Marciano, Mitsuyo. *Nippon Modern: Japanese Cinema of the 1920s and 1930s*. "Introduction" pp. 1-15.

Gerow, Andrew. "The Subject of the Text, Benshi, Authors, and Industry." *Visions of Japanese Modernity: Articulations of Cinema, Nation and Spectatorship*. pp. 133-173.

Inoue, Kota. "Colonialism at Home: Sensibility of the Suburb in Yasujiro Ozu's *I was Born But . . .* (1932)" pp. 145-171.

### Currents: Broadcasting in Postwar Tokyo

2/16:

A survey of early Japanese television.

2/18:

Ito, Masami. "The Evolution of Broadcasting in Japan." *Broadcasting in Japan: Case Studies on Broadcasting Systems*. pp. 8-16.

Makoto Chun, Jayson. *A Nation of a Hundred Million Idiots? "Pro-Wrestling and Body Slams: Early TV as a Mass Event" & "Transforming the Nation: TV Takes Root in Japan (1957-1963)"* pp. 53-69 and 71-117.

Regina Merkle, Iwona. "Sport, Media, and Technonationalism in the History of the Tokyo Olympics." *Routledge Handbook of Japanese Media*. 86-97.

### Countercurrents: Activism, the Avant-Garde, and Appropriating the Signal

2/23:

Oshima, Nagisa. *The Man Who Left His Will on Film*.

2/25

Furuhata, Yuriko. "Introduction" and Diagramming the Landscape: Power and the Fukeiron Discourse." *Cinema of Actuality*. 1-12 and 115-148.

Eckersall, Peter. "Memory and City: Port B and the Tokyo Olympics." *Performativity and Event in 1960s Japan: City, Body, Memory*. 132-160.

### Reading Week

3/2:

No Class

3/4:

No Class

### Animating the City: Mixes, Ecologies, and Fandoms

3/9:

Otomo, Katsuhiro. *Akira*.

3/11:

Bolton, Christopher. "From Origin to Oblivion: Akira as Anime and Manga." *Interpreting Anime*. pp. 23-28.

Steinberg, Marc. *Anime's Media Mix: Franchising Toys and Characters in Japan*. "Introduction" pp vii-xviii.

Lamarre, Thomas. *Anime Ecology*. "Introduction: Television Animation and Infrastructure Ecology." pp 1-29.

Morikawa, Kachiro. "Otaku and the City. The Rebirth of Akihabara." *Fandom Unbound: Otaku Culture in a Connected World*. pp. 133-157.

### **Group Presentations**

### Local Rhythms: Shibuya-Kei, Hip-Hop, and Tokyo's Transnational Soundscape

3/16:

Shibuya-kei and Hip-Hop Listening Party.

3/18:

Mitsui, Toru. "Introduction: Embracing the West and Creating a Blend." *Made in Japan: Studies in Popular Music*. pp. 1-20

Roberts, Martin. "'A New Stereophonic Sound Spectacular': Shibuya-kei as Transnational Soundscape." *Popular Music*. Vol. 32. No. 1. pp. 111-123.

Condry, Ian. "Introduction: Hip-Hop Japan and Cultural Globalization." *Hip Hop Japan: Rap and the Paths of Cultural Globalization*. pp. 1-23.

Plourde, Lorraine. "Introduction - Listening to the City: Distraction, Attention, and Ubiquitous Attention." *Tokyo Listening*. pp. 1-14.

### **Group Presentations**

#### Local Algorithms: Digital Spaces and Precarious Futures

3/23:

Hashino, Katsura. *Persona 5*.

3/25:

Lamarre, Thomas. "The Portable Interface Complex." *The Anime Ecology*. pp. 311-344.

Fisch, Michael. "Tokyo's Commuter Train Suicides and the Society of Emergence." *Cultural Anthropology*. Vol. 28, No. 2. pp 320-343.

Allison, Anne. "Millennial Japan: Intimate Alienation and New Age Intimacies." *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination*. pp. 70-90.

### **Group Presentations**

#### The Mobile City: Platforms and Content

3/30:

Survey of online videos, cell-phone novels, and mobile games.

4/1:

Kohiyama, Kenji. "Introduction" and "A Decade in the Development of Mobile Communications in Japan. (1993-2002)." *Personal, Portable, Pedestrian: Mobile Phones in Japanese Life*. " pp. 1-18 and 61-76.

Steinberg, Marc. "Platforms After i-mode: Dwango's Niconico Video." pp. 163-208.

### **Group Presentations**

## Eco Media: Wild Tokyo

4/6:

Shinkai, Makoto. *Weathering with You*.

4/8:

Kataoka, Yohei. *Tokyo Jungle*.

Hadl, Gabrielle. "Nature, Media, and the Future: Unnatural Disaster, Animist Anime, and Eco-Media Activism in Japan." *Routledge Handbook of Japanese Media*. pp. 336-362.

## Conclusions

4/13:

Tawada, Yoko. Selections from *The Last Children of Tokyo*.

## **McGill Policy Statements**

**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. This does not apply to courses in which acquiring proficiency in a language is one of the objectives.**

**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 [McGill's guide to academic honesty](#) for more information).**

The University Student Assessment Policy exists to ensure fair and equitable academic assessment for all students and to protect students from excessive workloads. All students and instructors are encouraged to review this Policy, which addresses multiple aspects and methods of student assessment, e.g. the timing of evaluation due dates and weighting of final examinations.

The University is committed to maintaining teaching and learning spaces that are respectful and inclusive for all. To this end, offensive, violent, or harmful language arising in contexts such as the following may be cause for disciplinary action:

1. Zoom sessions, including Username (use only your legal or preferred name), virtual backgrounds, "chat" boxes, whiteboard annotations, breakout rooms
2. myCourses discussion fora

As the instructor of this course I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the Office for Students with Disabilities, 514-398-6009.