

EAST 361 Japanese Animation and New Media: An Introduction to Media Subcultures

Class: Tuesdays 01:35-05:25 Location: ARTS-W215

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Office Hours: Monday and Tuesdays 10-12 (You may book a Zoom meeting)

Course Objectives

This course offers a comprehensive examination of Japanese animation and new media from the early 1960s to the mid-2010s. We will consider their recent conjoined evolution in the national media environment (such as manga, video games and streaming platforms), in industrial models (TV, OVA and Cinema) as well as in subcultural audiences (namely, “otaku” or “fûjoshi” fan cultures). Our goal is less to provide a chronological survey than to critically engage with certain key moments of Japanese media history. As such, we will pay attention to cultural projects, amateur practices, media expressions and social movements that have supported crucial transformations in the production of animation and new media in Japan. We will adopt non-essentialist definitions of our “Japanese” objects: students will be asked to critically engage with the material to draw parallels with larger debates about media industries, subcultures, and cultural politics.

Course Structure and Methodology

The semester will follow a semi-chronological perspective on Japanese animation and new media history starting with a revisit of classical examples of films and TV series through a subcultural perspective before venturing into the more recent media convergence typical of the digital age. This course is organized to familiarize students with 1) the techniques and expressions 2) the media environment 3) the social contexts related to the emergence of “anime” subcultures. Class materials will be in English, clips and films will have subtitles.

Required Readings

Excerpts from books and full academic essays will be provided as an entry point to each week’s subject matter, please access class materials from MyCourses. Readings are fundamental to both class discussions and assignments and should not be overlooked.

Use of class material

Students must keep up with readings to prepare for class discussions and class activities, as well as for written assignments submitted via MyCourses. They should complete all required readings assigned each week prior to the start of the next week’s class. They should also keep up with screenings, lecture notes, power point slides, and any other material posted or handed out in class to adequately prepare for assignments.

Media

Class discussion will focus on screenings; each week we will watch a few short clips from episodes and films or read additional texts to analyze material in class prior to assignments. Screenings are an important part of class and should not be skipped.

Course Requirements and Grading Breakdown

- Attendance and Participation (10 %)
- Weekly Diary (20 %)
- Analysis of a clip (30 %)
- Final Project (40 %)

Attendance and Participation (10%)

This class requires regular attendance and active participation.

Attendance will be monitored through sign-up sheets. Unwarranted absenteeism or a consistent pattern of arriving late to class are detrimental to your best interests and accordingly will negatively impact your grade. Illness, medical appointments or other situations that cannot be avoided will be excused if accompanied by appropriate documentation, or discussed with the instructor. The first day of classes will not be considered.

Active participation in class - including your contribution to discussions or other activities in class - is essential and will be marked. Active participation reveals your familiarity with course material: come to class prepared to ask questions and volunteer comments about readings and films. If you do not understand an idea, a term or a concept, please let us know; asking for clarification makes you a good student and also helps your fellow classmates.

Weekly Diary (20%)

To encourage students to actively apply the knowledge and skills we learn in class, students will submit every Tuesday at the beginning of class their thoughts on how the themes of the previous week resonates with the news, the recent films and TV shows or current social debates. Only one paragraph is need (Max 10 lines), drawings and other creative formats are also welcomed. This diary is the place to freely express ideas, questions and potential debates for class and later assignments.

Written assignments

All written assignments are "take home" assignments. Students will have two weeks to write and submit on MyCourses.

Analysis of a Clip (30%) Due Oct 12th

The first written assignment is very straightforward; students will have to handout a short three pages analysis of a clip seen in class in between weeks **2 to 7** A successful assignment will engage with the techniques of animation specific to the clip to reflect on the subcultural practices demonstrated by its audience. Using readings and class discussion will be essential to develop **one** short yet critical ideal that can be continued in the final project. The main goal is to structure and develop your argumentation. Further information will be provided in class during discussions.

Final Project (40%) Due December 7th

Final projects may take multiple forms; an academic essay, a video-essay or an artistic creation. All formats **must** follow these instructions: **choose one film or series** seen in class **in between weeks 1 to 12**, use at least **2 readings from class and 1 extra source** to address the inscription of the chosen material in its historical context. Papers should be in between 8 and 12 pages long (including bibliography) and video-essays at least 4 minutes long. Both video-essays and artistic projects must come with a 3 pages proposal explaining in detail how this creation engages with the readings and the historical context of the chosen piece. Students **must** contact the professor in advance to talk about this project. Further details on formats and submissions will be given in class.

Writing guidelines

The work must be type-written and double-spaced, using a Times New Roman 12 points font, and printed on an 8 ½ x 11 inch white paper. **Correct citation is essential. Use endnotes where necessary and cite all your sources in an accompanying bibliography. Failure to do so could constitute plagiarism, which is a serious academic offence (see section below).** Work handed in without such documentation will be returned unmarked, and will be subject to late penalties. There are several citation reference guides available, most of which are accessible through the library's website. The Modern Languages Association (MLA) guideline is commonly used in film studies and the humanities in general, but if you wish to use another set of guidelines (e.g.

APA, Chicago, etc.) you may do so. You must however stick to one citation style throughout the full assignment. Always keep a copy of all assignments handed in. The department assumes no responsibility for lost work. Please feel free to consult your instructor at any time if you are experiencing difficulty in completing course assignments.

Important Notes

The most common offence under the Academic Code of Conduct is plagiarism, which the Code defines as “the presentation of the work of another person as one’s own or without proper acknowledgement” (Article 16a). Do not copy, paraphrase or translate anything from anywhere without saying where you obtained it! This could be material copied word for word from books, journals, Internet sites, professor’s course notes, etc. It could be material that is paraphrased but closely resembles the original source. It could be the work of a fellow student, for example, an answer on a quiz, data for a lab report, a paper or assignment completed by another student. It might be a paper purchased through one of the many available sources. Plagiarism does not refer to words alone - it can also refer to copying images, graphs, tables, and ideas. “Presentation” is not limited to written work. It also includes oral presentations, computer assignments and artistic works. If you translate the work of another person into English and do not cite the source, this is also plagiarism. If you cite your own work without the correct citation, this too is plagiarism. We remind you that plagiarism is a serious offence that can lead to disciplinary action by the University.

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). “© Instructor-generated course materials (e.g., handouts, notes, summaries, exam questions) 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.

“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 is on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. We acknowledge and thank the diverse Indigenous people whose footsteps have marked this territory on which peoples of the world now gather.”

Classroom Environment and Complaints

This class is a safe space for anyone to speak freely. Students from any academic background, minorities and disabilities have their right place in the discussion and multiple points of views are welcomed! Any questions, concerns, or complaints related to class material and classroom environment should be first discussed with the course instructor, who will make every effort to address them. Some of the visual and written material for this class contains explicit nudity and/or depiction of sexual acts. There is material that deals with issues of sexism, heterosexism, homosexuality, and racial or ethnic stereotypes. All material is part of the course’s focus and should therefore be considered from an analytic, rather than a moral or ethical perspective.

WEEKLY BREAKDOWN

Introduction classes

Week 1: Sept 7th

What is Japanese animation or “anime”? Apparatus, Techniques and Anime in Animation and New Media History

Readings:

- LaMarre, Thomas. 2002. “From Animation to Anime: drawing movements and moving drawings.” *Japan Forum*, Sep 2002, Vol. 14 Issue 2, pp. 329-367.
Hebdige, Dick. 1979. *Subculture or the Meaning of Style*. London: Routledge, pp. 5-19 and 73-80.

Recommended:

- Denison, Rayna. 2015. *Anime: A Critical Introduction*. Berg Publishers.
Levitt, Deborah. 2018. *The Animatic Apparatus*. Zero Books.

Some of the screenings:

- *Mononoke Hime* (Miyazaki Hayao, 1999, 133')
- *Kill la Kill* (Trigger, 2013, 24')

Key notions to discuss

- Anime
- New media
- Subcultures

Week 2: Sept 14th

Early Animation and Manga Subcultures: Animals at War

Readings:

- Chua, Karl Ian Uy Cheng. 2016. “[Boy meets world: the worldview of Shōnen kurabu in the 1930s.](#)” *Japan Forum*, Mar 2016, Vol. 28 Issue 1, pp. 74-98.
Otmazgin, Nissim and Sutter, Rebecca. 2016. *Rewriting History in Manga*. Palgrave Macmillan. Introduction.

Recommended:

- LaMarre, Thomas. 2010. “Speciesism Part 2: Tezuka Osamu and the Multispecies Ideal.” *Mechademia 4: Fanthropologies*, pp. 51-85.

Screenings:

- *Momotaro Umi no Shinpei* (1945, 74')
- *Norakuro* (1970, 20')

Key notions to discuss

- Full animation or Limited animation
- Mobile images
- Historiography (in relation to animation history)

Part 1

Anime and New Media History from the Margins (1960-1999)

Week 3: Sept 21st

Children’s Culture and media Mix: The Emergence of Modern Japanese « Transmedia »

Readings:

- Steinberg, Marc. 2012. *Anime’s Media Mix: Franchising Toys and Characters in Japan*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 37-64.
Hartzheim, Bryan Hikari. 2016. “Pretty Cure and the Magical Girl Media Mix.” *Journal of Popular Culture*, 49(5),

pp. 1059-1085.

Recommended

Johnson, Derek. 2013. *Media Franchising: Creative License and Collaboration in the Culture Industries*. Postmillennial Pop, New York: NY University Press.

Screenings:

- *Astro Boy* (Tezuka Osamu, 1963, 20')
- *Chameko no ichinichi* (1931, 6')
- *Getter robot* (1975, 20')
- *Glitter Force* (Pretty Cure, 2015, 20')

Key notions to discuss

- Transmedia
- Media Mix
- Children's (sub)culture

Week 4: Sept 28th

Otaku, OVA and the Alternative Circuits of Animation and New Media Readings:

Readings

Galbraith, Patrick W. 2010. "Akihabara: conditioning a public "otaku" image." *Mechademia* 4: Fanthropologies, pp. 84-99.

Galbraith, Patrick W and LaMarre, Thomas. 2010. "Otakuology: A dialogue." *Mechademia* 5, pp. 360-74.

Recommended:

Ernest dit Alban, Edmond. 2020. "Pedestrian Media Mix." *Mechademia* 12.2: Materialities across Asia.

Screenings:

- *Dream Hunter Rem 1* (Okuda, Seiji, 1985, 45')
- *Super Dimension Fortress Macross Volume 1 Upon the Shoulders of Giants* (Ishiguro Noboru, 1985, 75')

Key notions to discuss

- Media Industry
- Television and Parasociality
- "Otaku"

Week 5: Oct 5th

RPG Video Games and Hobby Fandoms: Media Platformivity and the Metamorphosis of the Anime Industry

Readings:

Ōtsuka, Eiji. 2010. "World and Variation: The Reproduction and Consumption of Narrative." *Mechademia* 5, pp. 104-116.

Jenkins, Henry. 2008. *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York: NY Univ Press. Introduction and pp. 240-260.

Screenings:

- *Records of the Lodoss War*. (Mizuno Ryō, 1990. 90')

Key notions to discuss

- Fan Labor
- World Fiction, Diegesis
- Character (kyara, kyarakutâ)

Week 6: Oct 15th (Make-up lecture on a Friday after the break)

"Girl's" Anime: Shipping Cultures and "the other side" of Animation

Readings:

Welker, James and McLelland, Mark. 2015. *Boy's Love Manga and Beyond*. University of Mississippi Press.

Introduction and pp. 42-75.

Kathryn, Hemmann. 2015. "[Queering the media mix: The female gaze in Japanese fan comics.](#)" *Transformative Works and Cultures*, Vol. 20 (2015).

Recommended:

Jones, Gretchen. 2002. "Lady Comics: Japan's Not-So-Underground Market." *Pornography for Women*. English Supplement 22.

Screenings:

- *Yuri on Ice* (Yamamoto Sayo, 2016, 25')
- *Ki to Kaze no Uta* (Takemiya Keiko, 1987 60')

Key notions to discuss

- Pornography
- Feminism(s) and Queering

Week 7:

An introduction to LGBT pop cultures

Readings: Oct 19th

McLelland, Mark. 2005. "The development of Homo Subcultures." *Queer Japan from the Pacific War to the Internet Age*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, pp. 127-158.

Halberstam, Jack. 2005. *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*. New York University Press, Introduction.

Recommended:

- Staiger, Janet. 2004. "Finding Community in the Early 1960s: Underground Cinema and Sexual Politics," *Queer Cinema: The Film Reader*, edited by Harry M. Benshoff and Sean Griffin, New York: Routledge. pp. 167-189.
- Sontag, Susan. 2009. "Notes on Camp" In *Against Interpretation*. Picador. pp. 191-203.

Screenings:

- *Legend of the Blue Wolves* (1996, Phoenix entertainment)
- Clips of Miwa on TV and in Pokémon

Key notions to discuss

- LGBTQ+
- Camp

Part 2

Media Subcultures in the Digital Age (2000-2015)

Week 8: Oct 26th

Otaku Sanctuaries: "Where" Anime becomes Urban Planning

Readings:

- Sugawa-Shimada, Akiko. "Rekijo pilgrimage and "pop-spiritualism": pop cultures-induced heritage tourism of/for young women." *Japan Forum*, Mar 2015, Vol.27 Issue 1, pp. 37-58.
- Okamoto, Takeshi. 2015. "Otaku Tourism and the anime pilgrimage phenomenon in Japan." *Japan Forum* Vol.27 n1 (20150102): pp. 12-36

Recommended:

Steinberg, Marc and Ernest dit Alban, Edmond. 2018. "Otaku Pedestrians". *A companion to Media Fandom and Fan Studies*, ed Paul Booth. New York: Wiley.

Screenings:

- *DRRR* (2009, 25')
- *Your Name (Kimi no na wa, Shinkai Makoto, 2016, 107')*

Key notions to discuss

- Contents Tourism
- Pedestrian (or Quotidian, The Everyday Life)

Week 9: Nov 2nd

Mobilizing the video game fandom: Level 5's "cross-media" model

Readings:

Suzuki, Shige. 2019. "'Yôkai Monsters at Large: Mizuki Shigeru's Manga': Transmedia Practices and (Lack of) Cultural Politics." *International Journal of Communication*, Vol. 13, pp. 2199-2215.

Steinberg, Marc. 2017. "Media Mix Mobilization: Social Mobilization and Yo-Kai Watch." *Sage Journal* 12 (3), pp. 244-258.

Recommended:

Ernest dit Alban, Edmond. 2020. "Cross-Media Gaming or Where Toys and Video Games Collide: The Pedestrian Dynamics of Level 5's Snack World." *Replaying Japan Journal* vol 2, pp. 23-54.

Screenings:

- *Snack World* (Level 5, 2017, 25')
- *Yôkai Watch* (Level 5, 2018, 25')
- *Inazuma Eleven* (Level 5, 2018, 25')

Key notions to discuss

- Crossmedia
- Ludomix

Week 10: Nov 9th

Otome-Games, 2.5 dimensions and sweet voices: the new spaces of popular feminine culture

Readings:

Yoda, Tomiko. 2017. "Girlscape: The Marketing of Mediatic Ambience in Japan." *Media Theory in Japan*, eds Alexander Zahlten and Marc Steinberg, Durham and London: Duke University Press, pp. 173-199.

Hyesin, Kim. 2017 (2009). "Women's games in Japan: Gendered identity and narrative consumption." *Theory Culture and Society*, Sage.

Recommended:

Leticia, Andlauer. 2018. "Pursuing One's Prince: Love Fantasy in Otome Content and Fan Practice." *Mechademia*, Vol.11, pp. 1166-183.

Screenings:

- *King Of Prism by PrettyRythm* (2016, 102')
- *Uta no Prince-sama* (Broccoli, 2011, 25')

Key notions to discuss

- Media Milieu
- Naka no hito (Voice actors)

Week 11: Nov 16th

Danmaku crossing Taiwan, China and Japan: the transnational amateur production of Tôhō anime

Readings:

Li, Jiyang. 2017. "[The Interface Affect of a Contact Zone: Danmaku on Video- Streaming Platforms.](#)" *Asiascape: Digital Asia*; September 2017, Vol. 4 Issue: 3, pp. 233-256

LaMarre, Thomas, 2015. "*Platformativity: Media Studies, Area Studies.*" *Asiascape: Digital Asia*, Volume 4, Issue 3, pp. 285-305.

Recommended:

Yan Du, Daisy. 2019. *Animated Encounters: Transnational Movements of Chinese Animation, 1940s-1970s*. University of Hawai'i Press.

Screenings:

- *Tôhô* (Manpukujinja, 2016, 120')

Key notions to discuss

- Region(alism)
- Platform(ativity)

Week 12: Nov 23rd

Mobile Games and Anime: Economies of the Pedestrian

Readings:

Akiko Shibuya Mizuha Teramoto Akiyo Shoun. 2016. "In-Game Purchases and Event Features of Mobile Social Games in Japan" in *Transnational Contexts of Development History, Sociality, and Society of Play*, Palgrave.

Camille Dubois. 2019. "The gods of The Gacha Are with me today" in *Ebisu Journal*, Issue 6 2020 (2).

Screenings:

- *Granblue Fantasy* (Cygames, 2020)

- *Puzzle and Dragons* (Gunho 2018)

Key notions to discuss

- Prosumer
- Gacha

Week 13: Nov 30th

Some conclusions on "Anime Philosophy", Subjectivity, Cultural Politics and Social Movements

Readings:

Booth, Paul. 2015. *Playing Fans: Negotiating fandom in the digital age*. University of Iowa Press. *Introduction*.

Terranova, Tiziana. 2000. "Producing Culture for the digital economy," *Social Text*, 63 (Vol. 18, N 2), Summer 32.

Recommended:

Sugawa-Shimada, Akiko. 2018. "Playing with Militarism in/with Arpeggio and Kantai Collection: Effects of shōjo Images in War-related Contents Tourism in Japan." *Journal of War and Culture Studies*.

Screenings:

- *Kantai Collection* (2015, 20')

- *Sarazanmai* (2019, 20')

- *Tiger and Bunny* (2011, 20')

Key notions to discuss

- Agency Subjectivity
- Technology