

EAST 364
Mass Culture and Postwar Japan
Scheduled: TTh 4:05-5:25pm ET
Meeting time: TTh 4:05-5:05pm ET

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Office Hours: TBA

Course Description

This course will explore the media and literature of postwar Japan, starting with the original *Godzilla*. Film director Honda Ishirō's 1954 masterpiece raises fascinating questions of censorship, trauma, and Japan's status as both perpetrator and victim during the Pacific War. We will explore the film through close readings and secondary scholarship, enjoying a brief introduction to the wide world of Godzilla Studies. We will then move on to other texts of the era, including the manga *Astro Boy*, exploitation cinema such as the *Lone Wolf and Cub* series, photography and performance by neo-Imperial author Mishima Yukio (1925-1970), and the novel *Face of Another* by the science fiction author Abe Kōbō (1924-1993).

We will explore questions like the following: How does the aftermath and trauma of the war manifest in works of art in Japan, including both high art and popular culture? How do writers, filmmakers, and artists, deal with Japan's legacy of imperialism and the surrounding historical amnesia? What is the impact of censorship on works of art, including under Japanese imperialism and the US Occupation? What does it mean for a society to recover from a traumatic event, and what is lost in that process of recovery?

Course Delivery

The class will meet through **live Zoom sessions** at the scheduled class time.

There will be a combination of **lectures** (with PowerPoint slide show), **discussions**, and **group activities**. Live components will be **recorded**.

Professor will hold Zoom **office hours** each week.

Students will be able use the **discussion boards** to post responses and questions and to communicate with each other.

Course Requirements

Weekly discussion posts: 10%
Creative assignments (4 times): 20%
Midterm Paper: 25%
Final Paper: 35%
Participation and Attendance: 10%

There will be extra credit opportunities during the term.

For more information about the above requirements, please see the below sections.

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.

Asynchronous Assignments and Evaluation

- Weekly Discussion posts
Students with last names A-M will post Tuesdays, and students with last names N-Z will post on Thursdays. Discussion threads will be labeled so you know whose turn it is to post.

Posts are due Tues. and Thurs. at 9:00am ET.

- 1) Choose an excerpt from the weekly material and write a one-paragraph response. Identify one or more key elements that stand out to you and offer some speculation about what they might mean. Also, craft one discussion question related to your excerpt.
- 2) Reply to one of your classmates' posts and explore their discussion question. Your response should be about a paragraph long. You may choose any classmate's post to respond to. Feel free to double up if someone else has already responded. If you are inspired to participate further, you may reply to more than one post. Feel free to let the discussion flow.

- Creative Assignment (4 times)
More information will be available soon.
- There will be two critical essays. More information about each essay will be available later in the semester. You will receive a letter grade.

Midterm paper: Comparative Analysis

Final Paper: Making an Argument

Synchronous Assignments and Evaluation

The class will meet synchronously on Zoom on Tuesday and Thursday at 4:05-5:05pm ET. We will not meet the full scheduled time to avoid screen fatigue. Attendance at synchronous sessions is not mandatory, but it is highly recommended for those who are able to attend and comfortable doing so. For those who cannot attend, a 1-paragraph written response to the recording is required in the two days after class. These will be posted to Discussions in MyCourses.

Attendance and participation will count for 10% of your final grade. You will not be penalized for taking the asynchronous option.

All class activities will be recorded for use by students who cannot attend. Recordings are for class use only and must not be disseminated beyond.

I encourage you to turn your video on if you are able to and comfortable doing so, but you are also welcome to attend the Zoom meetings with your video turned off. Please be understanding of your classmates who may have limited bandwidth or simply not feel comfortable turning on their cameras. You may participate in discussion and other activities either with your audio or with the Chat function.

Academic Integrity

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).