Fall 2011
565:361 Japanese Popular Culture
MW 4: 2:15pm-3:35pm (HCK-218)

Instructor: Satoru Saito
Office: Scott Hall, Room 338
Office Hours: M 11:45am-1:15pm
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Course Description

The goal of this course is two-fold. First, it examines Japanese popular culture through its major forms/media of representations, namely, manga, anime, and television. A particular focus will be given to the consideration of the archetypal frameworks underlying Japanese popular culture, which should serve as the students’ foundational basis for interpretation in their future encounters with the representations of Japanese popular culture. Second, the course, through its investigation of Japanese popular culture, seeks to develop the students’ Japanese-language abilities, including reading and listening comprehension and the ability to effectively discuss a variety of topics in Japanese. In particular, the course will familiarize students with colloquial Japanese, gendered expressions, and Japanese dialects.

Requirements

Grammar quiz #1: 5%
Test #1: 30%
Grammar quiz #2: 5%
Test #2: 30%
Final essay (4-5 pages double-spaced in English): 10%
In-class performance (including homework, vocabulary quizzes, and presentations): 20%

Note on absences:
Students are expected to attend all classes; if you expect to miss class, please use the University absence reporting website https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/ to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.

Required Texts

The required text for this class is a packet of Japanese-language reading materials. The packet will be available for purchase at cost.
Tentative Class Schedule

September 7: Introduction

UNIT I  Family and the School

In this unit, we will examine the foundational tropes of Japanese popular culture through the consideration of various manga and anime. The goal of this unit is to build the basic conceptual framework as well as the linguistic foundations necessary for the better understanding of Japanese popular culture and its representations.

September 8:  Sazae-san

MONDAY CLASS SLOT

September 12: Chibi Maruko, Crayon Shin-chan

September 14: The Japanese family cont’d

September 19: Adachi Mitsuru’s Nine

September 21: Quiz #1; Nine cont’d; discussion

September 26: Hara Hidenori’s Fuyu Monogatari

September 28: Takahashi Rumiko’s Maison Ikkoku

October 3: Kamio Yôko’s Hana yori Dango

October 5: Yazawa Ai’s Nana

October 10: Discussion; Review

October 12: Test #1

UNIT II  Japanese Humor

In this unit, we will explore the conversational economy of Japanese humor and comedy through the examination of the world of television, especially variety shows, as well as of manga characterized by their use of humor. In so doing, we will consider the cultural differences and similarities between Japanese and American humor. The unit will also familiarize students with the Kansai dialect, which is used by many comedians.

October 17: Skits from the variety show Enta no Kamisama

October 19: Enta no Kamisama, cont’d
October 24: Japanese variety shows; Kariya Tetsu’s *Oishinbo*

October 26: More Japanese variety shows

October 31: **Quiz #2:** Toriyama Akira’s *Dr. Slump Arare-chan*

November 2: Hashiguchi Takashi’s *Yakitate Japan!*

November 7: Discussion

**UNIT III  Case Studies in Manga**

This unit will examine three contemporary manga, applying what we have learned in the course of the semester, both culturally and linguistically.

November 9: Takei Hiroyuki’s *Shaman King*

November 14: Morikawa Jōji’s *Hajime no Ippo*

November 16: Kubo Tite’s *Bleach*

November 21: Discussion/Review

November 23: **NO CLASS; Thanksgiving**

November 28: **NO CLASS; make up day**

November 30: **Test #2**

December 5: Presentations

December 7: Presentations

December 12: Presentations

***FINAL PAPER Due at Noon on Monday, December 19 (please turn in papers under my office door at Scott 338 or in my mailbox in Scott 330).***