Japanese Anime & Manga: Magic & Machines
Provisional Syllabus
EALL S260

Yale Summer Session
Session B
Mondays and Wednesdays
9-12:15

Instructor: Caitlin Casiello
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Course description:

Featuring everything from robots to schoolgirls, aliens to pop singers, anime and manga (Japanese animation and comic books) have emerged as globally influential media forms which are nonetheless deeply influenced by their cultural context as Japanese productions. This course looks at anime and manga particularly as media which allow us to explore questions of technology, culture, machines, reproduction, gender, and the body in terms of narrative content and formal/visual elements and through their integration into multiple media objects and transnational fan communities. Students will learn how to analyze the visual elements of anime and manga while also learning about cultural context, production, and reception. Anime and manga discussed include the works of Miyazaki Hayao and Tezuka Osamu, Sailor Moon, Gundam, Macross, Evangelion, Ghost in the Shell, Creamy Mami, Millennium Actress, Mob Psycho 100, and Osomatsu-san.

Policies:

Grading:
Participation: 20%
Reading responses: 15%
Character design: 15%
Midterm Presentation: 20%
Final paper: 30%

Participation: Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the material. No unexcused absences will be allowed. With only ten sessions, each unexcused absence will have a significant impact on the final grade. Students are also encouraged to bring their own knowledge of anime, manga, games, and popular culture into conversation with the course material—I hope to learn much from the students as well.

Screenings: Screenings will occur during class and will consist either of one film or of 2-3 episodes of a TV series. Students are encouraged to engage with the material during screening, just like we would when watching TV with friends. For most sessions, screening will occur at the end of the class to be discussed next session; during some sessions, we may watch episodes or clips alternating with discussion.

Readings: Each session will have one article or book chapter providing historical or theoretical context and one chapter/section of a manga related to the theme of that week.
Late work: Extensions may be granted on a case-by-case basis if permission is asked before the due date. Otherwise, late work will negatively affect the grade.

Accommodations: Students needing disability accommodations should speak with me. I will provide warnings for sensitive material regarding sexual assault and violence in the material.

Academic Integrity: Students must do their own work in compliance with Yale’s policies on academic integrity and plagiarism. This includes collaborating on assignments without permission and turning in the same work to multiple professors without permission. All material consulted while preparing assignments must be properly cited: when in doubt, cite it. Students unfamiliar with citation practices should speak to me about how to cite and what must be cited before the final paper.

Assignments:

Reading/Screening responses (3 total): In weeks 1, 2, and 4, students will be responsible for a reading/screening response integrating the anime, manga, and readings with their own questions and analysis. The purpose of these responses is for students to demonstrate their knowledge of the material but also to guide the discussion by letting me know what students are interested in or what material needs clarification. Responses should be no shorter than one paragraph but no longer than one page.

Character design assignment: Due by session 5, students will design a character based on the themes of the course so far. Students may use artwork, sound, video, etc. to supplement their character, but the basic requirement will be filling out a character template I provide and writing a brief backstory which connects to the genres and archetypes we have discussed in class. Have fun with it!

Midterm Presentation: During the third week, students will present on a work related to Japanese popular culture in terms of the course themes. Subjects can be any anime, manga, game, or similar pop culture item not featured in the syllabus. Presentations should be ten minutes long with five minutes for Q&A. Students should prepare an outline or slideshow of the information to be sent to me via email before class on presentation day. Students will be graded on their ability to a.) present information concisely and coherently, b.) integrate their own research with the themes of the course, and c.) encourage discussion and field questions.

Final paper (6-8 pages): For the final paper, students will write 6-8 pages analyzing the anime or manga of their choice in terms of its formal and thematic elements. They may continue analysis of the work featured in the presentation. Work on the paper will occur throughout the course. In Session 2, we will take ten minutes for students to formulate a question to guide their interests as the term goes on. In Session 4, I will check in with students about their question and discuss works they feel may connect. In Session 8, students will turn in a paragraph-long proposal outlining their paper ideas and what work they will look at. The paper will be due the day of the final session before class.

Week 1: What is anime?

Session 1: Origins and Myths
Course introduction and short lecture on the history of animation in Japan. Where does anime come from? How is anime integrated into a world of multimedia objects? When does anime develop its interest in machines, bodies, and gender? Anime/manga from the 1940s to the 1960s including: Momotaro’s Sea Warriors, Astro Boy, Princess Knight, Takarazuka theater.

Reading: Marc Steinberg, “Limiting Movement, Inventing Anime,” in Anime’s Media Mix
Manga: Norakuro, Himitsu no Akko-chan
Screening: Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind (Miyazaki Hayao, 117 minutes)

Session 2: The Anime Difference


In class: Final paper question formulation session

Reading: Thomas Lamarre, “The Multi-planar Image” in Mechademia 1
Manga: Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind, vol 1
Screening: Galaxy Express 999, Cutie Honey

Response 1 due Friday

Week 2: Journeys Across Species

Session 3: Stellar Bodies

Discussion of Galaxy Express 999 and Cutie Honey. What sort of humanity is promised in the machine body? How does shōnen (boys) anime/manga imagine the potential of the body? What eroticism overlays the bodies in anime/manga?

Reading: Kotani Mari and Miri Nakamura, “Space, Body, and Aliens in Japanese Women's Science Fiction”
Manga: Ikki Kajiwara, Ashita no Joe (1968)
Screening: Creamy Mami, Macross

Session 4: Idol Transformations

Discussion of Creamy Mami, Macross, and The Star of Cottonland. How does anime imagine communication across space? How does communication occur across species? What are the commercial implications of anime centered on song/pop singers?

Due: Final paper check-in

Reading: Sharon Kinsella, “Cuties in Japan” in Women, Media, and Consumption in Japan
Manga: Ōshima Yumiko, The Star of Cottonland
Screening: Sailor Moon

Response 2 due Friday

Week 3: Fighting Teams, Flowers & Robots
Session 5: Girls Before Flowers

Discussion of Sailor Moon and the history of the magical girl genre. How does the magical girl become the “beautiful fighting girl”? What concerns animate the magical girl? What role does transformation/imagination play in the construction of identity?

Due: Character Design Assignment

Manga: Icchokusen Mōkon, Mahou Shojo Ore
Screening: Gundam Wing

Session 6: Boys & Their Toys

Discussion of Gundam, Evangelion, and the genre of mecha. What is the humanoid robot suit known as “mecha”? How does the extension of the body through metal differ from the transformation of the body through magic? What form of consumption centers around anime?

Due: Presentations

Manga: Hayashi Fumino, Neon Genesis Evangelion: Angelic Days
Screening: Ghost in the Shell, Serial Experiments Lain

Week 4: Cybernetic Dream Girls

Session 7: Woman in the Machine

Discussion of Serial Experiments Lain, Ghost in the Shell, and Helter Skelter. What does cybernetics have to do with the bodies of girls? What can the cyborg body do? How does the cyborg body disrupt the natural logics of reproduction?

Due: Presentations cont. (depending on class size)

Reading: Donna Harraway, “The Cyborg Manifesto”
Manga: Okazaki Kyoko, Helter Skelter
Screening: Millennium Actress (Kon Satoshi, 87 minutes)

Session 8: Girl as the Body of History

Discussion of Millennium Actress and Rose of Versailles. How can history be narrated through the body? Through film/animation? Through manga? How do girls’ bodies become carriers for history?

Due: Final paper proposal

Reading: Yuka Kanno, “Implicational Spectatorship: Hara Setsuko and the Queer Joke”
Manga: Ikeda Riyoko, Rose of Versailles  
Screening: Tatami Galaxy, Osomatsu-san  

Response 3 due Friday  

**Week 5: Recent Ruptures**  

**Session 9: Experiments in Body, Form, and Reflection**  
Discussion of Tatami Galaxy, Osomatsu-san, and Mob Psycho 100. How does anime reflect on its own genres? How does anime remember its past? What new forms are emerging given new reading/viewing contexts?  

Reading: Marc Steinberg, “Condensing the Media Mix: Multiple Possible Worlds in The Tatami Galaxy”  
Manga: ONE, Mob Psycho 100  
Screening: King of Prism  

**Session 10: The Anime World Beyond the Screen**  
Discussion of King of Prism and fan reception. How does anime create a world viewers continue to live in? How do fan practices deepen engagement with anime?  

Due: Final paper  

Reading: Mizoguchi Akiko, “Theorizing comics/manga genre as a productive forum: yaoi and beyond”  
Manga: A dōjinshi (fan comic) based on *King of Prism*