Japanese Popular Culture: Expression and Consumption, FC, 7.5hp

Teacher

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Course contents

The course gives an introduction to conceptions of Japanese popular culture with a focus on media, discourses and practices, that have gained an increased popularity inside and outside of Japan since the late 20th century. Through examples from popular visual culture, especially anime, this course addresses interrelations of the aesthetic and the economic which apply to other subject areas of Japanese popular culture as well, including global production and consumption, policy-related and fannish discourses of Japanese particularity (including alleged origins), labels such as “otaku” and “fujoshi”, the potential of conventions, and the limits of participatory culture. The course questions the concept of popular culture from a Japan-based perspective, while leaning primarily on media theory, subculture research and anime/animation studies.

Teaching and evaluation

Instruction is given in the form of lectures.

Attendance at all teaching sessions is mandatory.

*Japanese Popular Culture: Expression and Consumption* is examined on the basis of a *Exia home exam: 16/10 - 30/10.*

Learning outcomes

In order to pass the course, students are expected to be able to:

- account for the critical potential and limitations of an approach to Japan’s visual media under the name of “popular culture”
- distinguish between the concepts of popular culture, subculture, counter culture and their respective Japan-related features
- identify main traits of the local and global popularity of Japan’s media culture
- explain how the aesthetic and the economic are entwined, and what potentials this holds, for the interrelation of entertainment and education
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>The student <strong>shows an excellent knowledge</strong> in accounting for the critical potential and limitations of an approach to Japan’s visual media under the name of “popular culture”. She/he can also <strong>with great certainty</strong> distinguish between the concepts of popular culture, subculture, counter culture and their respective Japan-related features and identify main traits of the local and global popularity of Japan’s media culture. She/he also <strong>shows an in-depth knowledge</strong> in explaining how the aesthetic and the economic are entwined, and what potentials this holds, for the interrelation of entertainment and education.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>The student <strong>shows great knowledge</strong> in accounting for the critical potential and limitations of an approach to Japan’s visual media under the name of “popular culture”. She/he can also <strong>with certainty</strong> distinguish between the concepts of popular culture, subculture, counter culture and their respective Japan-related features and identify main traits of the local and global popularity of Japan’s media culture. She/he also <strong>shows an in-depth knowledge</strong> in explaining how the aesthetic and the economic are entwined, and what potentials this holds, for the interrelation of entertainment and education.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>The student can account for the critical potential and limitations of an approach to Japan’s visual media under the name of “popular culture”. She/he can also distinguish between the concepts of popular culture, subculture, counter culture and their respective Japan-related features and identify main traits of the local and global popularity of Japan’s media culture. She/he can also explain how the aesthetic and the economic are entwined, and what potentials this holds, for the interrelation of entertainment and education.</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>The student <strong>can give a fairly good account</strong> for the critical potential and limitations of an approach to Japan’s visual media under the name of “popular culture”. She/he can also <strong>to a certain degree</strong> distinguish between the concepts of popular culture, subculture, counter culture and their respective Japan-related features and identify main traits of the local and global popularity of Japan’s media culture. She/he can also <strong>to some extent</strong> explain how the aesthetic and the economic are entwined, and what potentials this holds, for the interrelation of entertainment and education.</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>The student can, <strong>on a superficial level</strong>, account for the critical potential and limitations of an approach to Japan’s visual media under the name of “popular culture”. She/he also <strong>shows sufficient ability in</strong> distinguishing between the concepts of popular culture, subculture, counter culture and their respective Japan-related features and identify main traits of the local and global popularity of Japan’s media culture. She/he can also, <strong>with some deficiencies</strong>, explain how the aesthetic and the economic are entwined, and what potentials this holds, for the interrelation of entertainment and education. There are some misunderstandings, but not so serious that the student should fail the course.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fx</td>
<td>The student lacks some of the basic knowledge that is required to obtain the grade E or higher.</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>The student lacks all of the basic knowledge that is required to obtain the grade E or higher.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Neither of the grades Fx and F include any opportunity to complete a supplementary assignment in order to convert the grade into a passing grade.

Course Literature
[No need to purchase any of the readings. Use the university library!] indicates mandatory readings.]

(2009), Otaku: Japan’s Database Animals, University of Minnesota Press. [SUB: e-book]


**Schedule**

See TimeEdit for dates and location, [www.su.se/asia](http://www.su.se/asia)

**Course schedule and required readings**

1. “Japanese Popular Culture” in the digital age and before

   **PRE-READING** (required): Treat, John Whittier (1996) [book Asienbiblioteket +Mondo]
   **POST-READING** (not mandatory!):

2. Studying “Japanese Popular Culture” through anime: Aesthetic, commercial, and global “movements” (main example *Astro Boy*)

   **PRE-READING** (required):
   Steinberg, Marc (2006) [SUB: e-journal article]; Darling-Wolf, Fabienne (2015) [SUB: e-
3. Thematic Genres: The role of Science Fiction in Japanese-language and English-language popular culture (ex. *AKIRA, To Terra*)

☆ PRE-READING (required):

POST-READING (not mandatory!):
Lamarre, Thomas (2008) [SUB: e-journal article]

4. Gendered genres: “Shōjo” (girl) as media discourse (ex. *Sailor Moon, Revolutionary Girl Utena*)

PRE-READING (required):

POST-READING (not mandatory!):

5. “Kawaii”: The aesthetics of cuteness

PRE-READING (required):
Nittono, Hiroshi (2016) [SUB: e-journal]

POST-READING (not mandatory!):
Suzuki, Satoko et al. (2016) [SUB: e-journal]

6. Censorship: Regulating virtual sexuality

PRE-READING (required):
Galbraith, Patrick W. (2009) [web];

POST-READING (not mandatory!):
McLelland, Mark (2017) [web]

7. [given by Ida Kirkegaard] Otaku: Database consumption (ex. *Space Battleship Yamato, Kantai Collection*)


POST-READING (not mandatory!):

8. Fujoshi (“rotten girls”): Queering through male-male romance
**PRE-READING** (required):
Galbraith, Patrick (2011) [SUB: e-journal]

**POST-READING** (not mandatory!):
Bauwens-Sugimoto, Jessica (2016) [web]


**POST-READING** (not mandatory!):
Berndt, Jaqueline (2016) [web]

10. Anime and animism: *yōkai*, the “folkloresque” (ex. *Spirited away*)

**PRE-READING** (required):
Foster, Michael Dylan (2015) [SUB: e-bok]

**POST-READING** (not mandatory!):
Lucken, Michael (2016) [SUB: e-book]