
INTRODUCTION TO JAPANESE CINEMA 2 2 credits (Fall)

日本映画入門2 2単位(秋学期)

Studying Anime

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Course Description/Objectives/Teaching Method/Intended Learning Outcome:

This seminar will cover leading theoretical approaches to Japanese animation as viewed from abroad. Is anime a genre? A culture? An industry? How do we actually define anime? And what reasons exist for studying anime in the first place? To answer these questions, we will explore the history of Japanese animation and its global reach by means of the arguments put forth by leading scholars in the English language, including notably Rayna Denison, Susan Napier, Thomas Lamarre, and Jonathan Clements. We will look at the themes they identify in and around anime, such as the shojo, the otaku, and techno-orientalism, as well as investigating to what extent characteristic production methods such as hand-drawn animation define a supposedly unique nature of anime. In the process we will also attempt to identify the transnational aspects that have long formed a part of "Japanese" animation, by asking the question: how Japanese is anime?

This course has two main goals: 1) To familiarize students with major academic literature on and theoretical approaches to anime; 2) To familiarize students with applying theoretical frameworks to the study of popular culture, in the shape of assignments and a term paper.

Course Plan:

- 1 Thursday 7 October 2021
Why and how should we study anime?
 - 2 Thursday 14 October 2021
Four approaches to anime, part 1: Anime as genre
Required reading: Denison, p.15-29
 - 3 Thursday 21 October 2021
Four approaches, part 2: Anime as data
Required reading: Napier, p.15-34
 - 4 Thursday 28 October 2021
Four approaches, part 3: Anime as medium
Required reading: Lamarre, p.45-54
 - 5 Thursday 4 November 2021
Four approaches, part 4: Anime as industry
Required reading: Clements, p.1-19
 - 6 Thursday 11 November 2021
Hand-drawn animation: Gainax vs. Studio Ghibli
Required reading: Lamarre, p.64-76
 - 7 Thursday 25 November 2021
The beauty of movement: *Castle of Cagliostro* film viewing
 - 8 Thursday 2 December 2021
The future is Japan: Cyberpunk
Required reading: Park
 - 9 Thursday 9 December 2021
The media mix
Required reading: Steinberg, p.vii-xvii
 - 10 Thursday 16 December 2021
Fan cultures and the otaku
Required reading: Saito
 - 11 Thursday 23 December 2021
Fan cultures: *Otaku no video* film viewing
 - 12 Thursday 13 January 2022
Anime tourism
Required reading: Norris
 - 13 Thursday 20 January
How Japanese is "anime"?
Required reading: Clements, p.177-190
- Other Final assignment:
In its podcast, Anime News Network interviewed Carl Macek, one of the pioneers of distributing Japanese animation in North America. Macek was behind the creation of Robotech, the global

success of Akira, and the first Miyazaki Hayao films released in the US:

<https://www.animenewsnetwork.com/anncast/2010-01-14>

Please listen to the interview (note: it's just over 2 hours long) and write a report that discusses Macek's work with anime, within the context of what you've learned during the course.

Method of Evaluation:

This course will contain a total of three graded assignments: two mid-term reports, based on the film viewings from session 7 and 11, and your final report on the Carl Macek podcast. All three count toward your final grade for the course.

Assignment deadlines:

Viewing report 1: Wednesday 1 December 2021, 23:59 Japan time

Viewing report 2: Wednesday 12 January 2021, 23:59 Japan time

Final report: Tuesday 1 February, 12:00 Japan time

The grading system for assessment is:

Viewing report 1: 20%

Viewing report 2: 20%

Final report: 60%

Further instructions about the assignments will be given during the course.

Reference Books:

All required readings will be available through Canvas.

Jonathan Clements. 2013. *Anime: A History*, London: British Film Institute

Rayna Denison. 2015. *Anime: A Critical Introduction*, London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic

Thomas Lamarre. 2009. *The Anime Machine: A Media Theory of Animation*, St. Paul: University of Minnesota Press

Susan J. Napier. 2005. *Anime from Akira to Howl's Moving Castle: Experiencing Contemporary Japanese Animation*, New York: Palgrave

Craig Norris, "Studio Ghibli Media Tourism", in: Alisa Freedman and Toby Slade ed., *Introducing Japanese Popular Culture*. London: Routledge, 2017, p. 114-122

Jane Chi Hyun Park, "Stylistic Crossings: Cyberpunk Impulses in Anime", *World Literature Today*, Sept-Dec 2005, pp. 60-63

Saito Tamaki, "Otaku Sexuality", in: Christopher Bolton, Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr., and Takayuki Tatsumi ed., *Robot Ghosts and Wired Dreams*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007

Marc Steinberg, *Anime's Media Mix: Franchising Toys and Characters in Japan* 2012

Lecturer's Comments to Students:

This course is online and on-demand, meaning that you can follow it at your own pace.

However, the three assignments have deadlines, so please try to keep up with our weekly schedule to avoid overloading yourself later in the course. I will provide feedback on all assignments by adding comments to your uploaded texts in Canvas.

Questions/Comments:

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