Mon Jan 19 2026 12:50:51 GMT+0900 (日本標準時)

Keio University Syllabus and Timetable

OTAKU CULTURE IN JAPAN AND ITS TRANSNATIONAL RELATION

Lecturer(s)	SUGIURA, KAZUNORI
Credit(s)	2
Academic Year/Semester	2026 Fall
Day/Period	Wed.5
Campus	Mita
Classroom	南校舎ホール
Class Format	Face-to-face classes (conducted mainly in-person)
Registration Number	80079
Faculty/Graduate School	INTERNATIONAL CENTER
Year Level	2, 3, 4
Grade Type	S, A, B, C, D
Course Description	A course to aim to learn how the roots of these Otaku cultural activities in Japan have expanded internationally as one of Simulacra with creators, and activists of the fields.
K-Number	CIN-CO-00133-212-86

▼ Detail

Course Contents/Objectives/Teaching Method/Intended Learning Outcome

"Anime", "Comic", and "Game" and its related productions are some of the aggressive and innovative forms of popular culture spreading throughout the world. Japan was one of the major countries influencing this unique popular culture with its creative contents. Enthusiast of such popular culture are defined as "Otaku". "Otaku" has also performed new sense of atmosphere in terms of "Kawaii", and "Moe". These so called "Otaku" cultures are now being spread throughout the globe and giving Japan an important role to enhance its innovative creativity. These contents and subcultures distributed from Japan have created trans-national cultural boom referred to as "Cool Japan" in the early 21st century. Since its culture has generated inevitable cultural influence, production of these contents became global, not only from Japan. Furthermore, political strategy suggests favorable international competitiveness to claim these cultural deliverable as the seeds of creativity influencing its national branding.

Objective of this course is to understand how the roots of these Otaku cultural activities in Japan have expanded internationally as one of Simulacra with creators, and activists of the fields: How the technology has been created and knowing its real motivation to drive these sub-cultural activities. This course will first address the backgrounds and characteristics as well as its innovative expansion of "Otaku" culture recognized internationally, that were once born in the age of competing creativity that comes from Social Darwinism inherent during the phase of its economic growth and development of Japan.

We will share the history of "Otaku Culture" and its technology in Japan from three perspectives. 1) Potential of expression process 2) Digital Content technologies that are being applied 3) Breakthrough of "Otaku Culture" influenced by Trans-nationalization and Internationalization. We will learn the creation process of media contents, games, and expressions for the next generation, especially learning and understanding technologies and methods to become a representative of "Otaku Culture creator and producers". We will discuss with participants, the next generation evolving reinvented, recreated animation, games, and expression contents produced internationally outside of Japan, especially from Asia. This course will also introduce you to get use to the views, methodologies,

and ideologies based on "Otaku" with practical evidence, together with knowing the route in psychological process of satisfying desire and greed with its Otaku creativity.

Course Taught by Faculty Member with Professional Experience

Applicable

Collaboration with video gaming industry (20 yrs)
Comic market circle participant (40 yrs)
Cosplayer (42 yrs)

Active Learning Methods ⓘ Description

Fieldwork

Preparatory Study

Course Plan

Lesson 1

Introduction of Otaku Culture

We will first address the introduction of "Otaku and "Otaku Culture" with its related products, including hardware, software, and services. We will share with some examples of contents to provide practical understanding in this cultural productivity.

Lesson 2

"Akihabara Tour"
We will be creating a group. The entire group will be going to Akihabara as a walking tour with some of the themes discussed on first class. During the tour, we will check the co-existence of "Media Contents (Software)", "Hardware" and "Service" influencing and re-inventing each other creating endless cycle of evolution inside "Akihabara" We will also keep in mind its changes in evolution while we do our next tour in the latter half of this course in spare time. Please note it is not mandatory to join this Akihabara tour if you are already a frequent Akihabara tourist.

Lesson 3

"Japanese Otaku Culture Surrounded and Distributed in Akihabara"

There are always relations between the Japanese "Otaku Culture" and its distributed location. "Akihabara" is one of the areas in Japan making an excessive influence on "Otaku Culture". We will also learn the "Shift", "Change" and "Transformation" in Akihabara to analyze based on social cultural perspective.

Lesson 4

"Summary of Akihabara Culture

We will summarize the characteristics of Akihabara based on the tour, understanding how Akihabara has been rested as a place suitable for Otaku. Discussion will be the main part of the class to share experiences in Akihabara tour.

Lesson 5

b>"Video Game Console and Gaming Industries Part 1"

Nearly 40 Years have passed since video games have infiltrated in our culture. We will investigate the history of

game industries to understand the creative evolution with its technologies behind. The interactive design, including game design, are "transparent design" which you cannot see, but within the game itself. We will learn the implementation of these designs rooted on psychological desire, sense and physical instinct of "Otaku". Meritocracy coupled together with metacognition are also important factors in video gaming.

Lesson 6
"Video Game Console and Gaming Industries Part 2"

Understanding Consumer Gaming Consoles.

Networks, connecting computers on both ends, connected a people's interaction that are using them. This session will introduce the figurative implementation based upon Japanese "Omotenashi" pursue and technology used in the network games.

Lesson 7
"Doujin and Comike Part 1"

Creative contents sold in Comike (Comic Market) and Doujin conventional events are the essence for the Otaku people to share their creativity based on contents consumption. We will learn the kinds of contents being created and distributed in such events, and know the facts, motives, and technologies of the most famous and attractive otaku events of all: "Comike", more than 650 thousand people participate in 2 day event. We will also investigate the management and operation process of such "Otaku" event.

Lesson 8
"Otaku Event Management"

Otaku are somewhat socialized people. We will discuss how otaku events are being handled and managed.

Lesson 9
"Cosplay and Event"

"Role-playing" to become Anime and Comic character is once given birth by the "board game" ages. Japanese Otaku cultures have evolved such "role-playing" to one of MR (Mixed Reality) transparent expression. We will understand the expression techniques, technologies of "Cosplay" and "Kigurumi", and seek into rational desires contained in its expressions. Anime and Comike cultures have given new expressions to creativity.

Lesson 10
"Kigurumi"

Kigurumi is a new expression scheme to become a character of contents. In this session, we seek how otaku kigurumi enthusiasts experience kigurumi culture.

Lesson 11
"Creative Expression (Ita-sha and ETC)"

Majority of Otaku creations are disclosed and presented to public as a work of art and as a cultural expression. We will seek the evolution principle of Otaku culture based on handicap principle expressed by Amotz Zahavi. We focus on Designs of "痛車(Ita-sha or Ouch Cars), decorating stickers or directly painting an Anime characters to body of the car. What are the psychological backgrounds and motivations to create such art? What are creative technologies used for creation? How can we apply these powers to new innovations?

Lesson 12
"Idol and Passionate/Braves:漢(おとこ), Instinct, sense, and desire"

Otaku(Wotaku) motivated from Idols are also called as Passionate /Braves: "漢(おとこ)". Within these practices of

ever-changing popularity against the collection of idols, we will seek into its management and stealth marketing strategy to keep these Wotaku in a position to support Idol (Ideal) world. With a specific example, we will also discuss the limitation in the Idol market based on its capitalism society of passionate Wotaku organizational cohesion community equipped with its social Darwinism.

Lesson 13

"Moe, Simulacra, Desire, and Motivation"

What is "Moe(萌え)"? With specific examples of creation from pop cultures, we will seek hints of its origins and essence. Why is there a culture that created a character called "Otokonoko(男の娘)": a Boy in cute girls' outfit? With a mixture of the pop culture and the Real world that we live in, we will evaluate a form of "Moe" based upon some of the perspective such as a life given from creation of "Lolicon: Lolita Complex", and "Shota" or the personification of inorganic forms(擬人化).

Lesson 14

"Future of Otaku"

Contents created by so called "Cool Japan" does not originate from Japan, but from all over the world. We will see how the origins of Japanese pop culture have re-innovated and developed outside of Japan and now re-influencing the Japanese pop culture. With all the classes we discussed, we will summarize this course to recognize the collaborative possibilities based on Otaku pop cultural activities

Other

Wrap up

With all the classes we discussed, we will summarize this course to recognize the collaborative possibilities based on Otaku pop cultural activities.

Method of Evaluation

Evaluation Scheme will be as follows:
1) Participants to the class, attendance questions
2) Submission of Assignments/Reports

Generative AI Policy for Classes

You are welcome to use AI as an utility, however, you need to specify and indicate how AI utility have been used against your deliverables.

Textbooks

Text books and materials will be announced during the lectures.

Reference Books

Text books and materials will be announced during the lectures.

Lecturer's Comments to Students

This lecture will be held in English, and if required, in Japanese as well. Some of the terminology will be in Japanese (You will need to learn some Otaku terminology in Japanese as well as in English).

Question/Comments

TARGET SCOPE:

Target of this workshop is for whom wishes to know further on

* Japanese Otaku Culture in General
* How endless seeds of creativity are born
* Internationalization and Trans-national "Otaku Culture"
* Knowing from "Comike": World's Largest Otaku Gatherings
* How it is being managed and steered
* Knowing the Participants of the event
* Understanding the future of "Comike"
* Knowing the technology and techniques behind Otaku
* Digitalization process of Comics and Anime
* Cosplay, Kigurumi "Technologies"

Assuming Target:

* Undergraduates and Graduates:
  College of Arts and Science
  Asian Studies (Especially Japanese and Asian Cultures)
  Computer Science
  Computer Games, Game Theory, Gaming Industries
  Communications, Network Technology(Infrastructure)
  Economics
  Consumption Society
  Creative Economics
  Film Studies
  Amateur filming
  Anime and Animation
  Humanities, Psychologies, Sociology
  Age of Post Moratorium
  Japanese
  Japanese culture
  Philosophy
  Logics and Ethics of Otaku Culture
  Media Studies, Media Production
  Technology, Arts, and Media
* Whom have interests in "Otaku Culture"
* Whom involved in "Otaku" Activities