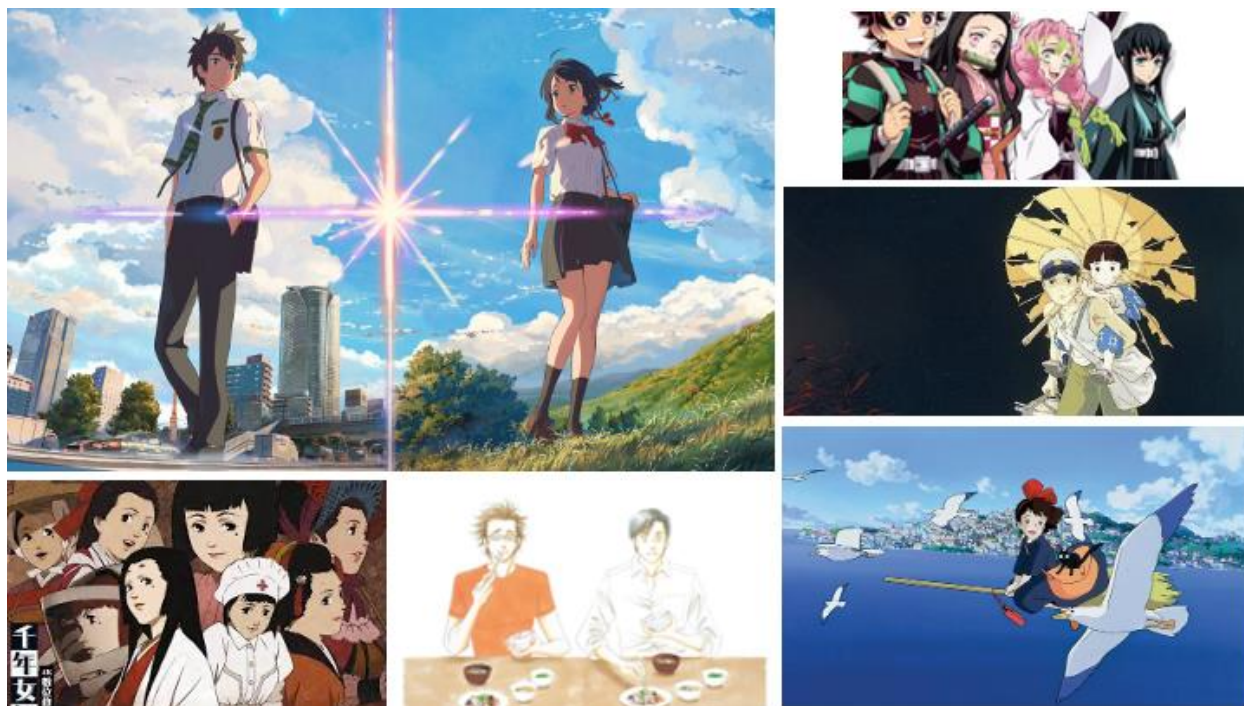


AAS 211-30
JAPANESE POP CULTURE: A Window into Society, History, and Identity
 Summer 2025 Session 2
 Jul 7, 2025 - Aug 16, 2025
 Department of Asian and Asian American Studies



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Course Information

Course Title: AAS Topics in Social Sciences- #JAPANESE POP CULTURE

Course Designator, Class #: AAS 211-30, 65069

SBC Designation: SBS+

Credits: 3

Semester, Year: Summer Session 2, 2025

Modality: asynchronous online

Mode of Instruction: Lecture

Time Zone: New York, EDT

Instructor Information

Instructor Name: Dr. Hiroko Matsuzaki

Instructor Email: hiroko.matsuzaki@stonybrook.edu

Required Course Materials

Various readings, images, and audiovisual materials will be posted on the course website (Brightspace) for students to read, watch, and listen to. These will also appear on quizzes, discussions, and assignments.

Course Description

This course explores how manga and anime reflect Japan's rapid social transformation over 150 years. By examining history, identity, memory, religious and gender in popular media, students analyze how these visual texts shape collective consciousness and cultural heritage, constructing an imagined community that bridges historical narratives with modern Japanese society.

Students will become familiar with various aspects of Japanese popular culture through required readings, viewings, voice-over lectures, online group discussions, etc.

No prerequisite knowledge of Japanese culture or Japanese language is required.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

1. Explain why certain manga and anime have reflected contemporary Japanese society.
2. Talk and write about contemporary Japanese pop-culture from a critical perspective.
3. Develop collaborative work and communicative skills with teammates and participants.
4. Analyze phenomena and recurrent themes of Japanese pop-culture by using analytical tools discussed in class.

Course Delivery Mode and Structure

This is an online asynchronous course. In [Brightspace](#), you will access online lessons, lectures, course materials, and resources. Each week has one learning module; with deadlines on Saturdays, EST.

How to Communicate and Interact in this Online Course

As your instructor, I plan to interact and engage with each of you on a regular basis throughout the term to support your learning. I will provide direct instruction related to the course's learning objectives, respond to your questions, grade and/or provide feedback on your submitted coursework, post regular announcements, and engage in the course discussion areas regarding academic course content when appropriate.

Regular Announcements will be posted in Brightspace. By default, you will receive an email notification when an announcement is posted and will continue to get them unless you modify your notifications. I recommend that you keep this notification on.

Regular, professional, and respectful communication is essential in online classes. Review additional [Online Communication Guidelines](#) carefully and contact me with any questions you may have.

What If You Have a Question?

- **General Question Discussion Forum**
Course-related questions should be posted in the General Questions forum in course Discussions, so everyone can benefit. Note that these questions can be seen and answered by anyone in the course.
- **When To Email the Instructor**

For personal/private issues, email me directly using the email stated on this syllabus. Please allow between 24-48 hours for an email reply.

Assessments

Assignment	Points or Percentage	Due Date
Weekly Quiz (5)	25%	11:59PM on Sundays
Weekly Discussions (including giving feedback) (6)	40%	Your reflection: 11:59PM on Fridays Feedback: 11:59PM on Sundays
Individual Video Presentation	20 %	Individual Presentation: 11:59PM on August 12 Feedback: 11:59PM on August 16
Final Essay	15%	11:59PM on August 16
Total	100	

Weekly Quizzes (25%) via Brightspace test your preparation and comprehension of the reading, viewing, and lecture videos.

There is a traditional quiz format. The quizzes will be activated every Monday for each week. There is one weekly quiz, due on Sundays at 11:59 p.m., respectively. Please read the instructions for each quiz carefully to know which materials and topics are covered.

You must provide your independent response to those questions (multiple-choice and true/false). The quizzes will be 25-minute timed ones operated via Brightspace. You have TWO chances, and the highest grade will be recorded. If you read/view the required materials and the voice-over lectures, getting a full grade on the quiz will be very easy.

Weekly Discussion Posts (40%)—You are asked to provide your discussion and analyses on the topic/case of the week.

There will be six discussion posts in total. The goal is to create a student-centered learning environment by fostering discussions on questions that interest or puzzle you. Your weekly discussion post should be around 400 words.

You are expected to 1) post your reflection and 2) at least two responses to a fellow student's response. Please post your reflection by Friday, 11: 59 pm and responses by Monday, 11:59 pm.

Each discussion post should comprise 1) a summary of the topic, case, or film; 2) one to two detailed examples; 3) your reflections/analyses on the examples from social, political, or cultural significance and

relevance in contemporary Japanese society. You are encouraged to showcase images, short videos, or other multimodal materials; 4) a conclusion and take-away.

Your responses to your peers should be meaningful to facilitate a discussion. Simple responses such as “I agree with your post” will not earn full credit. For example, you can

- Share your experiences as they relate to your peers’ comments
- Ask a probing question that seeks additional relevant information
- Provide an opposing viewpoint
- Provide additional relevant resources, etc.]

My Role as the Instructor in Online Course Discussions

As the instructor, I will serve as a “guide” in our online classroom. Discussions through Brightspace encourage conversation and learning with your peers. While I might not respond to every post, I will read what is posted, and reply if necessary to:

- assist you when it comes to making connections between discussion, lectures, and readings.
- fill in important points that may have been missed.
- re-direct discussion if it gets “off track.”
- highlight key points or identify valuable posts.
- I may also summarize at the end of each discussion, module, or week.]

Discussion Board Rubric

Criteria	Excellent/Meets Expectations [5]	Approaching Expectations [5]	Needs Improvement [5]
Quality of Posts	<p>Posts thoroughly answer all of the discussion prompts</p> <p>Posts are well-organized, include appropriate citations and include follow-up questions, additional resources, readings and/or links.</p> <p>Posts integrate assigned content and make connections to online education.</p>	<p>Posts answer some but not all discussion prompts.</p> <p>Posts are organized with some detail and/or examples.</p> <p>Posts attempt to integrate assigned content and make connections to online education.</p>	<p>Does not submit an initial posting to the discussion prompts or the post is not relevant to discussion.</p> <p>Posts do not attempt to make connections to online education.</p>
Community Participation	<p>Contributes and/or advances to class discussion.</p> <p>Responds to follow up questions/comments from peers and/or instructor(s).</p> <p>Posts are appropriate, thoughtful, reflective and respectful to the community.</p>	<p>Contributes to class discussion but lacks substantive responses.</p> <p>Posts are appropriate and respectful to the community.</p>	<p>Does not contribute to class discussion or posts consist of responses to peers such as "Good Job," or "I agree," without any supporting information.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Posts are not appropriate and/or disrespectful to the community.</p>
Timeliness	<p>Submits all posts on time to foster a discussion.</p>	<p>Submits posts mostly on time but some posts are late that limits the ability to foster a discussion.</p>	<p>Posts are past the deadline and therefore lack the ability to foster a discussion.</p>

Individual Presentation (20%) requires you to focus on one big topic or case on Japanese Popular culture discussed, comparing a popular cultural phenomenon in the country/area of your choice. The presentation is approximately 10-12 minutes long. You are asked to record and upload the presentation to the discussion board. You are also invited to watch your peers' presentation videos and provide written feedback on at least two of your peers' presentations.

The individual presentation is due on August 12, and the feedback to your peers is due on August 16.

Final Essay (15%) should be 3-5 pages long in MLA or APA format (double spaced, Times New Roman font, 12-point letters, with 1-inch margins and left justification). The essay will be an extension of your presentation. Please focus on one big topic of Chinese popular culture, reflect on what you have learned under this topic, and compare the phenomenon with the situations of the language you are familiar with.

Response Time and Feedback on Assignments

You can expect the following response times:

- Discussions will be graded within 72 hours of the due date using a rubric (rubric can be found in Brightspace).
- Grades and feedback on assignments and tests will be provided no more than 1 week after the due date.

Grade Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage/ Points
A	100.00-93.00
A-	92.99-90.00
B+	89.99-87.00
B	86.99-83.00
B-	82.99-80.00
C+	79.99-77.00
C	76.99-73.00
C-	72.99-70.00
D+	69.99-65.00
D	64.99-60.00
F	59.00-0

Additional information

- [Undergraduate Grading System](#)
- [Graduate Grading System](#)

Course Schedule

Note: This schedule is tentative and subject to change. For the most recent updates, please refer to the Brightspace modules.

All the lecture videos, readings, and viewings listed below the date should be completed before completing the quizzes and discussion posts. Students are encouraged to scan through optional readings. For this course, we have six weeks of content in total. Each week, we will focus on one major topic. Under each topic, you are asked to read the required readings, watch the required viewings, and watch the lecture videos.

Week/ Dates/ Module	Topic	Activities/Readings	Assessments
Week 1 7/7-7/13 Module 1	What is Japanese Pop Culture?	Readings: Martinez' "Worlds of Japanese Pop Culture" (intro) Poitras' "Contemporary Anime in Japanese Pop Culture" Video: Module 1 Lecture Video (Japan's Geography and Pop Culture) Film Screening: <i>Millennium Actress</i>	Discussion Board: 1. Student Self-Introduction 2. Topic Discussion Initial Post Due: 7/11 Responses Due: 7/13 Weekly Quiz: Due: 7/13

Week 2 7/14- 7/20 Module 2	Religion in Japanese Pop Culture	<p>Readings: Jolyon Baraka Thomas, “Shūkyō Asobi in Miyazaki Hayao’s Anime”</p> <p>Noriko T. Reider, “Spirited Away’: Film of the Fantastic and Evolving Japanese Folk Symbols”</p> <p>Andrea Castiglioni, "From Your Name. to Shin-Gojira: Spiritual Crisscrossing, Spatial Soteriology, and Catastrophic Identity in Contemporary Japanese Visual Culture"</p> <p>Video: Module 2 Lecture Video (Japanese Religions in pop-cultures)</p> <p>Film Screening: <i>Princess Mononoke</i>, <i>Spirited Away</i> (optional) <i>Your Name</i> (optional)</p>	<p>Discussion Board: Topic Discussion</p> <p>Initial Post Due: 7/18 Responses Due: 7/20</p> <p>Weekly Quiz: Due: 7/20</p>
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Week 3 7/21-7/27 Module 3	Cute and Otaku Culture in Japan	<p>Readings: Patrick W. Galbrath, "Akihabara: Promoting and Policing "Otaku" in "Cool Japan""</p> <p>Ian Condry, "Hatsune Miku: Virtual Idol, Media Platform, and Crowd-Sourced Celebrity"</p> <p>Christine R. Yano, "Hello Kitty Is Not a Cat?!?: Tracking Japanese Cute Culture at Home and Abroad"</p> <p>Toby Slade, "Cute Fashion: The Social Strategies and Aesthetics of <i>Kawaii</i>"</p> <p>Video: Module 3 Lecture Video (Otaku and Kawaii)</p> <p>Video Screening: <i>MIKUMENTARY REMIX</i></p>	<p>Discussion Board: Topic Discussion</p> <p>Initial Post Due: 7/25 Responses Due: 7/27</p> <p>Weekly Quiz: Due: 7/27</p>
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Week 4 7/28-8/3 Module 4	Girlhood and Gender in Japanese Pop Culture: Shōjo Manga and Working Women	<p>Readings: Mizuki Takahashi, "Opening the Closed World of Shōjo Manga"</p> <p>Deborah Shamoon, "The Beautiful Men of the Inner Chamber"</p> <p>Alisa Freedman, "Tokyo Love Story: Romance of the Working Woman in Japanese Television Dramas"</p> <p>Zhang, Xingyuan, "'tsuma' is not 'okusan' Hidden Figures in Japan: Japanese Housewives"</p> <p>Video: Module 4 Lecture Video (Girlhood and Gender in Japanese pop cultures)</p> <p>Film Screening: <i>Kiki's Delivery Service</i></p>	<p>Discussion Board: Topic Discussion</p> <p>Initial Post Due: 8/1 Responses Due: 8/3</p> <p>Weekly Quiz: Due: 8/3</p>
Week 5 8/4-8/10 Module 5	History and Memory in Japanese Pop Culture	<p>Readings: Eldad Nakar, "Framing Manga: On Narratives of the Second World War in Japanese Manga"</p> <p>Melek Ortabasi, "National History as Otaku Fantasy: Satoshi Kon's <i>Millennium Actress</i>"</p> <p>Keiji Nakazawa <i>Barefoot Gen</i></p> <p>Video: Module 5 Lecture Video (History and Memory in Japanese Pop Culture)</p> <p>Film Screening: <i>In This Corner (And Other Corners) Of The World</i></p>	<p>Discussion Board: Topic Discussion</p> <p>Initial Post Due: 8/8 Responses Due: 8/10</p> <p>Weekly Quiz: Due: 8/10</p>

Week 6 8/11-8/16 Module 6	Wrap-Up and Final Reflections	Video: Module 6 Video (Wrap-up) Individual Video Presentation Final Essay	Individual Presentation: 11:59PM on August 12 Feedback: 11:59PM on August 16 Final Essay 11:59PM on August 16
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Student Success Resources: How to Be a Successful Student in This Course

There are multiple resources, university offices, and help desks that are available to assist you with everything from advising, tutoring, accessibility and much more.

Review some [Academic Success Strategies](#) and visit the [Student Resources](#) page for links to resources on campus.

- Log into Brightspace once a day, check announcements.
- Complete all assigned readings each week.
- Ask questions when you are confused about a topic or course expectation.

Wellness & Support Statement

Stony Brook values student well-being, including mental health, and recognizes that a variety of factors can impact emotional wellness and academic success including stress, anxiety, depression, substance use, sexual violence, family or relationship concerns, and political conflict. [Resources are available](#) if you experience challenges or wellness concerns that affect your ability to be successful in class, and you are encouraged to reach out for help when you need it.

In the event of a short-term absence from class, students are encouraged to communicate immediately and work directly with instructors. However, if a student is struggling with an extended absence due a hospitalization, family illness or death, they are encouraged to reach out to the Student Support Team.

Technical Requirements and Assistance

[D2L Brightspace](#) is Stony Brook University's digital learning environment. It is used for the facilitation of communications between faculty and students, submission of assignments, and secure posting of grades and feedback in your courses. To [access Brightspace](#), go to mycourses.stonybrook.edu and use your SBU NetID and password. If you are unsure of your NetID, visit [Finding Your NetID and Password](#) for more information.

Sometimes submitting coursework via a tablet and/or mobile device can be challenging. Computers equipped with the appropriate software are available for use at the various [SINC site computer labs](#). Both physical and virtual labs are available. You can also borrow a computer through [SBU's Laptop Loan Program](#).

Visit the [Technical Requirements page](#) for additional information regarding hardware and software options.

Please use the following information if you need technical assistance at any time during the course or to report a problem with Brightspace:

Brightspace Support via SUNY Helpdesk

- Phone: 1-844-673-6786
- Submit a [ticket or chat online](#)

Stony Brook University: Academic Technology Services

- Phone: 631-632-9800
- Email: AcademicTechnologies@stonybrook.edu

Privacy Policies

This course utilizes various educational technologies to enhance the learning experience. You can access links to the [privacy policies](#) of the tools and platforms used at Stony Brook University on the Syllabus Addendum webpage.

Course Policies

Late Work Policy

Sample: All assignments must be submitted by the due date to receive full credit. While not ideal, please let me know ahead of time if there will be an issue handing something in on time. Assignment due dates are there for multiple reasons such as giving me time to get comments back to you so you can use them for future work and giving us the ability to have meaningful conversations in class about the assignment. Excessive or unannounced late assignments are subject to a reduction of earned grade by up to 10 points off the assignment.

Please note: Technical difficulties with personal technology are not an excuse for late assignments or for reading/activities not being completed. Make it good practice to save your work periodically to the cloud to be sure none of your work is lost.

Attendance Policy

Attendance in an online asynchronous course will be tracked differently than in a course that meets at set days/times throughout the semester. Attendance is tracked through your timely participation in certain course activities including but not limited to: submitting assignments, taking quizzes/exams, and active participation in discussions. Logging in to the course platform alone does not count as attendance. There will be acceptable activities assigned each week. If you do not engage in those activities, you will be considered "absent."

University Policies

Student Accessibility Support Center Statement

If you have a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact the Student Accessibility Support Center, Stony Brook Union Suite 107, (631) 632-6748, or at sasc@stonybrook.edu. They will determine with you what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

Students who require assistance during emergency evacuation are encouraged to discuss their needs with their professors and the Student Accessibility Support Center. For procedures and information go

to the following website: <https://ehs.stonybrook.edu//programs/fire-safety/emergency-evacuation/evacuation-guide-disabilities> and search Fire Safety and Evacuation and Disabilities.

Academic Integrity Statement

Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty is required to report any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. Faculty in the Health Sciences Center (School of Health Professions, Nursing, Social Welfare, Dental Medicine) and School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty please refer to the academic judiciary website at http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/academic_integrity/index.html

Critical Incident Management

Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students' ability to learn. Faculty in the HSC Schools and the School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. Further information about most academic matters can be found in the Undergraduate Bulletin, the Undergraduate Class Schedule, and the Faculty-Employee Handbook.

Understand When You May Drop This Course

If you need to drop or withdraw from the course, it is your responsibility to be aware of the tuition liability deadlines listed on the registrar's [Academic Calendar](#). Before making the decision to drop/withdraw you may want to [contact me or] refer to the University's policies:

- [Undergraduate Course Load and Course Withdrawal Policy](#)
- [Graduate Course Changes Policy](#)

Incomplete Policy

Under emergency/special circumstances, students may petition for an incomplete grade. Circumstances must be documented and significant enough to merit an incomplete. If you need to request an incomplete for this course, contact me for approval as far in advance as possible. You should also read the University's policies that apply to you:

[Undergraduate Bulletin](#)
[Graduate Bulletin](#)

Course Materials and Copyright Statement

Course material accessed from Brightspace, Zoom, Echo 360, VoiceThread, etc. is for the exclusive use of students who are currently enrolled in the course. Content from these systems cannot be reused or distributed without written permission of the instructor and/or the copyright holder. Duplication of materials protected by copyright, without permission of the copyright holder is a violation of the Federal copyright law, as well as a violation of Stony Brook's Academic Integrity.