Fall 2012  
565:361 Japanese Popular Culture  
MW 4: 2:15pm-3:35pm (HCK-218)

Instructor: Satoru Saito  
Office: Scott Hall, Room 338  
Office Hours: M 12:00pm-1:30pm  
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Course Description

The goal of this course is two-fold. First, it examines Japanese popular culture through its major forms/media of representations, namely, manga, anime, and television. A particular focus will be given to the consideration of the archetypal frameworks underlying Japanese popular culture, which should serve as the students’ foundational basis for interpretation in their future encounters with the representations of Japanese popular culture. Second, the course, through its investigation of Japanese popular culture, seeks to develop the students’ Japanese-language abilities, including reading and listening comprehension and the ability to effectively discuss a variety of topics in Japanese. In particular, the course will familiarize students with colloquial Japanese, gendered expressions, and Japanese dialects.

Requirements

Grammar quiz #1: 5%  
Test #1: 25%  
Grammar quiz #2: 5%  
Test #2: 25%  
Presentation: 10%  
Final essay (4-5 pages double-spaced in English): 10%  
Vocabulary quizzes (best 8 out of 10 quizzes): 10%  
In-class performance (attendance and participation): 10%

Note on Academic Integrity: You are expected to uphold the highest level of academic integrity in this class. For more information, please see http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/. I will also be glad to discuss with you any concerns or questions you have on this issue.

Note on absences:  
Students are expected to attend all classes; if you expect to miss class, please use the University absence reporting website https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/ to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.

Required Texts

The required text for this class is provided through Sakai.
Class Schedule (subject to change)

September 5: Introduction

UNIT I    Family and the School

In this unit, we will examine the foundational tropes of Japanese popular culture through the consideration of various manga and anime. The goal of this unit is to build the basic conceptual framework as well as the linguistic foundations necessary for the better understanding of Japanese popular culture and its representations.

September 10: Sazae-san
   *Vocabulary quiz #1

September 12: Chibi Maruko, Crayon Shin-chan

September 17: The Japanese family cont’d
   *Vocabulary quiz #2

September 19: Adachi Mitsuru’s Nine

September 24: Nine cont’d
   *Vocabulary quiz #3

September 26: Quiz #1; discussion

October 1: Adachi Mitsuru’s “Koibito sengen”
   *Vocabulary quiz #4

October 3: Hara Hidenori’s Fuyu Monogatari

October 8: Kamio Yōko’s Hana yori Dango
   *Vocabulary quiz #5

October 10: Yazawa Ai’s Nana

October 15: Discussion; Review

October 17: Test #1

UNIT II    Japanese Humor

In this unit, we will explore the conversational economy of Japanese humor and comedy through the examination of the world of television, especially variety shows, as well as of manga characterized by their use of humor. In so doing, we will consider the cultural differences and similarities between Japanese and American humor. The unit will also familiarize students with the Kansai dialect, which is used by many comedians.
October 22:   Skits from the variety show *Enta no Kamisama*  
*Vocabulary quiz #6*

October 24:   *Enta no Kamisama*, cont’d; introduction to Kansai dialect

October 29:   Kansai dialect cont’d; Kariya Tetsu’s *Oishinbo*  
*Vocabulary quiz #7*

October 31:   Kansai dialect cont’d; Hara Hidenori’s *Jasuto miito*

November 5:   Toriyama Akira’s *Dr. Slump Arare-chan*; Nagai Ken’s *Mote mote ōkoku*  
*Vocabulary quiz #8*

November 7:   **Quiz #2**: discussion

**UNIT III  Case Studies in Manga**

This unit will examine three contemporary manga, applying what we have learned in the course of the semester, both culturally and linguistically.

November 12:   Takei Hiroyuki’s *Shaman King*  
*Vocabulary quiz #9*

November 14:   Morikawa Jōji’s *Hajime no Ippo*

November 19:   Kubo Tite’s *Bleach*  
*Vocabulary quiz #10*

November 21:   **NO CLASS**: Thanksgiving

November 26:   Hashiguchi Takashi’s *Yakitate Japan!*

November 28:   Review

December 3:   **Test #2**

December 5:   Presentations

December 10:   Presentations

December 12:   Presentations

***FINAL PAPER due by noon on Friday, December 21 (please turn in papers under my office door at Scott 338 or in my mailbox in Scott 330).***
