

**Note:** There are also some screenings that occur outside of class time. You must be available for these, so please schedule accordingly.

## SYLLABUS

### East and West, Self and Other: Representations of Japan in Popular Culture

What do the concepts of East and West really mean? What other implications do they have, beyond being geographic terms that indicate two opposite directions on a compass? This course plans to address these questions by focusing on the case of Japan, the “easternmost” country, at least from the Western point of view. How have non-Japanese viewed Japan, and how have Japanese viewed themselves in this context? How do these views manifest themselves in cultural productions?

This course will progress chronologically through Japan’s modern period, commonly agreed to begin with the opening of the country to the West in the 1850s and continuing to the present day. By examining a variety of popular culture produced in both Japan and the West, we will discover how art, literature, performance and film have shaped Western (mis)understanding of Japan’s people and culture. From Gilbert and Sullivan’s 1885 comic opera, *The Mikado*, featuring a Japan peopled with quaint and idiosyncratic make-believe characters, to Ôtomo Katsuhiro’s 1988 film *Akira*, set in the bleak cyberpunk megalopolis of Neo Tokyo, Japan has repeatedly been represented as an exotic and often incomprehensible “other,” both from inside and out. Together, we will explore how and why these stereotypes developed -- and what we can do to deconstruct them.

Prior knowledge of Japan or the Japanese language is of course advantageous, but *not* required. All Japanese literature will be taught in English translation.

### REQUIRED TEXTS

- Okakura Kakuzo, *The Book of Tea*
- Arthur Golden, *Memoirs of a Geisha*
- Yoshimoto Banana, *Kitchen*
- Ruth Ozeki, *My Year of Meats*
- Kawabata Yasunari, *Snow Country*
- Michael Crichton, *Rising Sun*
- Custom Courseware

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Class **participation** is a very important part of your grade; your regular attendance and your responses to **discussion questions on WebCT** prior to most class meetings are factored into this. Your level of preparedness, and thoughtful contributions to discussion (on WebCT and in class), will determine your participation grade. You can also expect the occasional **pop quiz** on the day’s assigned materials. You will also write one **research paper** of 7-8 pages, which should be typed in 12-point font, double-spaced and stapled. I will give you a choice of scintillating topics at the beginning of the term. Two of the steps on the way to writing the paper, an **annotated bibliography** and an **introductory paragraph and outline**, are also assessed items. The **midterm** will be an in-class exam testing you on the materials covered in class until that point. The research paper replaces a final exam.

Don't forget **attendance, at both lecture and tutorial**: needless to say, your punctual arrival and regular presence in class are key to your success in this course. If you aren't here, you can't participate; chronic absenteeism will have a significant negative impact on your final grade.

**Classroom etiquette**: you are welcome to bring drinks, but please do not eat obnoxious foods in class. Also, turn off your cell phones. Finally, leave your laptop and other devices at home or in your bag; bring a notebook and pen instead (AND the texts we are discussing that day). We need to see your face!

This is a discussion-based course, not a lecture. You are expected to have read the assigned texts before each class meeting in full and to be prepared to discuss them. You must participate actively in class discussion. Speak up, and respect others' rights to do so as well! It affects not only your grade, but makes the class much more productive and enjoyable. I am confident that, as a group, we can create an environment where everyone will feel comfortable contributing.

## GRADING

Participation (including WebCT discussion board posts)	20%
Pop quizzes	10%
Annotated bibliography	10%
Introductory paragraph/paper outline	10%
Midterm Exam	25%
Research paper (7-8 pages)	25%

## SCHEDULE (subject to change):

<i>Week 1</i>	<b><i>What is Orientalism?</i></b>
January 8	Introduction
<i>Week 2</i>	<b><i>Japan in Vogue: Japonisme</i></b>
January 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selection from <i>Orientalism</i>, Said (Courseware)</li> <li>• <i>The Mikado</i>, Bradley (Courseware)</li> </ul> (Selected portions will be shown in class)
<i>Week 3</i>	
January 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Book of Tea</i>, Okakura</li> <li>• "Individuality," Lowell (Courseware)</li> </ul> <b>Paper topics handed out</b>
<i>Week 4</i>	<b><i>The Geisha Mystique</i></b>
January 27	Screening: <i>A Geisha</i> . SUR 3200, 5 p.m.
January 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Library research visit</li> <li>• Discussion on <i>A Geisha</i></li> </ul>
<i>Week 5</i>	
February 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Memoirs of A Geisha</i>, Golden</li> </ul>

Week 6	<b><i>The Fascist Japanese</i></b>
February 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The Catch,” Ôe (Courseware)</li> <li>• excerpt from <i>War Without Mercy</i>, Dower (Courseware)</li> </ul>
Week 7	<b><i>Post-War Identity Crisis</i></b>
February 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Snow Country</i>, Kawabata</li> </ul> <b>Annotated Bibliography due</b>
Week 8	
February 24	Screening: <i>Giants and Toys</i> . SUR 3200, 5 p.m.
February 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of <i>Giants and Toys</i></li> <li>• Selections from <i>Rising Sun</i>, Crichton: pp. 1-42; 199-207.</li> </ul>
Week 9	
March 5	Review Session for Midterm; <b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>
Week 10	<b><i>Displacement and Disaffection</i></b>
March 10	Screening: <i>Dream Girls</i> . SUR 3270, 5 p.m.
March 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Introduction,” Robertson (Courseware)</li> <li>• Discussion of Takarazuka</li> </ul>
Week 11	
March 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>My Year of Meats</i>, Ozeki</li> </ul> <b>Introductory paragraph/paper outline due</b>
Week 12	
March 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Kitchen</i>, Yoshimoto</li> </ul>
Week 13	<b><i>The Future is Now: Neo Tokyo</i></b>
March 31	Screening: <i>Akira</i> . SUR 3270, 5 p.m.
April 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of <i>Akira</i></li> <li>• Selection from <i>Neuromancer</i>, Gibson (Courseware)</li> <li>• Wrap-up: millennial views of Japan in the media, etc.</li> </ul>
April ??	<b>RESEARCH PAPER due</b>