

FILM 2164A: ANIMATION / ANIME

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TIMETABLE

Screening: Monday, 5:30 – 8:30, AHB 3B04

Lecture/tutorial: Tuesday, 4:30 – 6:30, AHB 3B02

DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE

This course explores the power of animation as a form of audiovisual representation, with a particular emphasis on Japan. We will trace the intertwined history of film, television, video, and computer animation from short films in the 1930s to the present day media mix that incorporates comic books, light novels, video games, and toys. Japanese *anime* franchises will be examined from the side of production, as industrial products and artistic expressions, and from the side of reception, as semiotic texts and as objects through which consumers construct their social lives. We will also explore the further dissemination of those franchises in various kinds of fan fiction and academic discourse, and as an aspect of Japanese "soft power" in North American popular culture.

All readings on the course are in English; no Japanese is required.

COURSE AIMS

The course aims to familiarize students with the development and main themes and genres of Japanese animated cinema and anime. It also aims to introduce students to the methods of audiovisual analysis and to topics in the study of popular culture such as media convergence, fan anthropologies, and the political economy of cultural industries.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will learn to closely analyze the stylized mode of representation of *anime* texts and to develop arguments about their appeal to audiences in Japan and abroad. Students will also gain a broader appreciation of the history of East Asian popular culture and its presence in the contemporary world, including in their own histories of cultural consumption.

REQUIRED TEXTS

All required texts are uploaded to the class web site.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Attendance and participation [15%]:

- Attendance will be taken at every class (screenings and lecture/tutorials). More than three absences will affect the attendance mark.
- You may not skip a screening because you have already seen the film. You may be familiar with the narrative and even the audiovisual design but the point of the screening is to commit to paying close attention to a text that you then consider in the light of the readings and the course of discussion so far. You can't do that from memory. You also can't pay close attention to a film and read your email or do your homework at the same time. In fact, *you cannot pay close attention to a*

film and take notes at the same time. You will be given fifteen minutes at the end of each screening to write some comments and questions about the film. *This is part of the course requirements and must be completed most weeks.* I will distribute prompts that will give you some ideas to respond to. Also, some of the screenings feature TV series that will be shown in specific excerpts. It will not be easy to reconstruct those screenings so speak to me if you have a reason to miss a screening.

- If you are absent from a screening or lecture, or an assignment is late due to illness or other legitimate reasons, please contact me as soon as possible and forward supporting documentation from Student Services. You must get the approval of Student Services to get credit for any work you missed and you must catch up with the screening material as soon as possible by watching it in the Video Library and sending me a commentary by email.
- This is a large class so in addition to your comments and questions during the lecture you will be graded on your participation in small-group discussions, which will be a feature of every class. You will discuss assigned topics related to the film or one of the readings with a group of fellow students and then report back to the class. Your participation grade will also depend on your responses to occasional written prompts that you will be asked to upload to the class web site.

2. Presentation [10%]:

Each discussion group will give one presentation during the semester. This will involve researching the background and critical reception of a film or TV property and presenting an *analytic summary* to the class. It's easy to find information on the internet these days, as well as on the DVD of the film, and in journals and monographs from the library. But the task is to decide what is *salient* about the property and to *communicate* that to the class using whatever visual aids are necessary. Each group will distribute the workload internally and will be asked to report on levels of participation. Each member of the group who is recognized as pulling their weight will receive the same grade. You will be graded on cogency and creativity. Presentations will be limited to **ten minutes**.

3. Pop quizzes [15%]:

There will be pop quizzes given at the beginning of most lectures. The quizzes will test you on your ability to retain and comprehend the material in the screening and readings for that week. The goal is to nudge you to prepare the readings before class by rewarding you for the effort. Familiarity with the readings will help you in your classroom discussions, in your preparation for the examinations, and when you are writing your short essay.

4. Essay [15%]:

There will be one short essay assignment during the term. The assignment will be a 1,200 - 1,500 word textual analysis of a sequence from one of the films shown in the first weeks of the course. Detailed instructions will be posted to the assignment section of the web site. The emphasis will be on marshaling evidence to make cogent arguments, drawing mostly on your viewing of the film. You might find it helpful to look at the website on film analysis that is linked to the class web site. All essays will be automatically passed through the plagiarism filters at turnitin.com when they are uploaded.

Please note:

Assignments handed in late without a previously approved extension will be penalized 3% per day. Essays should be submitted to the assignments section of the class web site as a *single uploaded file* in Word Format (put your name and the film title in the filename and include the .docx extension). Further instructions will be given on the assignment page.

5. Midterm [10%]:

There will be a short midterm examination before the screening on **October 16** that covers the material in the first part of the course. Students will be expected to recognize and discuss the films

and the main arguments from the readings as well as to remember and discuss the history of animation and the Japanese animation industry covered in class.

6. Final Examination [35%]:

There will be a final examination that covers the material *in the whole course*. Students will be expected to recognize and discuss the films and the main arguments from the readings, as well as to remember and discuss the history of animation and the Japanese animation industry covered in class, and write several short responses to broader questions on Japanese animation.

Accommodation

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC):

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism: Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations.

Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

Plagiarism Checking: All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western:

<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.