

**FILM 2164B (001)**  
**ANIMATION / ANIME**  
**Winter 2025**

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**Virtual screenings: see the class website on Owl Brightspace**

**ANTIREQUISITES**

Film Studies 2198A/B, if taken in 2016-2017; Film Studies 2198A/B, if taken in 2014-2015

**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 in Japan from its beginning 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 media franchises popularly known as *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**

1. Understanding, capacity for argument, judgment and analysis will be fostered by presentations and assignments, and by in-class small-group and whole-class discussion.
2. Communication skills will be imparted through in-class discussion, with credit given for frequency and quality of contributions, and through group projects that will be prepared outside of class.
3. Awareness of the limits of knowledge will be enhanced by exploring the legitimate differences of opinion and methodology within the field, and by requiring students to negotiate the formulation of their own opinions in-class with the terms and knowledge brought to that discussion by other students and the instructor. This will be reinforced by quizzes and multiple choice examination questions.
4. The ability to argue and decide on complex issues will be fostered by in-class discussion and by timed written assignments in the midterm and final examination.

## REQUIRED READING

All required readings are posted to Owl Brightspace. Students may access the OWL Brightspace Learner Support site for assistance: <https://brightspacehelp.uwo.ca/>

## ASSESSMENT

### 1. Attendance and participation (10%)

Attendance will be taken at every class (using the quizzes as a proxy). You are allowed two unexcused absences, but more will affect the attendance mark. Screenings are virtual but you may not skip watching an *anime* because you have already seen it. You may be familiar with the narrative, and even the audiovisual design, but the point of the course is to commit to paying close attention to a text that you then consider in the light of the readings and the discussion. 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*. It's best to write up some comments *right after* you watch the film. Also, some of the screenings feature TV series that will be shown in excerpt form. You are welcome to watch the whole series, but we will only discuss what I upload as part of the compilation.

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 many classes. Check which group you have been assigned to before class (it changes every week) and sit in that location. 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 and/or upload a response to the class web site. You will only get credit for group discussions *for which you were present*.

### 2. In-class quizzes (10%)

Quizzes will be given at the beginning and end of most classes. You must take the quiz in class, using your own device. Taking an online quiz outside the classroom is an academic offense. No outside help is allowed. The quizzes will test you on your ability to comprehend and retain material in the screening and readings for that week, and material we covered in the class session. The goal is to nudge you to take notes and to prepare the readings before class, and to pay attention during class, by rewarding you for the effort. Doing the work will also help you in your classroom discussions, and in your preparation for the midterm and the final examination.

### 3. Small group projects [30%]:

Four times during the semester you will work in small groups to complete worksheets. The first worksheet assignment will ask you to analyze character design in Japanese anime. The second will ask you to analyze forms of anime movement. The third will ask you to analyze a sequence from an anime, and the fourth will ask you to research and create materials for poster presentation on an anime franchise. You will exhibit that material in class and submit the material for grading. You must attend class (and out-of-class meetings) in order to participate in and receive credit for these assignments. All members of the group will receive the same grade so long as they participate in the work. You are tasked with using moral suasion to encourage everyone to participate; if someone cannot be persuaded, please contact me.

#### **4. Midterm Examination [15%]**

The midterm exam will consist of two sections: a multiple choice section that is similar in format and content to the weekly quizzes; and a short answer section that asks you to write on two topics from a list of four. Some questions will ask you to analyze in detail a clip from an anime that is given to you in advance.

#### **5. 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 a number of short responses to broader questions on Japanese animation. Some questions will ask you to analyze in detail a clip from an anime that is given to you in advance, as well as to relate the clip to the rest of the film and to the issues it raises.

#### **STATEMENT ON THE USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)**

This is not an essay course: I am not asking you to do much writing outside of class. I would still encourage you to explore the AI tools that are available to you as you prepare for your midterm and final examinations, and for your research presentation. I know some of you are not used to writing expressive prose. The large language models used by some implementations of generative AI produce syntactically correct and logically coherent sentences. You will benefit from seeing how generative AI, drawing on the "wisdom of crowds," organizes sentences and arguments. These tools also serve as a kind of non-ironic "dictionary of received ideas" – they compile what has been written on the internet to give you a general sense of what people think about various topics. Use them to gain familiarity with the films, and the methods and issues, that we will discuss on this course.

#### **STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC CONSIDERATION**

The university policy on academic consideration (not academic accommodation) is laid out here:

[https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/academic\\_consideration\\_Sep24.pdf](https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf)

On this course, groups will not be penalized for missing a project deadline by less than three days (72 hours). If you miss one of the in-class group projects, you will have to make it up to get credit. Also, your first two absences from the lecture will not affect your attendance grade, and your lowest four quiz grades will be dropped. In accordance with university policy, assignments with flexible deadlines and any term work that does not necessarily count toward the course grade (because the lowest scores are dropped) are not eligible for additional consideration. The Midterm is also designated as an assignment not subject to academic consideration.

If you miss the Midterm or Final examination, please contact the Academic Advising office of your Faculty of Registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final examination) in May. See:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/exam/definitions.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/definitions.pdf)

#### **STATEMENT ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY/COPYRIGHT**

Those students who, because of a learning disability or physical impairment, need to record the lectures

must get permission from the professors through [Student Accessibility Services](#). All instructor-written materials (e.g. PowerPoints, lecture notes, oral lectures) for this course are created solely for students' personal use within the course, and remain the instructor's intellectual property. Further reproduction, fixation, distribution, transmission, dissemination, communication, or any other uses, without securing the consent of the copyright owner (the course instructor) may be an infringement of copyright. You may not distribute, email, or otherwise communicate these materials to any other person. These limitations extend to recording, photographing, or sharing lectures (online or in-person) and lecture material without permission. Posting the instructor's content from this course to online course sharing sites like OneClass or Course Hero without permission is both an infringement of intellectual property law and a violation of academic integrity guidelines. The instructor will pass these cases on to the Western University Ombudsperson or their Department Chair as appropriate.

### **E-MAIL POLICY**

Think ahead. Generally, all emails will be responded to within 48 hours during weekdays (not including holidays). Don't hesitate to contact me if I don't get back to you in that time frame.

### **LAPTOPS AND CELL PHONES POLICY**

Laptops are useful for making notes and posting to the class website, but they are also a source of distraction, to you *and to others*. Any indication that you are not doing class work will result in laptops being banned for in-class use. Please remember that and remind your classmates. In addition, be sure to turn off cell phones. Text messaging during lectures is never acceptable.

### **SENATE REGULATIONS**

#### **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, here:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf).

#### **Statement on the use of plagiarism-checking software**

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>).

### **POLICY ON ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS**

Western's Policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays can be found here:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_religious.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_religious.pdf).

### **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION AND ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION**

**Academic Accommodation** is "a means of adjusting the academic activities associated with a course or program of student in order to permit students with disabilities to participate in those activities at the University and to fulfill the essential requirements of a course or program."

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation\\_disabilities.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf). Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with **Accessible Education** at the earliest opportunity. "Accessible Education plays a central role in Western's efforts to ensure that its academic programs are accessible for all students"  
[http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible\\_education/index.html](http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html)

## **SUPPORT SERVICES**

### **Academic Advising**

Your Home Faculty's Academic Advising Office will support or refer whenever you have an issue that is affecting your studies, including information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters. Do not hesitate to reach out to them if you are struggling and unsure where to go for help. Contact info for all Faculties is here: [https://registrar.uwo.ca/faculty\\_academic\\_counselling.html](https://registrar.uwo.ca/faculty_academic_counselling.html)

### **Mental Health Support**

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

### **Gender-based and sexual violence**

Western University [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: [https://www.uwo.ca/health/student\\_support/survivor\\_support/get-help.html](https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html). To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact [support@uwo.ca](mailto:support@uwo.ca).

### **Learning Development and Success**

Counsellors at the Learning Development and Success Centre <https://learning.uwo.ca> are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

### **USC**

Additional student-run support services are offered by the USC, <https://westernusc.ca/services/>.