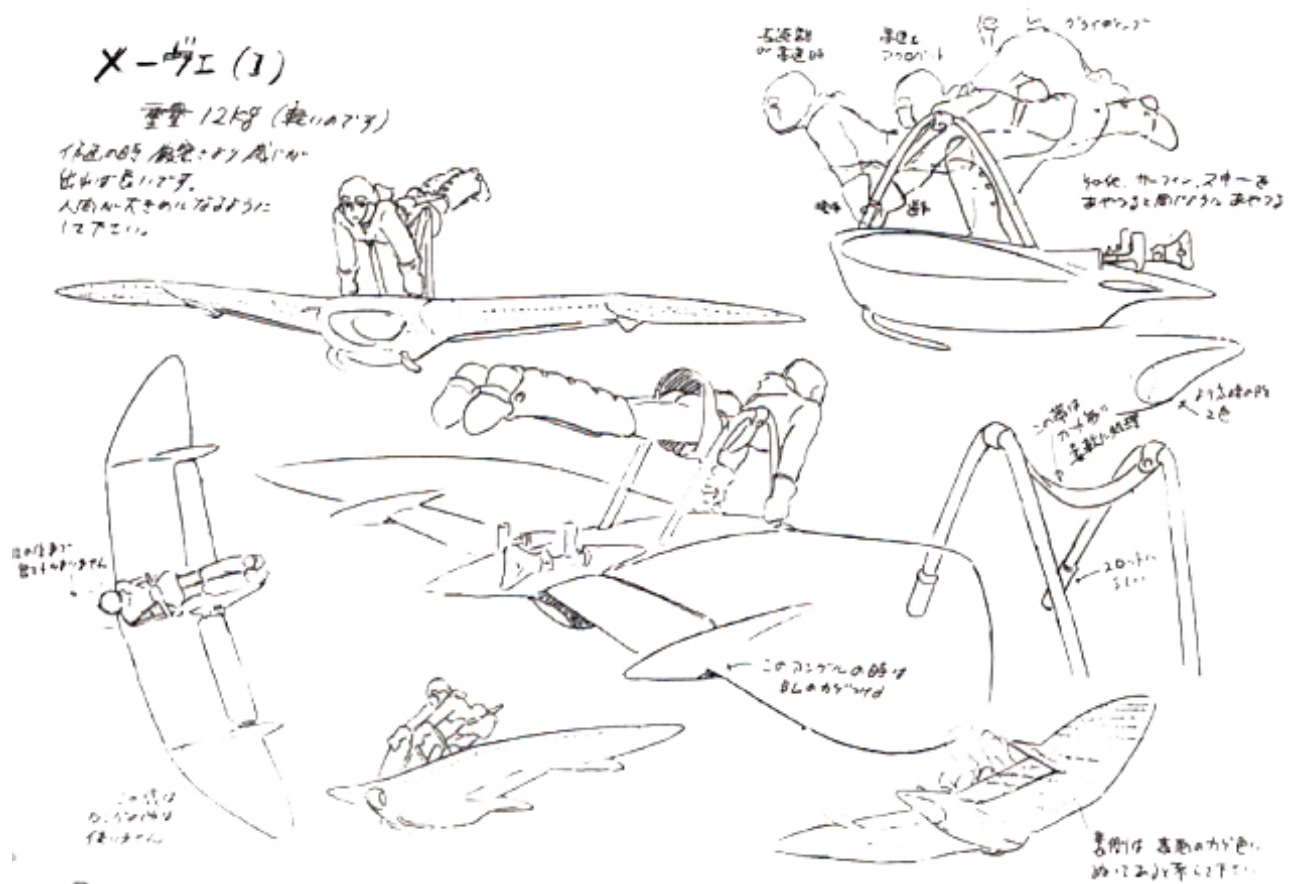


Asian Studies 2512:
Explorations of Japanese Animation

Spring 2017, TR 1:10-2:25, Commons Center 335

Course site at: <http://www.figal-sensei.org/home/asia-2512-explorations-of-japanese-animation/>



Course manifesto

Animated films and TV series rank among Japan's most prominent forms of artistic expression and have become important exports in a transnational and transcultural global media market. The mass appeal and range of content in anime—from kiddie cartoons to sophisticated feature films to philosophically complex sci-fi to gruesomely violent pornography—render it a significant object of study. While most Japanese animation constitutes light entertainment, many treat themes associated with “serious art” and ask us to take them seriously even as we enjoy them lightly. While one risks taking the enjoyment out of any pop cultural form by submitting it to academic scrutiny, we will enjoin our study of anime in the belief that close analysis will enhance our enjoyment. At the very least, the anime fans among you will have a rationalization for your addiction and get credit for it (assuming you pass the course).

The field of anime is wide and the choices it presents are legion. The material for this course is thus necessarily selective while introducing major genres; recurrent themes; important works; historical, cultural, and technical contexts; and scholarly approaches to anime. This course does not aim to be comprehensive or up-to-date with the latest greatest anime. Rather, it selects examples that, while demonstrating techniques and traits of the medium, provoke issues of history and memory; humans, nature and technology; bodies and gender; speculative and apocalyptic visions. The works of Miyazaki Hayao receive special attention as noteworthy examples of feature-length animated films.

Course work

6 short Response Writings (RW), based on viewings and readings. 30% total (1-4 = 4% each; 5-6 = 7% each)

1 take-home Midterm Essay Exam: 25%

1 Final Exam and Scene Analysis on Friday, April 28 at 9AM: 25%

Neon Genesis Evangelion journal: 10%

Class attendance and participation (includes Mahō Shōjo Sentai and Mecha Sentai group tasks): 10%

Success at the exams, response writings, and class participation requires conscientious preparation of materials, printed and visual, and regular, active attendance. I reserve the right to administer unannounced diagnostic tests if silence during discussion becomes deafening or if noise becomes vacuous.

Course materials (all required unless otherwise noted)

Napier, *Anime: From Akira to Howl's Moving Castle*

Electronic Readings (ER), Handouts, and Media via course web site at:

<http://www.figal-sensei.org/home/asia-2512-explorations-of-japanese-animation/>

Screenings of anime outside of class:

Most Tuesdays and some Thursdays in Cohen Hall 203 from 7-9PM. Most items are on reserve in library and available via other sources (Netflix, Hulu, Crunchyroll, etc.) to stream online if you absolutely cannot attend regular screenings. You are encouraged to arrange your schedule to attend the primary screenings.

Course expectations

This course involves substantial reading, viewing, writing, discussing; these activities are time-tested means to thoughtful inquiry and learning. The grades you earn are a measure of the care you take in this inquiry and learning. The general meaning of scores for written assignments in the course is as follows:

- 93-100 (“A”) applies to work judged to be impressive in demonstrating command of the material (including accuracy and thoroughness in representing the readings and screenings), active engagement and original thinking in working with relevant ideas, and superlative presentation. 90-93 (“A-”) means you just missed it, typically by minor lapses in presentation.
- 83-87 (“B”) applies to work judged to be of distinctive quality, widely responsible to the readings, well organized, and possessing a thoughtful point of view. 87-90 (“B+”) and 80-83 (“B-”) mean the higher and lower ends, respectively, of this range.
- 73-77 (“C”) applies to work judged to be of adequate quality, barely responsible to the readings and/or displaying significant lapses in presentation. 77-80 (“C+”) and 70-73 (“C-”) mean the higher and lower ends, respectively, of this range.
- Work below a 70 is deficient in content and presentation, suggestive of inadequate attention to assigned readings, class sessions, and personal intellectual hygiene.

“Deadline extensions” generally do not exist in this course. Exceptions to this policy for valid reasons can only be made on a case-by-case basis, but you must plead your case well before the fact and I will determine what is valid as well as what grade-lowering such an exception will cost you. Such cases as “I have a job interview” or “a childhood friend is in town” or “I just fell in love and can’t think straight” or “I just broke up with my boy/girlfriend and can’t think straight” or “I have to party until 3AM and stay in bed all day with a hangover” or “I simply do not like magical girl anime and can’t bring myself to write about them” are not considered valid (staying up all night to watch the entire series of *Neon Genesis Evangelion* in one sitting and then sleeping all the next day *might* be considered valid).

Be sure to examine the syllabus for the schedule of reading, writing, and viewing work and make your semester plans accordingly. Keep, protect, and honor the syllabus; it is the GPS of my universe as far as this course is concerned.

NO smart or dumb phones allowed in class. Whether smart or dumb, they will make you dumb in class.

Laptops, iPads, and tablets are allowed ONLY when accessing course-related material as part of the in-class activity that I initiate. Signs of violations will result in complete shutdown. I base this decision on some of the latest research on the correlation between engaged learning and device use during class sessions (see: <https://teachingcenter.wustl.edu/?p=3264>). There will already be plenty of screen time in class when viewing series episodes and video clips for collective analysis.

Vanderbilt University's Honor Code governs all work in this course.

PROGRAM GUIDE

Act 1: MEDIUM

- Tu (01.10) Topic: Anime as popular entertainment and academic subject
Reading: Napier, chapter 1: "Why Anime?"
- Th (01.12) Topic: Historical, cultural, and filmic contexts for anime
Reading: Napier, chapter 2
Raffaelli, "Disney, Warner Bros & Japanese Animation" (ER)
- Tu (01.17) Topic: The anime medium: techniques, conventions, innovations
Reading: Lamarre, "The Multiplanar Image" (ER)
Viewing: Clips from various TV anime in class
Screening: *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*
- Th (01.19) Topic: Limited vs. Full Animation; The Manga Connection
Reading: Lamarre, "Full Animation" (ER)
Writing: RW #1: Where is cinematism & animetism in *Nausicaa*?

Act 2: MIYAZAKI

- Tu (01.24) Topic: Miyazaki Hayao and Studio Ghibli
Reading: Lamarre, "Flying Machines" (ER)
Screening: *Castle in the Sky*
- Th (01.26) Topic: *Castle in the Sky*, technology, and WMDs
Screening: *My Neighbor Totoro*
Writing: RW #2: Why does Miyazaki's animation fly?
- Tu (01.31) Topic: *My Neighbor Totoro*: Shōjo, nature, and supernature
Reading: Napier, chapter 8
McDonald, "Animation Seminal and Influential: Hayao Miyazaki's *My Neighbor Totoro*" (ER)
Screening: *Kiki's Delivery Service*
- Th (02.02) Topic: Flying Shōjo
Screening: *Princess Mononoke*
- Tu (02.07) Topic: *Princess Mononoke*: Human history and (super)natural disaster
Reading: Napier, chapter 12
Screening: *Spirited Away*
- Th (02.09) Topic: *Spirited Away*: Folkloric fantasy and capitalist critique
Reading: Napier, "Matter Out of Place: Carnival, Containment, and Cultural Recovery in Miyazaki's *Spirited Away*" (ER)
Screening: *The Wind Rises*
Writing: RW #3: What's so special about Miyazaki girls?

Act 3: HISTORY

- Tu (02.14) Topic: (Re)animating World War II
Reading: Napier, chapter 11
Yoshida, "The 'Space Cruiser Yamato' Generation"
Viewing: Clips: *Barefoot Gen*, *Space Battleship Yamato*
Screening: *Grave of the Fireflies*
- Th (02.16) Topic: Victims and victimizers
Reading: Goldberg, "Transcending the Victim's History: Takahata Isao's *Grave of the Fireflies*" (ER)
Writing: RW #4: How is the pathos of war animated?

Tu (02.21)	Topic:	(Re)imagining Postwar Japan
	Reading:	Bolton, "The Quick and the Undead: Visual and Political Dynamics in <i>Blood: The Last Vampire</i> " (ER)
	Viewing:	<i>Blood: The Last Vampire</i>
	Screening:	<i>Silent Service</i>
Th (02.23)	Topic:	Alternative histories
	Reading:	Mizuno, "When Pacifist Japan Fights: Historicizing Desires in Anime" (ER)
Tu (02.28)	Topic:	Hip-hop samurai in remixed history
	Viewing:	<i>Samurai Champloo</i> , eps. 1-2
	Screening:	<i>Samurai Champloo</i> , selected episodes
	Writing:	Midterm Essay due by class time, Tuesday February 28
Th (03.02)	Topic:	Hip-hop samurai in remixed history
	Reading:	Figal, "History Remixed: Amalgam, Anachronism, and Analogy in <i>Samurai Champloo</i> " (ER)
	Viewing:	<i>Samurai Champloo</i> , selected episodes
	Task:	Be assigned to a Mahō Shōjo Sentai (Magical Girl Task Force) and download handout for magical girl TV series concept task

<<<SPRING BREAK>>>

Act 4: MAGIC

Tu (03.14)	Topic:	How to become a magical girl
	Reading:	Saito, "Magic, <i>Shōjo</i> , and Metamorphosis: Magical Girl Anime and the Challenges of Gender Identities in Japanese Society" (ER)
	Viewing:	<i>Sailor Moon</i> , ep. 1; magical girls transformation scenes
	Screening:	First episodes of <i>Cardcaptor Sakura</i> , <i>Pretty Cure</i> , <i>Shugo Chara</i>
Th (03.16)	Topic:	The narrative magic of the magical girl genre
	Reading:	"So You Want to Write a Magical Girl Series" (https://goo.gl/kU9syb)
	Task:	Each Mahō Shōjo Sentai will pitch its magical girl TV series concept to the rest of the class and me
Tu (03.21)	Topic:	How not to become a magical girl
	Viewing:	<i>Madoka Magica</i> , eps. 1-2 in class
	Screening:	<i>Madoka Magica</i> , eps. 3-6
Th (03.23)	Topic:	Midpoint discussion of <i>Madoka Magica</i>
	Viewing:	<i>Madoka Magica</i> , ep. 7 in class
	Screening:	<i>Madoka Magica</i> , eps. 8-12
Tu (03.28):	Topic:	The composition and decomposition of the magical girl
	Reading:	Cleto & Bahl, "Becoming the Labyrinth: Negotiating Magical Space and Identity in <i>Puella Magi Madoka Magica</i> "
	Writing:	RW #5: What's so magical about girls?
	Screening:	<i>Ghost in the Shell</i>
Th (03.30):	Topic:	From magic to mecha: Kusanagi's body & Shinji's EVA
	Reading:	Napier, chapter 6
	Viewing:	<i>Neon Genesis Evangelion</i> , episode 1

Screening: *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (2-6)
Task: Be assigned to a Mecha Sentai (Mecha Task Force) and download handout for mecha TV series concept task

Act 5: MECHA

Tu (04.04) Topic: Mechamorphosis: human-robot relations in anime history
Viewing: *Mecha Mix: Mazinger Z, Mobile Suit Gundam*, etc.
Screening: *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (7-11)

Th (04.06) Topic: The narrative mechanics of the mecha genre
Reading: "So You Want To Write a Humongous Mecha Anime"
(<https://goo.gl/PkYIY3>)
Screening: *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (12-16)
Task: Each Mecha Sentai will pitch its mecha TV series concept to the rest of the class and me

Tu (04.11) Topic: What the hell is Shinji's problem?
Viewing: *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, episode 17
Screening: *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (18-22)
Writing: Turn in *NGE* journal entries for episodes 1-16

Th (04.13) Topic: Themes in *Neon Genesis Evangelion*
Reading: Orbaugh, "Sex and the Single Cyborg" (ER)
Screening: *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (23-26)

Tu (04.18) Topic: Symbols & Psychology in *Neon Genesis Evangelion*
Reading: Napier, chapter 13
Ortega, "My Father, He Killed Me; My Mother, She Ate Me: Self, Desire, Engendering, and the Mother in *Neon Genesis Evangelion*" (ER)

Th (04.20) Screening: *End of Evangelion*
Topic: Apocalypse of the mind: final discussion of *NGE*
Reading: Broderick, "Anime's Apocalypse: *Neon Genesis Evangelion* as Millenarian Mecha"
Writing: RW#6: *Neon Genesis Evangelion* or, what the hell am I watching?
Turn in *NGE* journal entries from episodes 17 to 26 + *End of Eva*
Screening: Bonus Screening Thursday evening to relieve you of the depression that *NGE* put you in: fan parodies, Anime Music Videos, and anything else that will make you happy before finals.

FINAL EXAM FRIDAY, APRIL 28 at 9AM