Course Name: Analysis of Japanese Popular Culture
Course Number: EAST 3001 KYJA
Program offering course: Ancient and Modern Japan
Language of Instruction: English
US Semester Credits: 3
Contact Hours: 45
Term: Spring 2020

Course Description
This course will provide students with the conceptual tools, which will allow for a careful analysis of popular culture in Japanese society. Students will be provided with opportunities to engage with the imagination, emotions, aesthetics, and technologies within the various facets of Japanese popular culture, all of which can be found in the various forms of media such as music, film, literature, and fashion. Students will also have the opportunity to reflect and analyze their experiences of Japanese popular culture based on dialogic, reflective, and cooperative learning.

Learning Objectives
By completing this course students will:
• Understand different perspectives on contemporary Japanese popular music and culture.
• Analyze cultural phenomena through a range of theoretical lenses.
• Critique and deconstruct terms, concepts, and techniques employed in creating connections between cultural products and audiences.
• Apply a variety of analytical approaches to primary sources, developing original research outputs.

Course Prerequisites
Previous completion of an introductory course related to Japanese popular culture or popular culture studies is recommended.

Methods of Instruction
This course will incorporate in-class lectures, discussions, readings, videos, and field research.

Assessment and Final Grade
• Class Participation 20%
• Online Journal 20%
• Midterm Paper 20%
• Project Presentation 20%
• Final Exam 20%

Course Requirements
Class Participation
You are expected to follow CIEE’s attendance and participation policies as outlined in the CIEE Academic Manual for students.
Online Journal
You will be expected to post a short journal entry of 125 to 150 words to the online discussion group by 11:59pm about the readings assigned that day. You must also respond to at least two posts made by two different classmates to generate discussion online. These posts and responses will aid in the in-class discussion to be held the following day.

Midterm Paper
You will write a scholarly essay of 1500 to 2000 words in which you develop a critical argument about a topic related to the course, subject to instructor approval. Your paper must demonstrate sufficient understanding of key concepts explored in class, and must follow conventions of academic writing.

Project Presentation
You will perform an in-class presentation on a topic of your choosing, which relates to materials of the course. Depending on class enrollment you will conduct your research either individually or as a group. You must submit a proposal for a presentation that would be no longer than 15 minutes. Have your topic approved by the instructor by Week 6. The proposal should be 750 to 1000 words and include (1) Topic you will present on; (2) How it is relevant to the course; (3) The critical viewpoints that you hope to discover through research and share with the class; and (4) An outline of how your presentation will be structured. Your Proposal is 25% of the Project Presentation grade. Depending on the nature of their project, students may be required to use out-of-class time to make field visits, or to explore library and other resources. Students will be advised on their project proposal in terms of how to organize such out-of-class work.

Final Exam
You will write short essays in answer to three questions prompted by the instructor. Each answer must be 500 to 600 words (total word count of 1500 to 1800 words). Your answers must demonstrate sufficient understanding of key concepts explored in class and must follow conventions of academic writing.

Weekly Schedule
NOTE: the following schedule and assignments are subject to change

Week 1:

Day 1.1.
Introduction
  - Course overview
  - No readings

Day 1.2.
Unpacking “Japanese” “popular” “culture”
Popular culture and the fame of Japan
  - Homework due 11:59pm: Online Journal

Day 1.3.
Unpacking “Japanese” “popular” “culture” (cont.)
How “Japanese” is Japanese popular culture?
- Homework due 11:59pm: Online Journal

**Week 2:**

**Day 2.1.**
Popular Music and Authenticity
Nostalgia, intimacy, authenticity in enka.
- Homework due 11:59pm: Online Journal

**Day 2.2.**
Popular Music and Authenticity (cont.)
Music, language, and race: how “Japanese” is enka?
- Homework due 11:59pm: Online Journal

**Day 2.3.**
Popular Music and Authenticity (cont.)
Rock and colonialism in Okinawa
- Homework due 11:59pm: Online Journal

**Week 3:**

**Day 3.1.**
Participation and the practice of “media mix”
Fan activity and youth culture.
- Homework due 11:59pm: Online Journal

**Day 3.2.**
Convergence culture
Popular culture from bottom up.
- Homework due 11:59pm: Online Journal

**Day 3.3.**
“Media mix” and marketing discourses.
Popular culture through institutional process.

- Homework due 11:59pm: Online Journal

**Week 4:**

**Day 4.1.**
Idol Culture, 1
Overview of Japanese idol culture.
- Homework due 11:59pm: Online Journal

**Day 4.2.**
Idol Culture, 1 (cont.)
Institutional structures in Japanese idol culture.
- Homework due 11:59pm: Online Journal

**Day 4.3.**
Idol Culture, 1 (cont.)
Idols, television and advertising.
- Homework due 11:59pm: Online Journal

**Week 5:**

**Day 5.1.**
Idol Culture, 2
Idols, fandom, and fantasy.
- Homework due 11:59pm: Online Journal

**Day 5.2.**
Idol Culture, 2 (cont.)
Idols as mediators of society.
Day 5.3.
Idol Culture, 2 (cont.)
Idol fans and fan idols. Fandom as labor.
- Homework due 11:59pm: Online Journal

Week 6:
Day 6.1.
Globalization, 1
Cultural globalization
- PROJECT PROPOSAL Due
- Homework due 11:59pm: Online Journal

Day 6.2.
Globalization, 1 (cont.)
In-Class Screening and Discussion: Global Metal (S. McFadyen and S. Dunn, dir., 2007)
- No Readings

Day 6.3.
Globalization, 1 (cont.)
Metal and Cuteness.
- Homework due 11:59pm: Online Journal

Week 7:
Day 7.1.
Globalization, 2
Global circulation of Japanese fashion: Gothic/Lolita
- Homework due 11:59pm: Online Journal

Day 7.2.
Globalization, 2 (cont.)
Politics of cultural appropriation
Day 7.3.
Globalization, 2 (cont.)
Appropriating cultural appropriation
- MIDTERM PAPER Due
- Homework due 11:59pm: Online Journal

Week 8:

Day 8.1.
Otaku Culture
The changing images of otaku.
- Homework due 11:59pm: Online Journal

Day 8.2.
Otaku Culture (cont.)
- In-class screening and discussion: *Otaku no Video* (T. Mori, dir., 1991)
- No readings

Day 8.3.
Otaku Culture (cont.)
Anonymity and virtual communication.
- Homework due 11:59pm: Online Journal

Week 9:

Day 9.1.
Consumption and Popular Culture
Theory of “narrative consumption.”
- Homework due 11:59pm: Online Journal

Day 9.2.
Platforms
“Media mix” revisited.
Day 9.3.
Platforms (cont.)
Mobile platforms. i-mode and the history of the idea of ‘platform.’
- Homework due 11:59pm: Online Journal

Week 10:

Day 10.1.
Technologies of Reading/ Seeing
Texts and events of contact in video streaming sites.
- Homework due 11:59pm: Online Journal

Day 10.2.
Popular Literature
Patterns of textuality in keitai shosetsu (the cellphone novel).
- Homework due 11:59pm: Online Journal

Day 10.3.
Popular Photography
Purikura (‘print club’) and affective labor.
- Homework due 11:59pm: Online Journal

Week 11:

Day 11.1.
Technologies of Listening
The Walkman effect. Individualism, consumption, and music.
- Homework due 11:59pm: Online Journal

Day 11.2.
Technologies of Listening (cont.)
Muzak as a platform of affect management. Sounds and social relations.
Day 11.3.
Technologies of Listening (cont.)
Distant intimacy through sounds.
- Homework due 11:59pm: Online Journal

Week 12:

Day 12.1.
Technologies of Singing
The history of karaoke.
- Homework due 11:59pm: Online Journal

Day 12.2.
Technologies of Singing (cont.)
Karaoke and the ‘space’ of popular music.
- Homework due 11:59pm: Online Journal

Day 12.3.
Technologies of Singing (cont.)
- FIELD TRIP: visit karaoke establishment(s)
- No readings

Week 13:

Day 13. 1.
Voice, Fame, and Collaborative Creativity
Virtual idols and peer production.
- Homework due 11:59pm: Online Journal

Day 13. 2.
Vocaloids and Participatory Culture
The Kagerou Project.
Day 13.3.
Culture of Voice Acting
Voice acting as an interface between fans and characters.
- Homework due 11:59pm: Online Journal

Week 14:

Day 14.1.
Popular Protest Through Music
Music performance in anti-nuclear protest.
- Homework due 11:59pm: Online Journal

Day 14.2.
Project Presentations
Students will present their research projects in class.
- No Readings

Day 14.3.
Project Presentations (cont.)
Students will present their research projects in class.
- No Readings

Week 15:

Day 15.1.
Popular Protest Through Music (cont.)
The folk song movement in the 1960s.
- Homework due 11:59pm: Online Journal

Day 15.2.
Final Exam Workshop
Final exam questions will be distributed and discussed in class.
- No Readings

Day 15.3.
Course Materials