

ANT 232

From Bombs to Buddhism: Fatalism, Technology, and Modern Japanese Culture

Course Basics

Meets:

TMC 120 Emerson Auditorium
Tuesday and Thursday
2:25-4:10pm

Instructor:

Jennifer Milioto Matsue
(Mocha)
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Office Hours:

Office location TMC 201
Wednesday 3:00-5:00pm (on-
line) and Thursday
4:30-5:30pm (in-person)

Prerequisites

An appreciation for the beauty of the arts to express everyone's unique experiences of the world!!



Course Overview

An exploration of Japanese culture through critical reading of a variety of narratives including classic literature, historical accounts, contemporary fiction, manga (Japanese comics), anime (Japanese animation), and film. Throughout the course students will question how religious beliefs, the natural environment, and historical events have shaped Japanese media, in turn deepening our understanding of contemporary Japanese society more broadly. Through analysis of such objects as the 1954 film *Godzilla* to the mega-manga *Akira*, this class will explore the importance of such disparate phenomena as Buddhism to the dropping of the nuclear bomb in shaping Japanese identity.



Enduring Understandings

Engaging with cultures of the world instills respect for diversity, demands equity for all peoples, and creates empathy for the needs of global citizens.

Syllabus Design

Adapted and inspired by the inclusive syllabus design of [Dr. Tona Hangen](#), professor of History at Worcester State University, the *Inclusive Syllabus Survey Tool* by [Dr. Kathy Takayama](#), Senior Science Education Fellow at Howard Hughes Medical Institute, as well as the [Accessible Syllabus](#) project at Tulane.

Course Format

Students must complete assignments as indicated in the schedule and be prepared to discuss them in class. Indeed, lively discussion is absolutely essential in this course, therefore please take adequate notes on your reading and films to allow you to contribute. We may not discuss everything we read or watch. Rather, we will use class time to expand on the materials you cover on your own. If you have any questions or concerns about how to improve your discussion techniques, and in turn your class participation grade, please see me during the term. Please remember that your class participation grade is entirely separate from your grades on your other assignments.

Learning Objectives

Framed by anthropological approaches to understanding the world's people, and through discussion and completion of a variety of assignments, students increase their understanding of the connection between arts, culture, and society—especially in the context of modern Japan.

As a Writing Across the Curriculum course (WAC), you will develop critical analysis, and in turn, argumentative thinking. You will be challenged to reflect on your perception of failure as instead a learning moment through which you can grow both as a student and as a person.

Classroom Behavior

Students are expected to practice proper classroom etiquette. **Cellphones are prohibited during class time, guest lectures, films and concerts.** Computers may be used to take notes (and to google things when the class has questions!), but should not distract you or your fellow classmates (no YouTube, Facebook, etc. and let's keep the display on a lower setting. If students in back are disturbed by screens in the front, we can switch seats around to best accommodate all learning styles).

Practical Details

Diversity + Inclusion



The readings, class lecture, and my comments in class will suggest a particular point of view. This perspective is my own and does not have to be yours! I encourage you to disagree with the ideas in the readings and lectures as well as the perspectives of your colleagues in the course. Please express yourself! I want to learn from you.

A significant part of a college education is learning about the complexity of various issues. Therefore, it is important that we listen and respect one another but we do not have to agree. A richer discussion will occur when a variety of perspectives are presented in class for discussion.

Honor Code

Union College recognizes the need to create an environment of mutual trust as part of its educational mission. Responsible participation in an academic community requires respect for and acknowledgement of the thoughts and work of others, whether expressed in the present or in some distant time and place. Matriculation at the College is taken to signify implicit agreement with the Academic Honor Code, available at <http://muse.union.edu/honorcode/>. It is each student's responsibility to ensure that submitted work is his or her own and does not involve any form of academic misconduct. Students are expected to ask their course instructors for clarification regarding, but not limited to, collaboration, citations, and plagiarism. Ignorance is not an excuse for breaching academic integrity. Students are also required to affix the full Honor Code Affirmation, or the following shortened version, on each item of coursework submitted for grading, including daily assignments and compositions: 'I affirm that I have carried out my academic endeavors with full academic honesty.'

[Signed, Jane /John Doe]

Disability Accommodations



Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first be registered with Accommodative Services to verify the disability and to establish eligibility for accommodations. For information on documentation requirements or to start the process, students may contact Accommodative Services in Reamer Campus Center 303, call 518-388-8785, or e-mail **S. Shinebarger** at shinebas@union.edu.

Once registered, students should then schedule an appointment with me to make appropriate arrangements. All discussions will remain confidential.

Course Materials & Technologies

Ibuse, Masuji. 1969. *Black Rain*. New York: Kodansha.

Komatsu, Sakyō. 1973 (2016). *Japan Sinks*. New York: Harper & Row (Dover Doomsday Classics).

..... Luke, Elmer and David Karashima, eds. 2012. *March was Made of Yarn*. New York: Vintage Books.

Additional materials may be placed on Nexus, reserve, or distributed in class. If any deadlines or other information on Nexus or in the syllabus seems odd, please notify me immediately and I will clarify. All assignment guidelines should state Winter 2021 at the top so there is no confusion with past

In this course, you'll use the following technologies:



Nexus: <https://nexus.union.edu>



Maker Web/Maker Spaces

<https://muse.union.edu/makerweb/>



Student Tech Help

The USTAR TechTeam provides students with a centralized resource for computer support. While virus protection is USTAR's primary focus, they provide basic technical support for all ITS supported software, remedy basic networking problems, and assist with some hardware issues.

USTAR technicians are available five days a week, Sunday through Thursday from 6PM to 10PM and Monday through Thursday from 12:50PM to 1:50PM (common hour) in the Schaffer Library at the far end (away from the front door) of the circulation desk.

Class Attendance & Assignments

Attendance

Regular attendance and participation are both absolutely necessary to successfully complete this course. **Greater than 4 absences** (equivalent to two weeks of class or 20% of the term) **will result in failure of the course.**

Deadlines and Extensions



Each of the course activities is designed to help you build particular skills and gain knowledge while working together in an active learning community. In order to excel in this class, you are expected to complete assignments by the dates and times as indicated.

However, in the real world, things happen (an interview off campus, a required class field trip, multiple major assignments due the same day, etc.). With the exception of the Final Project, you can have two extensions for such legitimate reasons, but must inform me ahead of time. Any other late work will be penalized by a deduction of .25 per each day late.

All assignments must be completed to pass the course.

Choices

You will see a lot of choices in the assignments for this course. These are designed for your benefit—to allow you the opportunity to explore themes and styles that inspire you and bring your own ideas to the class. Offering choices also requires you to pay attention to the materials in the course and exercise your ability to take action without fear. The increased engagement demanded of choice will ultimately sustain you in the writing process now and build confidence for the future.

Group Work

Several assignments require you to work in a group (to be assigned by the Instructor). Group work poses particular challenges and the potential for great growth as you work as a team, problem solve, and feed on each other's creativity. While group work can be intimidating at times, learning to work with (and respect!) diverse personalities and learning styles will help you in your future education and careers. Working as a team is a part of life that needs to be nurtured and valued.

Assessed Products and Performances

Breakdown

Your performance in this course will be assessed on five types of products:



1. Self-Assessment (5pts)
2. Reflections (20pts)
3. Position Papers (30pts)
4. Final Project (35pts)
5. Class Participation (10pts)

Detailed guidelines will be provided for each assignment.



Drafts and Revisions

- If you have concerns about your writing, you are encouraged to submit drafts for suggestions ahead of assignment deadlines.
- You do have the option, however, to rewrite some of the assignments (to be determined; see individual assignment guidelines).
- All rewrites must be turned in no later than one week after I have returned the original batch of graded assignments to the class. This means that if for some reason you have turned in the assignment late, the rewrite is still due when everyone else's rewrite is due.
- Please send rewrites as an attachment to e-mail.
- The rewrite grade will be averaged with the original grade to determine the final grade for that assignment.
- Rewrites are NOT automatically graded higher than the original version.
- Rewrite means "to write again," not just to correct a few grammatical errors that I have pointed out. It is an opportunity to rethink and improve your work, and the assignment should display that effort.

Writing Center

The [Union College Writing Center](https://union.mywconline.com/) will host appointments online through video conferencing in lieu of face-to-face consultation for the duration of the Winter 2021 term. To book a conference and for instructions on how to access a video conference, please visit <https://union.mywconline.com/>. Questions? Email writingprograms@union.edu



Special Considerations due to COVID-19

Respect COVID-19

Please think of others and follow all the safety protocols that Union has put in place. We want to protect you and keep learning on campus this fall. BUT THIS IS UP TO YOU! If you contract COVID-19 you may contribute to the campus closing down and could spread the disease with dire consequences. Every day at the beginning of class we will all share our Emocha green badges (I'll need your help to remember to do this). If you do not feel well, let me know immediately and please stay home. We can do this together!

Access to materials during COVID-19

If you are quarantined or isolated for COVID-19-related reasons, I will be notified by the Dean of Students Office that you will not be able to attend classes during the specified time frame and that you may require additional flexibility with regard to your participation in this course. Your responsibility will be to contact me as soon as you are able so that we can discuss your needs. I will make arrangements to provide you with material missed from classes.

Counseling Resources

As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and/or negatively impact your daily life. If you or someone you know is experiencing mental health challenges at Union College, please contact the Counseling Center. Please call 518-388-6161 or email hotalinm@union.edu or daym@union.edu to schedule an appointment. All counseling services are free and confidential. Please visit the Counseling Center website at <https://www.union.edu/counseling-center> for updated resources on dealing with Covid-19. Additionally, please follow Wicker Wellness Center on Instagram, where postings will focus on how to address isolation, academics, and stress.

In a crisis situation, or after hours, contact Campus Safety at 518-388-6911. The National Suicide Prevention hotline also offers a 24-hour hotline at [800-273-8255](tel:800-273-8255).

Tentative Schedule

Week 1

Tues 1/12 – Introduction to the course

Thur 1/14 –Contextualizing Japan

Reading: Karan (2005) *Japan in the 21st Century* (1-49)

Week 2

Tues 1/19 – Cultural History of Japan

Reading: Karan (2005) *Japan in the 21st Century* (50-70)

Assignment: Review Essay and Self-Assessment

Thur 1/21 –Japanese Religion

Reading: Karan (2005) *Japan in the 21st Century* (70-76)
Hendry (2003) *Understanding Japanese Society* (126-144)
Reischauer and Jansen (1996) *The Japanese Today* (203-215)

Week 3

Tues 1/26 – **Essay and Self-Assessment**

Reading: None

Film: Puppet Theater TBD (in-class)

Assignment: Review Reflections

Thur 1/28 –The Medievalists

Reading: Kamo no Chomei's "An Account of My Hermitage" and Yoshida
Kaneyoshi's "Essays in Idleness" from McCullough (1990) *Classical
Japanese Prose* (377-421)

Week 4

Tues 2/2 –Love Suicides

Reading: Keene (1961) *Four Major Plays of Chikamatsu* (1-38) and
Chikamatsu Monzaemon's "The Love Suicides at Sonezaki" from
Keene (1961) *Four Major Plays of Chikamatsu* (39-56)

Assignment: Review Position Papers

Thur 2/4 – Godzilla Rises

Reading: Tsutsui (2006) "Introduction" to in *Godzilla's Footsteps* (1-8) and

Film: Tsutui (2004) "The Birth of Godzilla" in Godzilla on My Mind (13-42)
Gojira (on-line before class); Lifting the Fog (in-class)

Week 5

Tues 2/9 – Hiroshima

Reading: Ibuse (1969) Black Rain (5-100)

Assignment: Review Final Projects

Thur 2/11 – – Hiroshima Continued

Reading: Ibuse (1969) Black Rain (101-204)

Week 6

Tues 2/16 –Hiroshima Continued

Reading: Ibuse (1969) Black Rain (205-300)

Thur 2/18 – **Position Paper #1 (Final)**

Reading: None

Film: NOVA: Japan's Killer Quake (in-class)

Week 7

Tues 2/23 – Sinking Japan

Reading: Komatsu (1973) Japan Sinks (7-129)

Assignment: **Proposal Meetings TBD**

Thur 2/25 – Sinking Japan Continued

Reading: Komatsu (1973) Japan Sinks (130-238)

Assignment: **Proposal Meetings TBD**

Week 8

Tues 3/2 – Natural to Nuclear Destruction

Reading: Napier (2001) Anime (3-34, 39-62 and 193-218)

Film: Akira (on-line before class)

Thur 3/4 – Natural to Nuclear Destruction Continued

Reading: Luke and Karashima, eds. (xiii-xxi; 3-107)

Film: NHK: The Phone of the Wind (in-class)

Week 9

Tues 3/9 – Natural to Nuclear Destruction Continued
Reading: Luke and Karashima, eds. (109–206)

Thur 3/11 – **Position Paper #2 (Final)**
Reading: None
Assignment: Wrap-up and Remembrance

Week 10

Tues 3/16 – Final Presentations

Thurs 3/18 – Final Presentations

Week 11

Optional Final Drafts Due by Noon on 3/21 (upload to Nexus)
Final Papers Due by Noon on 3/24 (upload to Nexus)

