Sophia University – Summer Session 2024

June 28th – July 19th, 2024   *June 28th: Orientation   *July 5: No-class day

Date: February 15, 2024

Course Title	Japanese Popular Culture
Course Code	SOZ 330
Instructor	Alisa Freedman
Class Period	Period 2: 10:55-12:35
Course Format	In-Person
Language of Instruction	English
Course Description	Japanese fashions, games, manga, anime, toys, music, and more have spread worldwide and have created a new form of national superpower. Popular culture has changed Tokyo space and revitalized neighborhoods. Hello Kitty is arguably the most recognizable icon in the world and was made tourism ambassador to Asia in 2008. Emoji are programmed into global cellphones; Pokémon continues to inspire new franchises. Words like "sushi" and "otaku" are well known in several countries, and the suffix "zilla" (from Godzilla) is part of American slang. Before the 2020 pandemic, tourists from around Asia came to Japan in droves to buy popular culture goods, shopping patterns that have influenced the economic relationship between China, Japan, and South Korea. During the pandemic, popular culture has been integral to campaigns to stop the spread of COVID-19. What makes Japanese popular culture so fascinating? How are cute characters like Hello Kitty transforming global politics and the ways people construct their own identities? Are there any negative effects of regarding Tokyo as the "capital of cool"? We will look at how people of different age groups around the world have used Japanese popular culture to form communities, make statements about gender and identity, and to overturn cultural stereotypes. We will discuss how artists and corporations have spearheaded major trends, often with support from the Japanese government and through efforts of fans. We will analyze how Japanese popular culture both "belongs" to Japan and has become an "international" culture, linking people around the world. We will learn methods of the new academic field of Japanese popular culture studies. Students are encouraged to bring in materials related to course themes and to share their own experiences. Prior knowledge of Japanese culture and language is helpful but not

	required. All readings and discussions will be in English.
Course Objectives	Learn about Japanese popular culture and its diversity, impact, and globalization; experience methodologies of popular culture studies; understand of the role of popular culture in daily life; practice critical thinking skills; express ideas orally and in writing; build class community through discussion on Japanese popular culture
Expected work outside of class	Read assigned texts, observe popular culture around you, prepare assignments, study for tests. Around 1-2 hours per day.
Course Materials	PDFs, video essays, and other materials on Moodle, suggested textbook
	Purchase of textbook: optional
	e-book: acceptable
Moodle	The day-to-day syllabus, readings, class outlines, assignment sheets, and other course materials will be posted on Moodle. Students can also reach the professor through Moodle.
Contact Instructor	·via Moodle message *The email address will be available at CGED office or informed by the instructor in the first class if needed.
Evaluation (Attendance, Class participation, in-class assignments, final exam, quizzes, etc.)	**Tentative Grade Breakdown: (Total of 162 points. Lots of points mean many changes to get a good grade!) • 2 Tests (each 50 points, total of 100 points) • Trend report (20 points) • Attendance and Engagement Exercises (3 points per class, total of 36 points)
Other comments	***The following syllabus is very tentative. The actual syllabus will be provided to available to registered students before Summer Session begins.
Class schedule	*June 28: Orientation *July 5: No-class day
	[DAY 1] Course introduction and why study popular culture
	[DAY 2] Popular culture and Tokyo
	[DAY 3] Beloved children's culture, I
	[DAY 4] Hello Kitty and Doraemon
	[DAY 5] Godzilla and monsters

	[DAY 6] Pokemon
	[DAY 7] Superheroes, I
	[DAY 8] Superheroes, II
	[DAY 9] Studio Ghibli
	[DAY 10] Gender and popular culture examples
	[DAY 11] Popular culture languages
	[DAY 12] Pop music
	[DAY 13] Review and synthesis
	[DAY 14] Final Examination

*Course format, evaluation methods and class schedule may be subject to change.