Creative Inquiry Project

For this project, you'll form small groups with your classmates. Each group will decide on a topic; it should be one that each member of the group can contribute to substantially and enthusiastically. The goal is to explore (inquire about) something having to do with manga, anime, and/or Japanese visual storytelling.

Inquiry

The idea of doing an inquiry project is to go in with an idea of what you want to learn about, without necessarily knowing what you'll find—otherwise, there's no need to inquire! For that reason, rather than deciding right away on a thesis statement or argument, you'll instead think about research goals and questions. Inquiry objectives might include learning more about manga production/publishing, exploring a particular genre or artist, finding ways of using manga in teaching, learning more about the role of manga and anime as part of Japan's "soft power"—the options are broad. It should include some outside research—*at least six sources,* but more if your project needs it.

Creative Production

I also want this project to be an opportunity for your groups to express their creativity. The "creative production" element of the project can be quite wide-ranging, but should link to your research/inquiry component.
Thinking of the two together (inquiry and creative production), your inquiry goals and questions might be guided by the idea you have for what you want to create; or, your idea for a production might instead arise out of what you research—both approaches are valid.

Possible creative elements include drawing manga panels (by hand or using software), collage, animation, remix, video taped live action performance, informative poster, and so on.

Putting It Together

The research can work its way directly into the creative elements or show up as part of an explanatory meta-text (or both). In total, the project should be the equivalent of about a 15 page paper—since that includes the creative production portion, part of your proposal/rationale should make the case for your project being the equivalent of a polished 15 page research project in terms of effort, content, and audience impact.

Proposal and Progress Reports

Each group's inquiry topic will need my approval—you'll write up a formal proposal and meet with me to discuss it following the midterm. The proposal should be one to two pages; use the attached template to guide your proposal writing. Later in the semester, I'll ask the groups to email me a progress report to let me know how the projects are going (due November 17). At any point in the

semester, feel free to set up appointments with me to talk about your projects, share drafts, etc.

Presentations
You'll share your finished projects at the end of the semester. To give you more of an audience, I'd like to open the presentations up to guests (other interested faculty and students). Depending on project needs, we may move to a different space for the presentations.

Group Dynamics and Conflict Resolution
Group projects are a great opportunity for real in-depth learning, for producing truly outstanding projects, and for a lot of fun—these are the results I aim for in designing this project. However, in any group project there is always the possibility of groups breaking down in some way or another—I hope this won't happen for any of you, but better to be prepared in case! One common way groups can break down is that someone might not do their fair share of the work; another is that one person might start to act unilaterally and not involve the others. In general, I want the groups to be responsible for self motivating and resolving their own conflicts—the project proposal includes space for assigning responsibilities and developing a timeline, both of which go a long way toward avoiding conflicts due to misunderstandings or missed deadlines. However, if serious problems arise, please bring them to my attention; ideally, come to me with a solution in mind.

Regardless of whether there are conflicts, at the conclusion of the project, each group member will complete a short group evaluation, letting me know about the other members' contributions—this is a way for me to fine-tune grades so that people who worked particularly hard can be rewarded and anyone who didn't do their fair share will not be able to "free ride" on the efforts of the rest of the group.

TL;DR
- In groups, decide on a topic related to manga, anime, and/or Japanese visual storytelling that you want to research.
- Decide on a creative component that will be part or the result of your research.
- Use *at least six outside sources*.
- The combined project should be the *equivalent of a 15 page research paper* in terms of effort, content, and effect.
- Write a formal proposal following the attached template, due the week after midterm (the week of 10/20). Conference with me for approval and suggestions.
- Progress reports emailed to me by November 17.
- Present the completed project at the end of the semester.