

English 200, Topics in English: Japanese Pop Culture in Translation

(3 hours; CRN 15814)

Fall 2015

TR 3:30–4:45

Dr. Dominic Ashby

Department of English & Theatre

Case Annex 348

Office hours: T/Th 1:00–3:00; Wednesday 9:30–12:00

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Course Description

In his instructional book *Comics and Sequential Art*, American comic book artist Will Eisner defines “sequential art”—what others might call comic book art—as “an art and literary form that deals with the arrangement of pictures or images and words to narrate a story or dramatize an idea” (xi). Pushing back against the perception that comics are somehow a lesser art form than other types of visual and literary art, he states that “the reading of a graphic novel is an act of both aesthetic perception and intellectual pursuit” (2). His work celebrates the energy and flexibility of the comic book form while highlighting the complexity behind the drafting and interpretation of these hybrid visual and alphabetic texts.

ENG200, Japanese Pop Culture in Translation, will approach Japanese manga from a similar perspective, looking at the art form as pop art that makes use of highly complex meaning-making strategies to produce a wide range of stories and styles. The course will be a space to read and discuss manga, or Japanese graphic novels. We’ll explore several genres and authors, tied together by the theme of stories that involve Japanese artists’ depictions and retellings of western stories and cultures. Readings will include a range of genres, such as historical romance, action, science fiction, and comedy. The goal is to develop a greater appreciation of Japanese popular culture as a major force in global entertainment culture and literature.

Handbook Course Description for ENG 200: Introduction to areas of literature, writing, and language use through selected topics. Designed primarily for non-English majors; may be retaken with different topics to a maximum of six hours.

Prerequisite: ENG 102 or 105 or HON 102.

Learning Outcomes for ENG 200: Japanese Pop Culture in Translation

At the end of the semester, students will be able to:

1. Identify key rhetorical and story-telling features of manga (Japanese comic books or graphic novels) as examples of what Will Eisner calls “Sequential Art”
2. Discuss manga as a distinctive art form and demonstrate knowledge of several major genres
3. Trace some of the major intercultural flows of manga and anime between Japan other parts of the globe (particularly the United States and Europe)
4. Rigorously discuss and debate the merits of manga texts by drawing from both academic and fan perspectives

Required Texts

Hidekaz Himaruya *Hetalia: Axis Powers* vol 1. Tokyopop, 2010. 978-1427818768

Isuna Hasekura. *Spice and Wolf*, vol 1. Yen Press, 2009. 978-0759531048

Kaoru Mori. *A Bride's Story* Vol. 1. Yen Press 2011. 978-0316180993

Kaoru Mori. *Emma*, Vol.1. Either the CMX, 2006 paperback 978-1401211325 (only available used) or the 2015 Yen Press hardback 978-0316302234 are acceptable.

McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. William Morrow Paperbacks, 1994. isbn# 978-0060976255

Osamu Tezuka *Princess Knight, Part One*. Vertical, 2011. 978-1935654254

Yasuhiro Nightow. *Trigun Maximum Omnibus*, Volume 1. Dark Horse, 2012. 978-1616550103

Additional readings (excerpts and articles) will be made available on Blackboard. I will also assign viewing of some anime episodes, available for ad-supported streaming in the U.S. via hulu.com.

Policies

Absence Policy: I run the course in a manner that is highly dependent on student interaction and discussion. For this reason, class attendance is mandatory to successfully complete the course. ***You may miss no more than 2 classes during the semester without penalty. Additional absences will accrue penalties to your final course grade.*** For each additional unexcused absence, your course grade will drop by a letter grade.

Exceptions to this policy may be made for certain absences. For the purposes of this course, "excused absences" include verifiable medical or family emergencies, university approved activities (accompanied by a university excuse), illness, and other absences as outlined in the University's "Student Absence from Class" policy

http://policies.eku.edu/sites/policies.eku.edu/files/policies/4.1.6_student_absence_adopted_12.1.14.pdf.

Students asking for an absence to be excused must bring documentation of the reasons for the absence. Students whose absences are not excused will not normally be allowed to make up tests, quizzes, and/or assignments. Students who anticipate having a high number of *excused* absences should contact their instructor as soon as the situation arises so that they can make arrangements for how to handle missed class time. Late arrival or early departures from class that are unexcused will be considered in the tabulation of absences as well.

Tardiness: Professionalism and consideration of your peers is important in a college course, so be on time. Coming in late is disruptive to your fellow students. Every three times you are late will count as an absence. If you come in 30 or more minutes late I will count you as absent. If you know you will be late consistently or on a given day, please let me know ahead of time so we can work out a solution.

Academic Integrity: Students are advised that EKU's Academic Integrity policy will strictly be enforced in this course. The [Academic Integrity policy](#) is available at the [policy website](#). Questions regarding the policy may be directed to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Mutual Respect: I encourage vigorous and lively debate in this class and within our university community. However, personal insults involving an individual person's race, class, ability, gender identity, sexuality, and/or veteran status will not be tolerated. Practice empathy and help maintain our classroom and university as a safe and inclusive place.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: A student with a "disability" may be an individual with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities such as learning, seeing or hearing. Additionally, pregnancy or a related medical condition that causes a similar substantial limitation may also be considered a disability under the ADA.

If you are registered with the [Office of Services for Individuals with Disabilities](#), please obtain your accommodation letters from the [OSID](#) and present them to the course instructor to discuss any academic accommodations you need. If you believe you need accommodation and are not registered with the [OSID](#), please contact the office in the Whitlock Building Room 361 by email at disserv@eku.edu or by telephone at (859) 622-2933. Upon individual request, this syllabus can be made available in an alternative format.

End of Drop/Add: August 30, 2015

Last Day to Drop without a Fee: September 20, 2015

Last Day to Drop with a Fee: November 15, 2015

Email: I will post class updates and reminders to our class email list, so please check it regularly. I will only respond to email inquiries regarding the class that come from an official ECU email account—this policy is to protect your privacy, as I have no way of verifying that an email from another service (e.g., gmail, yahoo) is actually from you. I make a great effort to respond to emails in a timely manner and generally will get back to you within 24 hours during the week (usually much sooner—I check several times a day, but not every minute), 48 hours on weekends. If you have emailed me and not heard back within that timeframe, do not hesitate to email again—my not replying may mean the message was caught in a spam folder or otherwise misdirected.

Cell Phones, Text Messaging, and Other Distracting Stuff: How do you react when somebody's cell phone starts ringing in a movie theater or in the middle of a business meeting? How do you feel when you're giving a presentation and someone in the audience is checking Facebook or texting their friends? In general, the policy is this: Do not interrupt the class in any way, or distract your classmates, or show disrespect for the instructor or other students in the class. Turn cell phone ringers to Off. If you must (say, you are waiting on an update on a close relative's condition), take calls and do text messaging outside the classroom, not in it.

Student Progress: Students should be aware that the instructor participates in the following reports on student progress: First Day of Attendance Faculty Drop, 4-Week Progress Reports, mid-term grade reports, final grade deadlines, and approved requests for updates from athletic programs.

Grading Distribution (out of 1000 pts):

Active Participation	100 pts
Blog Posts	
(Daily Posts	150 pts)
(Weekly Comments	50 pts)
Presentation	100 pts
Mid-term Essay	150 pts
Creative Inquiry (group)	300 pts
Final Exam	150 pts

Grading Scale:

A	900-1000
B	800-899
C	700-799
D	600-699
F	0-599

Blog posts are due by the start of class. You may skip up to two posts during the semester without penalty. Late posts will receive half credit if posted before the following class session; posts later than that will receive no points. Posts should engage with the day's reading. Since manga and anime are driven by both written/spoken word and visuals, try to consider both (one at a time, or thinking about how the two work together) in your posts. Things you might comment on include dialogue, narrative, art style, character development, world building, genre conventions, etc. On days that we read an article alongside a text, apply some ideas from that article to the manga or anime we're studying (or to another text you are familiar with that exemplifies a concept). Feel free to link out to other sites in your posts, if that helps you to explain or demonstrate an idea.

Weekly responses: At least once a week, you need to comment on at least two other students' posts. These responses should be thoughtful and engaging. You may skip one week of commenting without penalty.

Presentation: Each student will be responsible for giving a discussion start-up presentation on one of the readings. The presentation will include some close reading of part of the day's text and a sharing of the presenter's impressions of the text. The goal is not to somehow get the text "right," but to share your ideas about the text and get a conversation with the class started. The presenter should plan to present for about 10 minutes (just the presenter has the floor) before transitioning to posing questions to the class or inviting questions or commentary. You will receive a copy of the evaluation rubric I will use for evaluating the presentation beforehand. Students will sign up for presentation days during Week Two of the semester.

Creative Inquiry: In the second half of the semester, 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. Topics 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 a little outside research (and it's fine if you draw from the "recommended readings" list I provide on the course blog) and should include a/some creative element(s). Possible creative elements include drawing manga panels (by hand or

using software), collage, animation, remix, video taped live action performance, and so on. The research can work its way directly into the creative elements or show up as part of an explanatory meta-text (or both). Each group's inquiry topic will need my approval—you'll write up a short proposal and meet with me to discuss it before getting started. You'll share your finished projects with the rest of the class at the end of the semester. At that time, each member will also complete a short group evaluation, letting me know about the other members' contributions.

Extra Credit: You may earn extra credit in one of two ways: Attending an anime convention and/or by submitting a proposal to present a paper about manga to an academic conference that accepts student submissions. Doing either will earn 20 points (that is, 2%); doing both will earn 40 points (4%). Documentation is required to receive points and you will only receive points once for each category (so, if you go to two cons, you still get just 20 points). If applying to a conference, you need to meet with me to workshop your proposal before you submit it. I will post links to nearby conventions held during the semester as well as to academic conferences.

Course Requirements and Evaluation: All major assignments (Midterm Essay, Creative Inquiry, and Final Exam) must be completed to pass the class. Skipping any of these assignments equals an automatic failure (F).

Weekly Schedule for ENG200: Japanese Pop Culture in Translation

Schedule is subject to change. Changes will be announced in class (when possible), on Blackboard, and via email; emergency cancelation or changes will be announced via email and Blackboard—please check your EKU email account regularly.

You are responsible for keeping up with material covered and assignments due on any days that you miss class.

Week 1

Tuesday 8/25: Course Introduction

Thursday 8/27 *Understanding Comics* Chapters 1 & 2; bring in some examples of scenes in a manga or comic book that exemplify at least two of the ideas from McCloud

Week 2

Tuesday 9/1 *Understanding Comics* Chapters 3, 4, & 5; *Princess Knight* Chapters 1 & 2

Thursday 9/3 *Princess Knight* continued

Week 3

Monday 9/7: Labor Day

Tuesday 9/8 Susanne Phillipps, "Characters, Themes, and Narrative Patterns in the Manga of Osamu Tezuka"; *Princess Knight* to the end.

Thursday 9/10 begin *Emma*

Week 4

Tuesday 9/15 Mizuki Takahashi, "Opening the Closed World of Shōjo Manga"; finish *Emma*

Thursday 9/17 Watch *Rose of Versailles* episodes 1 & 2 (streaming on Hulu); watch *Croisee in a Foreign Labyrinth* ep 1 & 2

Week 5

Tuesday 9/22 Rieko Okuhara, "The Censorship of Japanese Anime in America: Do American Children Need to Be Protected from *Dragon Ball?*"; *Bride Story* first half

Thursday 9/24 Finish *Bride Story*

Week 6

Tuesday 9/29 *Spice and Wolf*

Thursday 10/1 *Spice and Wolf*

Week 7 (Midterm)

Tuesday 10/6 Jenkins' [interview with Steinberg on Condry on the Japanese Media Mix](#);
watch *Spice and Wolf* anime ep 1 on hulu; read excerpt of manga

Thursday 10/8 **Midterm**

Week 8

Monday 10/12 Fall Break

Tuesday 10/13 Fall Break

Thursday 10/15 Topic: Adapting European Legends and Fairy Tales; Introduce the Creative Inquiry Project

Week 9

Tuesday 10/20 Topic: Western Vampires in Japan

Thursday 10/22 Group Conferences: **Creative Inquiry Proposals Due**

Week 10

Tuesday 10/27 *Understanding Comics* Chapters 6, 8, & 9

Thursday 10/29 Topic: "Slice of Life" manga; read excerpts

Week 11 (Daylight Savings Time ends)

Tuesday 11/3 *Hetalia Axis Powers*

Thursday 11/5 Topic: The Idea of America; read excerpt from Sargeant; manga excerpts

Week 12

Tuesday 11/10 Topic: Japanese Sci-Fi and the West; watch episodes of *Ergo Proxy* and *Aria the Animation*

Thursday 11/12 *Trigun*

Week 13

Tuesday 11/17 *Trigun*

Thursday 11/19 Readers' Choice

Week 14

Tuesday 11/24: Workshop Creative Inquiry Projects

Wednesday 11/25 Thanksgiving Break begins

Week 15

Share Creative Inquiry Projects (**All projects are due Tuesday, 12/1**)

Prep for Final Exam

Finals Week

Our Final Exam is Scheduled for: **Tuesday 12/8, 1:00–3:00**