ALL 5920

REPRESENTATIONS AND REIMAGINATIONS OF “JAPAN”

Fall 2015
MW 1:00-2:15
Nicholson 145

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION
Baryon Tensor Posadas
228C Folwell Hall
Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:00 pm -4:00 pm
bposadas@umn.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course is organized around readings of non-Japanese literary and cinematic texts that take up the fantasy of ‘Japan’ in their narratives. Attentive to the structuring of desires, affects, and horizons of expectation that their deployment of an imagined cultural geography engender, our discussions will examine the various ways ‘Japan’ is rearticulated and re-signified across a range of different texts at different historically specific moments as a point of departure for the interrogation of our own critical practice in taking up ‘Japan’ as an object of intellectual inquiry. Particular emphasis will be placed on such focal points as: ethnographic cinema, the politics of travel and translation, the intersecting performances of race and gender, the uses of cultural otherness in the writing of alternate histories, and the ramifications of techno-orientalist discourse.

The challenge in this course is not simply to determine the accuracy or authenticity of the various texts’ respective representations of Japan, but to ask what ramifications their deployment of “Japan” as an imagined geography have on the production and circulation of their works. With these discussions as our point of departure, we will investigate the broader discursive premises and presuppositions foregrounded by acts of looking, writing, and interpreting “Japan.” Through the articulation of the specific critical problems as well as possibilities offered by the narrative conventions and logics of literary forms, participants are expected to reflect on their own intellectual positions vis-a-vis the issue of cross-cultural representation and analysis.

No preceding knowledge of Japanese language, literature, or history is required. All the required readings are available in English, and discussions are conducted in English.

COURSE EVALUATION
Attendance and participation 20%
Weekly responses (x10) 20%
Midterm paper (4 pages) 20%
Final paper (8-10 pages) 40%

Attendance and Participation
Attendance to class sessions and active participation in the discussions are mandatory. Please come to class having already read both the literary texts and the critical materials assigned for that session and be prepared to critically discuss them in class.

Weekly responses
At the beginning of each week, students are required to electronically circulate a short response to be posted on the discussion board of the course website. In these responses, students are tasked to critically reflect on one or more of the assigned theoretical readings. These reflections should go beyond mere summaries of the texts; instead, they should raise questions for discussion, highlight important critical points, and demonstrate a grasp of the key issues at hand. The format is fairly informal and flexible, and can consist of (for example) a set of questions to raise for discussion, or a staging of a debate between two or more readings, or a discussion of an essay’s arguments in relation to one of the assigned literary texts, or a reaction/counterpoint to other posted responses. Responses are due by class time on the Monday session, and will be used as the set-up for further discussion during the Wednesday session.

(Due every Monday by class time)

No late responses will be accepted

Midterm Paper
As a midterm assignment, students are required to submit a critical reflection of about 4 pages in length. For this assignment, your task is to critically reflect on the issues and political complications in writing, looking, or thinking about “Japan” that we have discussed thus far. With the critical and theoretical readings, as well as our discussions in class to date as your point of departure, identify what you believe to be the most pressing problems at stake in taking up “Japan” as an object of study and articulate a position for yourself vis-a-vis these issues.

(Due Oct 28th)

Late midterm papers will be subject to a 2% penalty per day.

Final Paper
Using one or more literary texts (or films, or animations) as a focal point, produce a solid analysis of the range critical issues in relation to the ways in which “Japan” is represented in literary and other discourses. Topics can include (but are not restricted to) any of the themes discussed in class, e.g., travelogues and ethnographies, intersections of gender, and nation, ethnic and gender passing, techno-orientalisms and empire, etc. The choice of text and approach is open, to be determined in consultation with the instructor. Some questions that may be addressed are:

1. How do the texts in question address the political-economic conditions that have shaped representations of Japan at given historical conjunctures?
2. How does the problem of gender and its intersections with discourses on race, ethnicity, or the nation complicate how we might apprehend the mechanisms through which “Japan” is taken up in fiction?
3. How do uses of “Japan” play out in different forms of representation, for example, filmic vs. literary representation?
4. How do we account for the possibility of auto-orientalisms in Japanese cultural productions? How might our understanding of these literary representations of “Japan” be furthered when they are juxtaposed to the Japanese writings they intertextually reference?

(Due Dec 16th)

Late final papers will be subject to a 2% penalty per day.

REQUIRED TEXTS
BOOKS

FILMS
Chris Marker, *Sans Soleil*, 1983
David Cronenberg, *M. Butterfly*, 1993
Alain Resnais, *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, 1959
Wong Kar-wai, *2046*, 2004

All other materials listed below will be made available through the course website

SCHEDULE

**Week 1**

**Introduction**

*Sep 9* Orientation

**Week 2**

**Historical Signposts: Orientalism and Japan**


**Week 3**

**Gaze upon the Other**

*Sep 21* Roland Barthes, *Empire of Signs*


*Sep 23* Roland Barthes, *Empire of Signs* (cont.)

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<tr>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Ethnographic Cinema</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sep 28</td>
<td>Chris Marker, <em>Sans Soleil</em></td>
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| Sep 30 | Chris Marker, *Sans Soleil* (cont.) |


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<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Anthropology and Autobiography</th>
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<th>Week 6</th>
<th>Sexuality and Nationality</th>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 12</td>
<td>David Cronenberg, <em>M. Butterfly</em></td>
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Ayako Kano, “Acting Like a Woman” and “Modern Formations of Gender and Performance” in *Acting Like a Woman: Theater, Gender, and Nationalism* (Palgrave, 2001), 3-38.

| Oct 14 | David Cronenberg, *M. Butterfly* (cont.) |

Dorinne Kondo, "*M. Butterfly*: Gender, Ethnicity, and the Critique of Essentialist Identity" in *About Face: Performing Race in Fashion and Theater* (Routledge, 1997), pp. 31-54.

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<tr>
<th>Week 7</th>
<th>Migrations and Motherlands</th>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 19</td>
<td>Julie Otsuka, <em>The Buddha in the Attic</em></td>
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| Oct 21 | Julie Otsuka, *The Buddha in the Attic* (cont.) |

Manzella, Abigail G. H. "Disorientation in Julie Otsuka’s *When the Emperor Was Divine*: The Imprisoned Spaces of Japanese Americans During World War II." In Maha Marouan

**Week 8**  
**Midterm Break**

Oct 26  
NO CLASS

Oct 28  
MIDTERM PAPERS DUE

**Week 9**  
**Representation and Desire**

Nov 2  
Alain Resnais, *Hiroshima Mon Amour*


Nov 4  
Alain Resnais, *Hiroshima Mon Amour* (cont.)


**Week 10**  
**Alternate Histories**

Nov 9  
Philip K. Dick, *The Man in a High Castle*


Nov 11  
Philip K. Dick, *The Man in a High Castle* (cont.)


**Week 11**  
**Japan and Asia**

Nov 16  
Wong Kar-wai, *2046*


Nov 18  
Wong Kar-wai, *2046* (cont.)

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<tr>
<th>Week 12</th>
<th><strong>Consuming Images, Consuming Commodities</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 23</td>
<td>Ruth Ozeki, <em>My Year of Meats.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 25</td>
<td>Ruth Ozeki, <em>My Year of Meats.</em> (cont.)</td>
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<th>Week 13</th>
<th><strong>Japan in the World</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 30</td>
<td>Wim Wenders, <em>Until the End of the World</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 2</td>
<td>Wim Wenders, <em>Until the End of the World</em> (cont.)</td>
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<th>Week 14</th>
<th><strong>Techno-orientalism</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 7</td>
<td>David Mitchell, <em>number9dream.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 9</td>
<td>David Mitchell, <em>number9dream</em> (cont.)</td>
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<th>Week 15</th>
<th><strong>Conclusions</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 16</td>
<td>FINAL PAPERS DUE</td>
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**POLICY STATEMENTS**
Grading Policy
The University utilizes plus and minus grading on a 4.000 cumulative grade point scale. In this course, numeric percentile grades will be converted to letter grades using the following standard:

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>Represents achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>Represents achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>Represents achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>Represents achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59</td>
<td>Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either: (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit; or (2) was not completed, and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an &quot;I&quot; (see also I).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td>Assigned at the discretion of the instructor when, due to extraordinary circumstances, e.g., hospitalization, a student is prevented from completing the work of the course on time. Requires written agreement between the instructor and the student.</td>
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For additional information, please refer to:

http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/GRADINGTRANSCRIPTS.html

Makeup Work for Legitimate Absences
Students will not be penalized for absence during the semester due to unavoidable or legitimate circumstances. Such circumstances include verified illness, participation in intercollegiate athletic events, subpoenas, jury duty, military service, bereavement, and religious observances. Such circumstances do not include voting in local, state, or national elections. For complete information, please see:

http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/MAKEUPWORK.html

Student Conduct Code
The University seeks an environment that promotes academic achievement and integrity, that is protective of free inquiry, and that serves the educational mission of the University. Similarly, the University seeks a community that is free from violence, threats, and intimidation; that is respectful of the rights, opportunities, and welfare of students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University; and that does not threaten the physical or mental health or safety of members of the University community.

As a student at the University you are expected adhere to Board of Regents Policy: Student Conduct Code. To review the Student Conduct Code, please see:


Note that the conduct code specifically addresses disruptive classroom conduct, which means "engaging in behavior that substantially or repeatedly interrupts either the instructor's ability to teach or student
learning. The classroom extends to any setting where a student is engaged in work toward academic credit or satisfaction of program-based requirements or related activities."

**Scholastic Dishonesty**
You are expected to do your own academic work and cite sources as necessary. Failing to do so is scholastic dishonesty. Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

If it is determined that a student has cheated, he or she may be given an "F" or an "N" for the course, and may face additional sanctions from the University.

The Office for Student Conduct and Academic Integrity has compiled a useful list of Frequently Asked Questions pertaining to scholastic dishonesty:

[http://www1.umn.edu/oscai/integrity/student/index.html](http://www1.umn.edu/oscai/integrity/student/index.html).

If you have additional questions, please clarify with your instructor for the course. Your instructor can respond to your specific questions regarding what would constitute scholastic dishonesty in the context of a particular class—e.g., whether collaboration on assignments is permitted, requirements and methods for citing sources, if electronic aids are permitted or prohibited during an exam.

**Equity, Diversity, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action**
The University will provide equal access to and opportunity in its programs and facilities, without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. For more information, please consult Board of Regents Policy:

[http://regents.umn.edu/sites/](http://regents.umn.edu/sites/)

**Sexual Harassment**
"Sexual harassment" means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment in any University activity or program. Such behavior is not acceptable in the University setting. For additional information, please consult Board of Regents Policy:


**Disability Accommodations**
The University of Minnesota is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. Disability Services (DS) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations.

If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical), please contact DS at 612-626-1333 to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.
If you are registered with DS and have a current letter requesting reasonable accommodations, please contact your instructor as early in the semester as possible to discuss how the accommodations will be applied in the course.

For more information, please see the DS website:

https://diversity.umn.edu/disability/

**Academic Freedom and Responsibility**

Academic freedom is a cornerstone of the University. Within the scope and content of the course as defined by the instructor, it includes the freedom to discuss relevant matters in the classroom. Along with this freedom comes responsibility. Students are encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth. Students are free to take reasoned exception to the views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.

Reports of concerns about academic freedom are taken seriously, and there are individuals and offices available for help. Contact the instructor, the Department Chair, your adviser, the associate dean of the college, or the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs in the Office of the Provost.