

Girl Culture, Media, and Japan
JAPN LIT 162 Spring 2017
Tues@1-3 Northwest Bldg B104

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 3-4:00 or by appointment

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In contemporary Japan, girls and girl culture are considered to be among the most significant sources of popular cultural trends. For instance, the girly aesthetics of “cute” (*kawaii*) has animated broad areas of Japanese consumer culture since the 1980s and is fast becoming a global cultural idiom through the popularity of Japanese entertainment, media, and fashion products abroad. The course will explore a number of key questions about Japanese (and global) girl culture. How did the conceptualization of girlhood, girl culture, girl bodies, and girl affect transform in Japan from the early twentieth century to the present? How did various medias and media consumption help shape these trends? What can the exploration of “girls’ question” tell us, not only about Japanese socio-cultural history, but also about the general conditions of youth, gender, and media culture in the world today (e.g., the *sea of pink* at recent Women’s March at DC and elsewhere)? We will begin the semester by unpacking key terms such as “girl,” “girlhood,” and “girl culture” in relations to the modern and contemporary notions of gender, maturity, and majority. The course materials include fiction, popular magazines, teen films, manga, and animation. No prior knowledge of Japanese language or history is expected.

Assignments:

Weekly reflection papers (250 min 350 words max) on assignments for the upcoming week to be posted on the course website by Monday@6pm every week unless otherwise noted.

Three papers:

Paper #1 (5-7 pages), due Saturday, March 4@6pm

Take-home midterm essay (4-6 pages), due Saturday, April 8@6pm

Paper #2 (8-10 pages), due Friday, May 5@6pm

Quiz: In-class final short quiz (either during the Tues class or at a section meeting TBA)

No final exam

Grading:

Class participation and reflection papers 30%

Mid-term take-home exam: 15%

Two papers: paper #1 (20%); paper #2 (30%)

Final Quiz: 5%

Reflection Papers are short write-ups where you are expected to reflect on, question, criticize, and offer analyses on the assigned materials. Please remember that you do not have to (in fact, you shouldn't) summarize a piece of text or a video in order to express your thoughts about it. Rather, you are encouraged to begin directly with the points you want to address. These writings are not expected to be polished analyses and you are encouraged to raise thoughtful questions about what you have read or viewed. Sometimes I may post specific

questions that I want you to respond to. If no such questions are posted, you are expected to respond directly to the materials on your own terms.

Your Responsibilities: A course cannot be successful without your input and cooperation. There are few policies that I want you to keep in mind.

*Class attendance (including discussion sections) is mandatory. Missing more than two class meetings may result in grade reduction. If you know you will miss a class please send a note to TF explaining your absence.

*You are expected to submit all assignments on time. We will accept one late posting with no question asked; but more than one late submission may result in grade reduction.

*You are expected to come to classes prepared (having completed assigned readings/viewings/writings). You should make every effort to participate in classroom discussions. Thoughtful participation will have positive effects on your final grade.

Course Materials

Required textbooks to be purchased (available at Harvard Coop except “Yellow Rose”)

- Yoshimoto Banana, *Kitchen*.
- Okazaki Kyôko, *Pink*
- Takemoto Novala, *Kamikaze Girls*
- Hagio Moto, *The Heart of Thomas*
- Yoshiya Nobuko, “*Kibara*” and “Translator’s Introduction,” by Sarah Frederick (only available on Amazon.com in kindle edition, please purchase it online)

Optional textbook: Tanizaki Jun’ichiro, *Naomi* (If you decide to write about this novel for your paper #1)

***All other reading materials will be available in the “Readings” page on the course website, unless otherwise noted.**

*** All videos are available on reserve at Yenching Library; some can be watched online as well.**

*** Names of Japan-based writers, scholars, and manga creators are listed with family name first, following the Japanese convention.**

Academic Integrity

Discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to academic work. For assignments in this course, you are encouraged to consult with your classmates on the choice of paper topics and to share sources. You may find it useful to discuss your chosen topic with your peers, particularly if you are working on the same topic as a classmate. However, you should ensure that any written work you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and writing and that it reflects your own approach to the topic. You must also adhere to standard citation practices in this discipline and properly cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, etc. that have helped you with your work. If you received any help with your writing (feedback on drafts, etc), you must also acknowledge this assistance.

Please see Harvard's guides to [Citing Sources](http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/citing-sources) (<http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/citing-sources>) and [Avoiding Plagiarism](http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/avoiding-plagiarism) (<http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/avoiding-plagiarism>).

Accessible Education

Any student needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to present their letter from the Accessible Education Office (AEO) and speak with the professor by the end of the second week of the term. Failure to do so may result in the course head's inability to respond in a timely manner. All discussions will remain confidential, although AEO may be consulted to discuss appropriate implementation.

Week 1 (1/24)

Introduction

Week 2 (1/31)

Girls, Girl Culture, and Feminism

Mary Pipher, *Reviving Ophelia*, Chapter 1

Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards, "Feminism and Femininity" in Anita Harris ed., *All About the Girl*

Catherine Driscoll, "Feminine Adolescence" in *Girls: Feminine Adolescence in Popular Culture and Cultural Theory*. pp. 47-77

Week 3 (2/7)

Girl Body, Girl Affect and the Advent of Modern Japan

Higuchi Ichiyô, "Child's Play" ("Growing UP") [1885]

Monica Swindle, "Feeling Girl, Girl Feeling: An Examination of 'Girl' as Affect"

Iris Marion Young, "Throwing Like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Feminine Body Comportment, Motility, and Spaciality"

(optional) Nolte and Hastings, "The Meiji State's Policy Toward Women, 1890-1910."

Week 4 (2/14)

Modern Girls: Gender and Media During the Interwar Period

DVD: *Osaka Elegy* (dir. Mizoguchi Kenji, 1936) DVD J-0178

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w497OJtsYxw>

Barbara Sato, "Modern Girl as a Representation of Consumer Culture" in *The New Japanese Woman*

Miriam Silverberg, "Modern Girl as Militant" in Gail Lee Bernstein ed., *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945.*

Week 5 (2/21)

Girl Magazines, Girl Fiction, and Passionate Friendship Among Girls

DVD: *Maria sama ga miteiru* Season 1 Episodes 1-3; DVD J-0172 disc.1 HYL HD

Episode 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FRrqZlNDjeg>

Episode 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dScOJNLBpA>

Yoshiya Nobuko, "*Kibara*" translated by Sarah Frederick (available on Amazon as a kindle book, please purchase it online)

Deborah Shamoon, *Passionate Friendship*, Chapter 2 "Prewar Girls' Culture (*Shôjo bunka*) 1910-1937"

Honda Masuko, "The Genealogy of *hirahira*"

Week 6 (2/28)

Girl Modernism

Osaki Midori, "Wandering in the Realm of the Seventh Sense"

(skip the intro and start reading the novella halfway down p. 224)

*Instead of writing a regular posting, you will be asked to create a "diagram" for this week

Paper #1 (5-7 pages), due Saturday, March 4@6pm

Week 7 (3/7)

All-Women Takarazuka Theater and Cross-dressed Fantasies

Streaming: *Dream Girls* (Dir. Kim Longinotto)

<http://id.lib.harvard.edu/aleph/013955314/catalog>

Jennifer Robertson, *Takarazuka* Chap. 2 and 4.

[3/10-3/19 Spring Break]

Week 8 (3/21)

"It's a Cat . . . It's a Girl . . . It's Cutie!" Postwar Girl Culture

DVD: *The Star of Cottonland* (private copy on reserve at Yenching; you need a laptop and video player such as VLC to play it)

<http://www.veoh.com/watch/v195310228thkBBtf>

Christine Yano, *Pink Globalization* (selection)

Sharon Kinsella, "Cuties in Japan"

Week 9 (3/28)

Girl Manga and Love Among Boys

Hagio Moto, *The Heart of Thomas*

James Welker, "Beautiful, Borrowed and Bent: 'Boy's Love' as Girls' Love in Shôjo Manga"

Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, vol. 31 no.3 (2006)

Debora Shamoon "The Revolution in 1970s Shôjo Manga," *Passionate Friendship* Chapter 5.

Week 10 (4/4)

Girl Fiction of 1980s

Yoshimoto Banana, "Kitchen" in *Kitchen*

John Treat, "Yoshimoto Banana Writes Home"

Tomiko Yoda, "The Rise and Fall of Maternal Japan"

Take-home exam due this week on Saturday, April 8@6pm; No reflection paper this week

Week 11 (4/11)

Mediated Naughty Girls of Post-bubble Japan

Video: *Bounce Kogals* DVD J-0148 HYL HD

Sharon Kinsella, *Schoolgirls, Money and Rebellion in Japan*, Chapter 3

Jennifer S. Prough, "Material Gals," in *Straight From the Heart: Gender, Intimacy, and the Cultural Production of Shôjo Manga*.

Ueno Chizuko, "Self-determination on sexuality? Commercialization of sex among teenage girls in Japan," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, Vol. 4, No.2, 2003.

Week 12 (4/18)

Lolitas and Fashion Subculture

Takemoto Novala, *Kamikaze Girls*

Brian Bergstrom, "Girliness Next to Godliness: Lolita Fandom as Sacred Novels of Takemoto Novala," *Mechademia*, Vol. 6, 2011.

Week 13 (4/25)

Love, Capitalism, and Urban Girls

Okazaki Kyôko, *Pink*

Short final quiz

Final Paper (8-10 pages) due Monday, May 8@6pm