

University of California, San Diego
Global Seminars II
Summer 2016

Making of the Modern World 15 &

**Tuesday, Wednesday
Lectures & discussions
9:00am-12:00pm**

Thursday Excursions

**Summer Session I
June 28-July 30**

**Global Seminar
UCSD**

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DESCRIPTION AND THE PURPOSE OF THE COURSE:

This course examines twentieth- and twenty-first-century Japan within the broader context of world history through the intertwined lenses of technology and politics. It explores how technological innovation has shaped modern Japanese society, culture, and historical consciousness, while situating these developments within global processes of modernization, empire, and postwar transformation. The course begins by tracing the philosophical and historical evolution of technology in Japan, from industrialization and imperial expansion to postwar reconstruction and the emergence of advanced technological infrastructures. Building on this foundation, the course examines the rise of popular culture and visual media as key sites where technological change is both represented and contested. Through the study of cinema, animation, and manga, students will explore how media forms reflect and mediate experiences of rapid modernization, technological acceleration, and global circulation, often through narratives centered on artificial life, mechanized environments, and technologically transformed bodies. Particular attention is given to how visual technologies and cultural practices engage themes such as memory, disaster, urbanization, and identity, while also drawing on religious and philosophical traditions that inform conceptions of humanity, nature, and the machine. By situating Japan within transnational networks of exchange, the course highlights how technological imaginaries circulate globally, contributing to Japan's cultural influence and shaping broader debates about modernity and the future. Ultimately, the course asks how technology, as both material infrastructure and cultural force, has played a central role in shaping modern Japan and its position in the contemporary world.

The basic goals of the course are as follows:

1. To develop a foundational understanding of Japanese popular visual culture, with a focus on manga, animation, and cinema.
2. To examine how everyday life and local histories are connected to broader global cultures and historical processes.
3. To cultivate familiarity with non-European cultural traditions and perspectives.
4. To gain knowledge of Japanese history and society through the lens of popular cultural production.
5. To engage in intensive university-level writing and to strengthen analytical and critical thinking skills.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

1. **Course Reader** (Cal Copy)
2. Haruki Murakami, *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*.
3. Osamu Dazai, *No Longer Human*.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Assignments:

Assignments and grades will be determined as follows:

Reading Group Assignments	30%
Final Exam	40%
Excursion reviews	20 %
Class participation	10%

EXAMS:

● **Reading Group Assignments:** In the beginning of the summer term the class will be divided up into a number of groups (27 students in total: 3 students in each group; a total of 9 groups). Each group will be responsible for reading, discussing and summarizing the assigned reading during the lecture day, when the readings are due. Each group will also write up a collective essay on the Sunday of that week (submit at 11:59pm to religion101ucsd@gmail.com). We will have a total of 3 Reading Group Assignments for the summer term. For each essay submitted members of the group will receive credit. The essay should not be more than 500 words (excluding the references) and should make reference to the reading assignment. You may use MLA or any other reference style. Write the topic (the assignment you have discussed), your group name and members of that group on top of the paper. As for the name of the group, you can choose any name you like. My suggestion: choose the name of your favorite anime. The essays should be an analytical reflection and a summery of the assignment discussed in class. As for who writes the essay, you can rotate authors on a weekly basis.

● **Japan Futurism Project:** Students are required to write a fieldwork-based essay of 2,500–3,000 words (excluding references) that examines the concept and manifestations of Japanese futurism from the twentieth century to the present. This essay should combine historical analysis, theoretical reflection, and field observations drawn from course excursions, sites, visual media, or cultural artifacts encountered during the program. Students are encouraged to think critically about how “the future” is imagined, represented, and materialized in Japanese contexts, particularly through the intersections of technology, culture, and (where relevant) religious or philosophical worldviews.

- **Excursion reviews:** 200 to 300 words review of excursion. They can be informal. I simply want to hear about your reflections. No need to make references.
Due: everyday Sunday at 11:59pm, religion101ucsd@gmail.com
- You must complete all parts of the writing assignment, attend section, and submit all exams in order to pass the course.

CLASS POLICY & GUIDELINES:

Attendance and Participation

Active participation for each week comprises 10% of your grade. Students are expected to come to the lectures and are required to attend the sections. Students are also expected to have read the assigned reading materials and be prepared to talk about the reading material and lectures during discussion sessions. You can certainly ask questions during the lectures.

Late Papers

You must complete all assigned papers in a timely manner to pass the course. Late papers will be penalized 1/3 of a grade for each class that they are late.

Plagiarism

The major part of your course assignments and exams involves writings based on your assigned reading. So, make sure to cite your sources, either quoted directly or paraphrased, so to avoid plagiarism. In other words, submit your own original work! See me if you have any questions regarding what constitutes plagiarism. If you are caught cheating you will automatically fail the course.

Assistance

In case of disability that may require accommodation, please see me. ☺

Course Schedule (Summer Session 2027)

Dates: June 28 – July 30, 2027

- **Tuesday & Wednesday:** 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM (in class / on-site lectures)
- **Thursday:** Excursion Day
- **No scheduled activities:** Mondays, Fridays, weekends

Week 1: June 29 – July 1

Monday, June 28

ISA Orientation
Welcome Dinner

Tuesday, June 29

Introduction to Course
Lecture Site: Edo-Tokyo Museum and Tokyo Sky Tree

Wednesday, June 30

Lecture Site: Shibuya Crossing
Film: *Godzilla* (1954)

Thursday, July 1 (Excursion)

Asakusa Area Tour

- Kaminarimon Gate & Nakamise-dori
- Sensōji Temple
- Sumida River

Sunday (July 4)

Reading Group Assignment #1 (11:59 PM)
Excursion Review #1

Week 2: July 6 – July 8

Tuesday, July 6

Lecture Site: Yasukuni Shrine & Museum

Wednesday, July 7

Lecture Site: Tokyo National Museum; Yoyogi Park; Meiji Shrine; Nezu Museum

Thursday, July 8 (Excursion)

- Edo Wonderland (Nikkō Edomura)

Sunday (July 11)

Reading Group Assignment #2 (11:59 PM)
Excursion Review #2

Week 3: July 13 – July 15

Tuesday, July 13

Film: *Ghost in the Shell*

Lecture Site: National Art Center

Wednesday, July 14

Lecture Site: Mori Art Museum

Thursday, July 15 (Excursion)

Ghibli Museum (TBD)

Inokashira Park

Sunday (July 18)

Reading Group Assignment #3 (11:59 PM)

Excursion Review #3

Week 4: July 20 – July 22

Tuesday, July 20

Lecture Site: Akihabara Tour & Tokyo Animation Center

Wednesday, July 21

Lecture Site: TBD

Thursday, July 22 (Excursion)

Travel to Kyoto (Train)

Hotel Check-in, Overnight in Kyoto

Friday, July 23 (Excursion)

Travel from Kyoto to Nara

Saturday, July 24

Return to Tokyo

Week 5: July 27 – July 30

Tuesday, July 27

Kyoto International Manga Museum

Manga Workshop

Wednesday, July 28

Return to Tokyo (Train)

Thursday, July 29 (Excursion / Final Visits)

Lecture Site: Suginami Animation Museum

Panasonic Center & Miraikan (National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation)

Friday, July 30

Futurism Project Due (11:59 PM)

Farewell Dinner