CONSUMER CULTURE IN ASIA

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course will make use of historical fiction, film, and scholarly articles to explore the events, ideas, and legacies of the development of East Asian consumer culture. This seminar seeks to engage students in an investigation of the consumption of goods, forms of leisure, and other cultural practices that starts before the turn of the Twentieth Century and moves forward chronologically into the present. Some specific themes we will cover include: work and leisure; family life; social relations; media; advertising; and technology. All of the course materials for “Consumer Culture in Asia” seek to provide students with a nuanced historical and cultural understanding of how goods and their consumption affected the nature of cultural production in East Asia and represented comprehensive social and political shifts. Materials on China, Japan, and Korea will be all be included for comparative purposes examining global interactions past and present that help students to contextualize course materials within an environment of increased globalization.

COURSE PREREQUISITES
While a background in East Asian Studies is not required, such knowledge along with any other cultural, literary, or historical background would be helpful to students taking this course. Previous study of Japanese, Chinese, or Korean language is not required for the course, as the materials used will all be in English translation (or subtitled).

COURSE OBJECTIVES & AIMS
Students will:
• Understand cultural and academic materials on Asia;
• Critically engage with historical and cultural studies methods;
• Demonstrate effective oral and written communication skills by writing analytic essays and doing in-class presentations;
• Undertake a small amount of independent research after being oriented to FIU’s libraries;
• Articulate interpretive arguments concisely and clearly;
• Utilize critical listening skills by providing constructive criticism for their classmates’ presentations.

GLOBAL LEARNING & OUTCOMES
• Global Awareness:
  Students will display knowledge of the interconnectedness of global issues, trends, and systems influencing the development of consumer cultures in Asia.
• Global Perspective:
  Students will be able to construct analyses of Asian consumer and cultural issues from national, transnational, international, and global perspectives.
• Global Engagement:
  Students will demonstrate an ability to identify, research, and propose solutions or alternative approaches to issues within Asian consumer and cultural studies.
Many components of the course foster active learning strategies. Students should be prepared to analyze assigned readings and other materials, and to share opinions, ideas, and questions during the discussion in class. Participation in the course will account for 15% of your grade in the course.

Other components of the course include:

Discussion Questions/Comments — Except on days when films are shown, students will print and bring at least three questions or provocative comments for each meeting to help stimulate the discussion, address any confusion about that week’s readings, or critique the materials assigned. These submissions will account for 5% of your grade in the course.

Quizzes — There will be two quizzes to ascertain student knowledge of the course materials. Each quiz will account for 5% of your grade in the course, together accounting for 10% percent of the total grade.

Analytic Essays — Students will write at least two short analytical papers, of no more than 1200 words each, in response to questions to be distributed in class. Each question will be associated with specific reading assignments, primary texts, or films. These assignments allow students to creatively engage with course materials and express their opinions about the conclusions they’ve drawn. Neither paper will require outside research. Each paper will account for 15% of your grade in the course, together accounting for 30% percent of the total grade.

In-Class Presentation & Feedback — There will be an in-class individual presentation to be scheduled for the last weeks of the term. In addition to presenting one’s own thesis, students will be required to provide written constructive criticism for the other presenters. The presentation and responses to classmates will each account for 10% of your grade in the course, together accounting for 20% percent of the total grade.

Modular In-class Assignments, Attendance & Participation — attendance in this course is both crucial and required. Sufficient preparedness for our activities and productive contributions to them are essential to the success of our course. These will account for 20% percent of the total grade. There is a participation rubric on Blackboard for your reference.
Possible Course Readings:


Films:

Yasujirō Ozu, 東京の合唱 Tokyo no kōrasu (Tokyo Chorus), DVD 90 min., 1931.

Yasujirō Ozu, お早よう Ohayō (Good Morning), DVD 94 min., 1959.

Xiaowen Zhou, 二嫫 Èrmó (Ermo), VHS 98 min., 1994.

TENTATIVE MEETING SCHEDULE

Introductions and Methodology
Wednesday, September 5
CONCEPTS, DEFINITIONS, & FRAMING OUR DISCUSSIONS
Activity: Group work - definitions, concept maps & charting a path

Enter the 20th Century
Wednesday, September 19
WHAT CAME BEFORE
Activity: Using Art & Literature to understand history

Wednesday, September 26
BUYING AND THE NATION
Readings: Trentmann, Chpt 1 “The Evolution of the Consumer” (21-44) in The Ambivalent Consumer; and Gerth, China Made, Introduction (1-25) and Chpt 7 “Nationalizing Female Consumers” (285-332)
Activity: Role Play [American Colonist, Chinese New Woman, Japanese Meiji Man, etc]

Wednesday, October 3
MODERNIZATION AND THE FAMILY
FIRST ANALYTIC ESSAY DUE
In-class viewing: Yasujirō Ozu, Tokyo Chorus

Wartime & Postwar
Wednesday, October 10
MODERN GIRLS IN THE WORLD
Activity: Source Analysis - Visual materials (The 5-Cs)

Wednesday, October 17
MODERN GIRLS IN FICTION
SHORT PRESENTATION AND SIGN-UP FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSULTATIONS

Wednesday, October 24
THE WAR AND BEYOND
SYLLABUS
Dr. Amy Bliss Marshall, History & Asian Studies
amy.marshall@fiu.edu

Japan; and Nelson, Chpt 8 “South Korean Consumer Nationalism” (188-207) in The Ambivalent Consumer.

SECOND ANALYTIC ESSAY PROMPTS DISTRIBUTED

Wednesday, October 31
OZÔ’S FAMILY REVISITED
In-class viewing: Good Morning
Library Visit: Research & Technology Instruction Presentation

Contemporary Lives

Wednesday, November 7
The CONTEMPORARY “CHINESE” FAMILY
⇒ SECOND ANALYTIC ESSAY DRAFT DUE ⇐
Readings: Davis, Chpt 12 “Urban Chinese Homeowners as Citizen-Consumers” (281-299) in The Ambivalent Consumer.
In-class viewing: Ermo

Wednesday, November 14
WHITHER AMBIVALENCE?
⇒ SECOND ANALYTIC ESSAY DUE ⇐
In-class viewing: My Sassy Girl
FINAL ESSAY & PRESENTATION ASSIGNMENT DISTRIBUTED

Wednesday, November 21
Thanksgiving Holiday ~ Enjoy!

Presentations & Wrap-up

Wednesday, November 28
INTO THE PRESENT & IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS

Wednesday, December 5
INTO THE PRESENT & IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS
Readings: Allison, Millennial Monsters Chpt 1 “Enchanted Commodities” (1-34) and Chpt 7 “Pokémon: Getting Monsters and Communicating Capitalism” (192-233).

Friday, December 21
⇒ FINAL ESSAY DUE BY 4:00 PM ⇐