**COURSE DESCRIPTION (details are subject to change slightly each semester)**

**COOL JAPAN: JAPAN IN MODERNITY**

Modern Japanese culture has permeated international pop culture and marketing spheres in an unparalleled way, attracting attention of a wide range of fans and critics from diverse fields and spawning a number of creative offshoots and manners of participation. This course takes a broad-strokes look at the history, origin and cultural contributions to and from specific significant features of Japanese pop culture while integrating field excursions to understand more completely how those inputs continue to manifest and affect culture as experienced and understood today in modern Tokyo.

We explore important themes and representations that embrace and diverge from western and other eastern traditions and critically examine the context through which unique cultural products like manga, anime, popular film, J-pop, fashion, other cultural trends and texts. Students will analyze the cultural artefacts with a critical eye, and contextually examine selections from pertinent readings in lectured courses that will be supplemented with field excursions to relevant modern cultural sites and trainings as outlined below.

**COURSE OUTLINE:**

**Lecture 1:** Class Introduction and Orientation

**Lecture 2:** Development of the Japanese Consumer and Pop Culture Domestically

Trends domestically

Soft Power Abroad

**Lecture 3:** Major pre-war popular culture movements

Taisho Era Avant-garde

Modern Girl and Modern Boy

Modernization, the west, and Japonism

Excursion to the Ukiyo-e Museum

**Lecture 4:** Monsters and Nightmares of the Post-war period

Godzilla

Nuclear themes

Technological Armageddon

Superheroes

**Lecture 5:** Industrial Progress

Salarymen

Ikiru movie

**Lecture 6:** Focus on Manga and Anime

**Lecture 7:** Student Presentations of Mid-term project

**Lecture 8:** Popular Martial Arts Cultures, Representations and Realities

**Lecture 9:** Cultural adoptions of Technology

Behavioral Patterns

Otaku

Social Issues of Modernity: Hikikomuri Hikikomori

Video Game Industry

**Lecture 10:** Gender and Romance in Japanese Media

Female and Male Roles

Relationships in contemporary Japan

**Lecture 11:** Tokyo Fashions

Kawaii Culture

Excursion to Harajuku Fashion Street

Cosplay

**Lecture 12**: Guided Excursion to Akihabara Electronic District

**Lecture 13:** J-Pop Idol Culture and Fans

**Lecture 14:** Subcultures

Extremists in Japan: gangs and violence

Other Subcultures in Japan

**Lecture 15:** Student Presentations