

Reflection Paper and Presentation Guidelines

Japanese Pop Culture Spring 2025

Assignments:

- 1) 15-20 minute presentation on a chosen popular culture artifact of group choice
- 2) 3-5 page reflection paper on Japanese Pop Culture Trip

Due Dates:

- Presentation Topic: Tuesday, April 15
Students will need to email what topic they will presenting on in Japanese Pop Culture, see possible ideas below
- Presentation Outline and Sources: Friday, May 2, Midnight by email
Students will need to include presentation materials in the shared google folder that covers their presentation.
- Refection Paper: Monday, June 16 (one week after return home) Midnight by email.

Specifications Group Presentation:

Assignment: Throughout the course we have explored various forms of what pop culture is in the Japanese Context including a variety of mediums including toys, anime, manga, tv, cinema, video games, karaoke, internet and social media. Your group's task is to present to the class on a chosen artifact within one of the mediums (please see list below for ideas). Your presentation however you chose to organize it must address the following.

- **Why did you choose this artifact?:** You will need to provide some background about your chosen artifact. What is the artifact and why is it considered popular culture in Japan? Who was the intended audience who bought it, watched it, listened to it, etc.? Did its appeal go beyond its intended audience ,did it go global? Why? How does technology shape the way it was produced, consumed?
- **Identity and Social Structure:** How does this artifact define individuality within our society? What about the role of social structure? Does it address social institutions, if so which ones? How does it define Japanese or global societies and the role of people in our society? What values and norms of Japanese culture (ie Kami, Kawaii, etc) does it tap into? Is that part of its appeal?
- **Matrix of Domination:** What systems of privileges and disadvantages does your artifact touch upon, you must move beyond focusing on only one, think intersectionality here. Does this artifact reinforce and/or challenge social inequalities within Japanese society? American Society? Global societies? How?
- **Challenging or Mimicking Popular Culture:** Finally, you will need to discuss how your artifact compares to other artifacts in its genre. Was this band, game, show, movie, etc. different or similar to others? Why? Was its similarity uniqueness what made it so appealing? How does it reinforce the norms and values of other artifacts. What can we learn from this artifact about Japanese society? Other societies?

Specifics Reflection Paper,

Assignment: Students on their own will be completing a 3-5 page reflection paper based on the following two prompts before and after the trip as well as based on their travel journals

- **Before trip prompt:** What do you know about Japanese Pop Culture before taking this class? What types of mediums and artifacts have you engaged with? What about Japanese history, culture, and language did these artifacts tap into? What do you know about Japan? What do you want to learn?
- **After trip prompt:** What has changed about your understandings about pop culture in general and Japanese pop culture in particular? What history, culture, language do you feel really impacts

your perceptions about Japanese culture, people, and pop culture now? Did you learn what you wanted to, why or why not? What were some surprises on the trip that change your mind about Japanese pop culture or Japan in general? What do you still want to learn?

- **Organization:** You will need to format and organize this paper into a standard college essay. In order to do this, you will need a strong introduction with a thesis statement which summarizes your paper in one to two sentences. Use your thesis statement to show your understanding and interpretations of how your understanding of pop culture, Japan, Japanese pop culture has evolved through the course materials and our trip. You will also want to make sure that your body is organized by topics with strong transitions. Finally, you will need a good conclusion which not only summarizes your paper but re-states and supports your thesis. All papers should be double spaced, for format use Georgia font 12pt. and should be formatted with 1" margins.
- **Paper Support:** You will want to use lots of examples from your group presentation artifact and the readings from the course. Support your reflection with links to what we have learned about Japanese pop culture as well as your personal experiences on our excursions.
- **Citations:** You will be required to make references to support your analysis. In order to give the authors' credit for their ideas as well as avoid plagiarism, you will need to properly cite all of your quotations and paraphrases. In order to do this you will need both in paper citations and a bibliography or works cited reference page. I do not care which format (APA, MLA, ASA, etc.) you use for your references as long as you cite the authors. I have given you an example of ASA below:
 - For quotes (if you use more than three words from someone else, you need to quote them):
"To be or not to be, that is the question." (Shakespeare (Author), 1977 (Date of Publication), p. 888).
 - For paraphrases (summaries of others' arguments): Macbeth ponders the meaning of life (Shakespeare, 1977).
 - In bibliography: (you must cite the works in your paper **and** have a bibliography)
Book: Author. Date Published. Title. Publishing city: Publisher. Example:
Shakespeare, William. 1977. Macbeth in William Shakespeare The Complete Works.
Habrage, Alfred (ed.) England: Viking Publishing.
 - Article: Author. Date. "Article Title," Journal. Volume #: page numbers. Example:
Clark, Eve. Fall 2006. "How Not to Plagiarize," *Foundations of Sociological Theory*. 1: 1-30.

Group Presentation Ideas:

I am not limiting the scope of what artifact you choose but you must convince me that it does meet our definition of popular culture in general and Japanese Pop Culture specifically. You can decide to focus on current trends or do a historical analysis depending on your interest. You will want to include lots of examples from the artifact so that is why it is probably better to limit your focus depending on what you choose. One decision is to decide whether to focus on a Japanese produced artifact, or maybe a Western artifact that is influenced or directed towards Japanese Culture (will need to connect to Japan directly to talk about the biases there).

Here are some suggestions that may give you some ideas of where to start:

Print:

Books, can pick a single or series (**The Tale of Genji, Shogan**)

Magazines (Seventeen, GQ)

Manga (Helsing, One Piece, Doraemon)

Music

Probably better to focus on a band or genre of music as opposed to just a single song. Thus could focus on the 5, 6, 7, 8s for example. Or a genre (rap, hip hop, punk) and when it became popular as opposed to a counter culture.

TV

Pick a show, probably want to stick with a couple of episodes as your examples. Again careful to pick shows that would fall under popular culture, can be historical or current (Astro Boy vs Alice in Borderland). Careful here make sure you specify is this TV that is consumed in Japan or globally, or both.

Cinema

Again lots of possibilities but need to make sure it is in popular culture as opposed to critically acclaimed (sometimes they overlap, sometimes they don't). Cult Classics also may or may not fit into this category. 47 Ronin, Studio Ghibli fits this category. Again can do Western made like Kill Bill Vol. 1,

Ads and Fads

This is a fun category, many different options here. This needs to be in Japan as opposed to Western, although comparing the two would be interesting.

Language/Social Media/Internet

This too can be fun, look at fads and trends. What Japanese terms have made it to the US? How has emojis changed text speak, what about 4chan and all that followed