

# JPN 199: TOKYO CYBERPUNK MACHINIC DESIRES, CYBORG DREAMS, & DYSTOPIC CITIES

## Special Zero Week Edition



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### ***Course Description***

Introducing the history, forms, and discourses of Japanese “cyberpunk” in contemporary *anime* and film, this course explores the urban dreams (and nightmares) that constitute cyberpunk’s post-apocalyptic vision of Neo-Tokyo. Viewed not as a reflection of contemporary Japanese society but rather as its defamiliarization, Japanese forms of cyberpunk are investigated as sites of contestation for competing ideologies and the delineation of new possibilities of existence, new forms of being, at the intersection between carbon- and silicon-based forms of intelligence and data-processing.

Treating Japanese cyberpunk not merely as a literary movement or aesthetic style but more importantly as a philosophical discourse with distinctive questions and premises--i.e., as a philosophical “problematic” with its own sociohistorical specificities and transnational trajectories--we will consider the following topics:

- The status of subjectivity in cyberpunk: fabricated, virtual memories and fractured identities.
- The human body and its interfaces with technology: cyborg implants, prostheses, replacement parts, and bio-tech hybridities.
- Post-apocalyptic visions of class, race, gender, and sexuality.

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- The individual and her relation to the city: new modes of spatiality and habitation, new forms of community, new ways in which individuals circulate and are contained, as well as new forms of surveillance and policing.
- Acts of resistance: the politics of cyber-terrorism and other forms of subversion.

**Warning:** The subject matter of this course is for mature audiences only. Some films contain scenes of intense psychological stress, graphic violence, and body mutation. Viewer discretion is advised.

Readings in English. 4 credits. 09:00-16:50 MTWRF in 166 LA. CRN 42402. **No auditors permitted.**

### Website

<http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~stb/tokyocyberpunk.html>.

### Instructor Contact Info

E-mail: [stb@uoregon.edu](mailto:stb@uoregon.edu). Tel.: 346-4016.

### Further Study

Recommended Books and Websites

1. AnimeResearch.com: <http://www.animeresearch.com/index.html>.
2. Philip Brophy, *100 Anime* (BFI Screen Guides) (London: British Film Institute, 2005).
3. Dani Cavallaro, *Cyberpunk and Cyberculture* (London: The Athlone Press, 2000).
4. Jonathan Clements and Helen McCarthy, *The Anime Encyclopedia: A Guide to Japanese Animation* (Berkeley: Stone Bridge Press, 2001).
5. Lois H. Gresh and Robert Weinberg, *The Science of Anime: Mecha-Noids and AI-Super-Bots* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2005).
6. Geoff King and Tanya Krzywinska, *Science Fiction Cinema from Outerspace to Cyberspace* (London: Wallflower, 2000).
7. Susan J. Napier, *Anime from Akira to Howl's Moving Castle*, 2nd ed. (New York: Palgrave, 2005).
8. Gilles Poitras, *Anime Essentials* (Berkeley: Stone Bridge Press, 2001).
9. Gilles Poitras, *The Anime Companion: What's Japanese in Japanese Animation?* (Berkeley: Stone Bridge Press, 1998).
10. Yoshio Sugimoto, *An Introduction to Japanese Society* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

### Method of Instruction

Socratic-style discussions designed to establish a community of open dialogue. As in all of my classes, I invite students to interject, take risks with their thinking, respond to one another, and play devil's advocate. Civil discourse does not mean passive discourse. The most important thing is that everyone has an opportunity to establish a voice in an ongoing and constructive dialogue.

### Course Requirements and Grading Criteria

1. Each student is required to take the in-class essay exam administered on the last day, which will consist of a series of short essay questions about the topics discussed during the course of the seminar. Students are permitted to consult their notes during the exam. **Each student must bring an exam booklet to class, which may be purchased at the UO Bookstore.**
2. Active and audible participation on the part of every student is expected. Unexcused absences will adversely affect your grade. If you are unable to attend class, please notify the professor in advance. Discussion questions for each anime and film, as well as copies of the readings in pdf format, are posted in the Course Documents section of Blackboard.
3. Grading is calculated as follows: class participation = 50%; attendance = 30%; final exam = 20%.
4. These requirements apply both to those taking the course for a grade and to those taking it on a P/N basis.
5. If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with the professor as soon as possible. Please request that the Counselor for Students with Disabilities send a letter verifying your disability.

**Course Schedule** (Japanese names appear in traditional word order with surname first)

**Day 1**

INTRODUCING CYBERPUNK: CYBORGS, CLASS STRUGGLES, & DYSTOPIA CITIES

Morning Session: Introduction, *Blade Runner* (dir. Ridley Scott, 1982; Director's Cut, 1992).

Afternoon Session: *Akira* (dir. Ôtomo Katsuhiro, 1988), "Velocity-Image."

Further Study:

1. Scott Bukatman, *Blade Runner* (London: British Film Institute, 1997).
2. Wong Kin Yuen, "On the Edge of Spaces: *Blade Runner*, *Ghost in the Shell*, and Hong Kong's Cityscape," *Science Fiction Studies* 27 (2000): 1-19 (see <http://www.depauw.edu/sfs/wongess.htm>).
3. Isolde Standish, "Akira, Postmodernism and Resistance," in *The Worlds of Japanese Popular Culture: Gender, Shifting Boundaries and Global Cultures*, ed. D. P. Martinez (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), 56-73.

**Day 2**

THE RHIZOMATIC PROCESSES OF CYBERCULTURE & THE UNCANNINESS OF DOLLS

Morning Session: *Ghost in the Shell* (dir. Oshii Mamoru, 1995), "Metropolis," "The Rhizome," "Crystal Palace."

Afternoon Session: *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence* (dir. Oshii Mamoru, 2004), "Hans Bellmer's Dolls."

Required Reading:

1. Sharalyn Orbaugh, "Frankenstein and the Cyborg Metropolis: The Evolution of Body and City in Science Fiction Narratives," in *Cinema Anime: Critical Engagements with Japanese Animation*, ed. Steven T. Brown (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 81-111 (Blackboard).

Further Study:

1. Christopher A. Bolton, "From Wooden Cyborgs to Celluloid Souls: Mechanical Bodies in Anime and Japanese Puppet Theater," *positions* 10:3 (2002): 729-71.
2. Carl Silvio, "Refiguring the Radical Cyborg in Mamoru Oshii's *Ghost in the Shell*," *Science Fiction Studies* 26 (1999): 54-70.
3. Sharalyn Orbaugh, "Sex and the Single Cyborg," *Science Fiction Studies* 29 (2002): 436-52.
4. Brian Ruh, *Stray Dog of Anime* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 119-40.
5. Yamada Masaki and Oshii Mamoru, "Afterword," in *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence: After the Long Goodbye* (San Francisco: VIZ Media, 2004), 185-97.

**Day 3**

MACHINIC JUNKIES & THE ETHICS OF POSTHUMANISM

Morning Session: *Avalon* (dir. Oshii Mamoru, 2001), "Abstract Machines."

Afternoon Session: "Scrolls to Screen: The History and Culture of Anime," *The Animatrix* (various directors, 2003), Maeda Mahiro's commentary on "Second Renaissance, Pt. 1," "Politics in *The Animatrix*."

Required Reading:

1. Carl Silvio, "Animated Bodies and Cybernetic Selves: *The Animatrix* and the Question of Post-Humanity," in *Cinema Anime: Critical Engagements with Japanese Animation*, ed. Steven T. Brown (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 113-37 (Blackboard).

Further Study:

1. Livia Monnet, "Towards the Feminine Sublime, or the Story of 'A Twinkling Monad, Shape-Shifting Across Dimension': Intermediality, Fantasy and Special Effects in Cyberpunk Film and Animation," *Japan Forum* 14 (2) 2002: 225-268.
2. Félix Guattari, "Machinic Junkies," *Soft Subversions*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer (New York: Semiotext(e), 1996), 101-05.

**Day 4**

VIRTUAL IDENTITIES & THE MICROPOLITICS OF CONTROL

Morning Session: *Serial Experiments Lain: NAVI* (dir. Nakamura Ryutaro, 1998), *Serial Experiments Lain: KNIGHTS*

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Afternoon Session: *Serial Experiments Lain: DEUS*, *Serial Experiments Lain: RESET*, "Special FX," "Android Maria."

Required Reading:

1. Steven T. Brown, "Screening Anime," in *Cinema Anime: Critical Engagements with Japanese Animation*, ed. Steven T. Brown (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 1-7 (Blackboard).
2. Brian Ruh, "The Robots from Takkun's Head: Cyborg Adolescence in *FLCL*," in *Cinema Anime: Critical Engagements with Japanese Animation*, ed. Steven T. Brown (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 139-57 (Blackboard).

Further Study:

1. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 188-97.
2. Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on Control Societies," in *Negotiations: 1972-1990*, tr. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia UP, 1995), 177-82.

**Day 5**

AT THE LIMITS OF ANIME: STEAMPUNK & THE RETURN OF PYGMALION

Morning Session: *Metropolis* (dir. Rintaro, 2001), "Klimt's Pallas Athene."

Afternoon Session: In-Class Essay Exam. **Each student must bring an exam booklet to class, which may be purchased at the UO Bookstore.**

Required Reading:

1. Thomas Lamarre, "The First Time as Farce: Digital Animation and the Repetition of Cinema," in *Cinema Anime: Critical Engagements with Japanese Animation*, ed. Steven T. Brown (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 161-88 (Blackboard).