



KIIS Japan-Korea Pop Program, Summer 2026

ARC 401 Topics: Introduction to Anime, Manga, and Webtoons

Instructor: Dr. Kendra Sheehan

Email: knshee01@louisville.edu

Instructor's office hours: on site and by appointment

Syllabus subject to change

1. Course Description: The popularity of Japanese animation (anime) and manga and Korean webtoons is increasing worldwide. This course introduces students to these contemporary forms by considering anime, manga, and webtoons as literary genres, medium, art, culture, and industry. We will review the history of manga and webtoons and its animated form from AD 1000 to the present, focusing on the period from post-WWII to the present. Both new and experienced students will explore series and topics in depth, studying the manga, webtoons, and anime forms and comparing them against other artistic works. Course taught in English.

2. Overall KIIS Program Student Learning Outcomes:

KIIS Study Abroad Mission Statement:

KIIS provides high-quality education abroad programs for students from all diverse backgrounds that promote deep international learning, are integrated into the curriculum, and encourage critical and creative thinking. Our goal is to help students understand the wider world and develop personal and professional skills for lifelong enrichment. We strive to go beyond generalizations and cultural stereotypes to help foster a nuanced appreciation of the world in which we live.

Students participating on KIIS study abroad programs aim to:

- 1) Understand contemporary issues of their host country/countries (i.e. KIIS program location).
- 2) Develop skills to interact comfortably in a global setting.
- 3) Understand other cultures.

Prior to your KIIS study abroad program, and again at the conclusion of your program, KIIS will ask each student to a) answer a few multiple-choice questions, and b) write a short reflective essay (two paragraphs in length) related to the elements detailed above. There is no right or wrong answer, and your responses will not affect your grade in any way. The purpose of the exercise is to help KIIS measure the effectiveness of its study abroad programs.

3. Course Objectives and Specific Learning Outcomes: This course will have as its primary core domain oral, written and visual communication. It will also incorporate aspects of multicultural and international thinking, aesthetic and artistic thinking, social, ethical and historical thinking, and information literacy.

- I. At the end of this course in the domain of oral, written and visual communication you will demonstrate the ability to:
 1. Read and analyze a comic book and TV series text closely and thoroughly;
 2. summarize a text by communicating its information and concepts;
 3. create new texts, based on the texts in class, both visually and orally through group work;
 4. express ideas through a variety of written and visual genres;
 5. enhance their writing skills by employing strategies of pre-writing, drafting, and revising, taking into consideration rhetorical purpose, the knowledge and needs of different audiences, and feedback of instructors and peers;
 6. evaluate inferences and assumptions in inductive arguments;
 7. evaluate the implications and consequences of an argument;
 8. apply knowledge in others' texts to individual work;
 9. enhance critical thinking skills through various forms of writing, low, medium, and high stakes;
 10. engage actively with the subject matter through various forms of writing, low, medium, and high stakes;
 11. reflect in writing on your learning and writing processes.

- II. In the domain of multicultural and international thinking you will demonstrate the ability to:
 1. understand that Japanese manga and anime have different narrative traditions and techniques than other graphic texts such as U.S. comics and animation;
 2. identify and evaluate the fundamentals of language, politics, and history that shape the current world;
 3. recognize and appraise the major issues, concerns, and problems of a super-national or global scope in the current world (including, but not limited to depictions of international business in Japan's current role as a soft power and peace and war through depictions of the Russo-Japanese War, Sino-Japanese War, World War I, and World War II);
 4. use reflective judgment and communicate personal opinion/stances related to ethical standards and resolution of ethical dilemmas surrounding modern Japanese history;
 5. understand that the very topic of modern Japan is defined, investigated and assessed vis-à-vis other countries and their cultures as well
 6. recognize and assess diversity within, and interactions among, current world nations, peoples, and cultures, and how these help shape the world.

- III. In the domain of aesthetic and artistic thinking, you will demonstrate the ability to:

1. analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information from and into a variety of mediums, analyzing, evaluating, and creating texts/performances in a variety of genres;
2. convey understanding of a text's message;
3. think, speak and write about how the various literary elements of a text, including but not limited to plot, theme, character, tone, and literary tropes, contribute to a coherent whole; and how the genre of a text might affect the presentation of these aspects;
4. understand how, in addition to genre, the type of text, i.e.. high literature vs. popular culture, might affect its presentation and your reactions to it;
5. transplant the texts you have read into other genres and literary and non-literary representations.

IV. In the domain of social, ethical and historical thinking you will demonstrate the ability to:

1. understand how manga and anime are a product of the culture that created them, and how they resonate with any culture that examines them;
2. recognize the limits set on the depiction and investigation of Japanese culture in translation, and how these limits throw greater weight to the texts themselves;

V. In the domain of information literacy you will demonstrate the ability to:

1. establish an inquiry-based research question;
2. develop and implement a search strategy;
3. evaluate sources of information;
4. use information effectively for a specific purpose;
5. use information ethically and legally.

4. Major Topics covered in the Course: Some topics covered in the course include soft power and its impacts on Japanese and Korean popular culture, the importance of historical and cultural contexts as they pertain to Japanese and Korean comics/webtoons, genres of comics and webtoons and common themes, as well as critical analysis of specific comics.

5. Required Readings and Materials:

- 1) Selected PDFs provided through Google Classroom/Drive\

6. Graded Assignments:

<u>Grading Scale:</u>	Engagement/Professionalism 5%	<u>Final Grades Evaluation:</u>
	Reading Responses 15%	
	Comic Journal 15%	A: 100-90
	Frame Analyses 15%	B: 89-80
	Place and Text 15%	C: 79-70
	Final Project 30%	D: 69-60
	Excursion Quizzes 5%	F: 59-0

Class Attendance:

- 1) **Students are expected to attend all class meetings.** KIIS does not tolerate absences from class meetings.
- 2) Tardiness will prevent you from taking quizzes or doing writing assignments that are usually given at the beginning of each class. **Two (2) tardy arrivals or early dismissals become one (1) absence. Anything over 10 minutes will fall in this category.**

Late assignments:

Late assignments **will not be accepted.** The exceptions to this policy are, of course, serious illness. If either happens, we will discuss options.

Course policies:

- A. Academic Dishonesty Policy: The first instance of academic dishonesty will result in a zero for the assignment. The second instance of academic dishonesty will result in a course grade of F. I will report the sanction to the KIIS office.
- B. Incomplete Policy: I give incompletes only if the student has completed 95% or more of the course, and a verifiable emergency occurs. Incompletes must be finished by the start of the next semester.
- C. You are expected **to read the texts** and familiarize yourself with big concepts before coming to class. **Failure to bring your text or your notes on the readings to class means that you will be unable to participate in the discussions and results in a loss of participation points for the day and an unexcused absence from class.**
- D. Be prepared to take notes and participate in discussions.
- E. **Show respect** to your instructor, classmates, and yourself. Be responsible and considerate.

Assessments and Student Practice:

All assignments are structured to progressively build upon each other, guiding students towards the development of their final projects. Each assignment serves as a steppingstone, strategically interconnected and scaffolded within the course curriculum.

Engagement and Participation (5%)

Active participation in discussions, activities, and site visits. Students are expected to engage thoughtfully with readings and contribute to class conversations.

Reading Responses (15%)

You will complete four short reading responses. These low-stakes assignments are designed to help you develop ideas, ask critical questions, and prepare for class discussion. Responses should include specific examples from the readings.

Comic Journal (15%)

During the program, you will create a comic journal based on your experiences in Japan and Korea. Using a character you design, you will document moments from the trip through short manga-style entries. This work will be completed outside of class, with four in-class check-ins for sharing and feedback. Evaluation is based on effort, clarity of storytelling, and development over time.

1-Page Frame Analyses (15%)

You will complete two short analytical responses (1 page each). These assignments build toward the final project and must include at least one properly cited source from course materials or outside research.

Place and Text Project (15%)

You will write a series of short journal entries (2–3 paragraphs each) based on specific locations visited during the trip. Each entry should connect your observations to course themes such as manga, manhwa, webtoons, or anime. Evaluation focuses on thoughtful observation, clear connections to course material, and use of specific examples.

Excursion Quizzes (5%)

You will take low stakes quizzes based on the specific excursions to our site visits this summer, which ask you to analyze, evaluate, interpret, and compare the history, culture, and specific aspects of the sites.

Final Project: Sequence Analysis (30%)

Your final project is a 5–8-page sequence analysis. This paper should develop a clear argument and use specific evidence from course materials and/or outside sources. You will build toward this project through earlier assignments, including your 1-page analyses. Drafting, peer review, and instructor feedback will support your progress.

7. Attendance Policy:

KIIS program participants are expected to be punctual to and in attendance at all classes, presentations, meetings and required excursions, and to remain with the program for the full academic period. Unexcused absences from classes and/or mandatory meetings will result in a lowering of the student's final grade, as will excessive tardiness. Multiple unexcused absences could result in expulsion from the program. Any absence from an academic class session must be excused for medical reasons.

8. Generative AI Policy:

Generative AI is permitted/encouraged in some ways, with proper attribution, but prohibited in other ways.

Students are allowed, encouraged, and even required to use Generative AI in some ways but are prohibited from using it in other ways. Keep in mind that any content produced by generative AI can “hallucinate” (produce false information), so students are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of any AI-generated content. Examples of citing AI are available at: <https://libguides.wku.edu/stylewrite/ai>.

Students are permitted and encouraged to use generative AI in the following ways:

- **Brainstorming:** You may use generative AI to stimulate creativity, generate ideas, or brainstorm topics for papers, presentations, and discussions. The generated content must serve as a steppingstone, not a final product.
- **Citation Assistance:** AI tools can be used to manage, format, and organize citations and references, promoting adherence to academic writing standards and specific style guides required for individual assignments.
- **Grammar and Style Checking:** AI-powered writing enhancement tools may be used to help with spelling, grammar, syntax, and stylistic errors.
- **Concept Understanding:** Generative AI can be used to explain or simulate concepts taught in class, aiding in a deeper understanding.
- **Research Assistance:** AI can be used to conduct initial research, compile data, and summarize articles, books, or papers. It should not replace traditional research methods but rather enhance them.

You may not use generative AI in coursework in the following ways:

- **Plagiarism:** Using AI-generated content as your original work without attribution. This includes essays, papers, presentations, and exam answers.
- **Data Manipulation:** Using AI tools to alter data or create misleading information.
- **Misrepresentation of Skills:** Using generative AI to complete tasks that are meant to assess your knowledge and skills.
- **Confidentiality Breach:** Using AI tools that might violate KIIS/university policies or laws related to data privacy and confidentiality.

Metacognitive Reflection. In addition to a proper citation, the student should include the following statement with any assignment where generative AI is used for assistance.

“I used generative AI [INSERT NAME OF PLATFORM] for assistance in the following ways on this assignment: [INSERT WAYS USED, such as brainstorming, citation assistance, grammar and style checking, concept understanding, and research assistance, etc].”

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9. Disability Accommodation:

KIIS will make every reasonable effort to provide accommodations for program participants with special needs or disabilities, but we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Be aware that many foreign countries do not have comprehensive legislation comparable to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a result, businesses and other establishments operating in foreign countries may not be able to provide accommodations.

If you have a disability accommodation need, we recommend you contact your KIIS Campus Representative, <https://www.kiis.org/about-kiis/contact-us/campus-representatives/> early in your program selection process so that s/he has time to discuss any specific needs, including which KIIS programs may be best suited. You also are welcome to contact KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, maria.canning@wku.edu, to discuss your disability accommodation needs (e.g. housing, transportation, excursions, class schedule, etc.).

Immediately after acceptance, notify KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, haley.mctaggart@wku.edu, if you have a special need or disability that might require any form of accommodation abroad. Failure to notify KIIS may prevent you from participating on your KIIS program.

If you require any accommodations abroad, you must provide KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, an accommodation letter from your home campus' disability accommodation office that lists the accommodations you are eligible to receive. Please do not request accommodations directly from your KIIS Program Director or other KIIS Faculty; the KIIS Office will notify your KIIS Program Director and/or Faculty after we have received your above accommodation letter.

In some cases, you may need to make arrangements for a caregiver to join you on your KIIS program, should your physician, campus disability accommodation office, or KIIS make such a recommendation or require it.

10. Title IX / Discrimination & Harassment:

Recent attention to gender discrimination and sexual harassment at colleges and universities reminds us of the importance of adhering to standards of ethical and professional behavior. KIIS Study Abroad is committed to supporting and encouraging safe and equitable educational environments for our students, faculty, and program directors. Students, faculty, and program directors are required to be civil and treat each other with dignity and respect. As such, harassment and/or discrimination of any kind will not be permitted or tolerated.

Sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, sexual assault, and sexual/dating/domestic violence) and sex discrimination are violations of KIIS policies. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to a) KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning (+1-859-200-1000) or KIIS Executive Director, John Dizgun (+1-270-227-2288), b) WKU's Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir (270-745-6867 / ena.demir@wku.edu) or WKU's Title IX Investigator, Michael Crowe (270-745-5429 / michael.crowe@wku.edu). Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a KIIS program director and/or faculty member, KIIS program directors and faculty are considered "Responsible Employees" of Western Kentucky University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator.

If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center, <https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/> at 270-745-3159.

For more information on KIIS Title IX, see <https://www.kiis.org/students/health-safety/title-ix-clery/>; additional Title IX resources can be found here <https://www.wku.edu/titleix/titleixbrochure2020.pdf>.

Everyone should be able to participate on a KIIS program, attend a KIIS event, or work in a KIIS environment (e.g. KIIS office) without fear of sexual harassment or discrimination of any kind. Be respectful of each other.

CLASS SCHEDULE

KOREA

Day 1

Dates and Readings	Activities and/or Assignments
SUNDAY, JUNE 7TH	Arrive in Seoul and travel to Daegu!

Day 2

Dates and Readings	Activities and/or Assignments
MONDAY, JUNE 8TH	Daegu Scavenger Hunt
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chie Yamanaka, "Manhwa in Korea," 85-99 Chugong, "Solo Leveling" (HTML) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Reading Response #1: Origins of Manga and Manhwa Character Creation (groupwork)

Day 3

Dates and Readings	Activities and/or Assignments
TUESDAY, JUNE 9TH	Seomun Market
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ryan Shin and Jihyun Sohn, "Manga as Childhood Visual Culture," 52-62 Gomyang, "On the Way to Meet Mom" (HTML) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Place and Text #1 end of day: Comic cafés and Comic/Bookstores Comic Journal Check-In #1 (in-class)

Day 4

Dates and Readings	Activities and/or Assignments
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10TH	Daegu—Comic Plaza
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hyesu Park, "Korean Webtoon Wave Narratological, Technological, and Medial Innovations of Korean Digital Comics" Plutus and Spoon, "Who Made Me A Princess" (HTML) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Place and Text #2 due by end of day: Comics

Day 5

Dates and Readings	Activities and/or Assignments
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THURSDAY, JUNE 11TH	⇒ TRAVEL TO SEOUL ⇒ Seoul City Wall Museum and Dongdaemun
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Heekyoung Cho, "The Platformization of Culture: Webtoon Platforms and Media Ecology in Korea and Beyond" (73-93) ● <i>Sweet Home</i> by Carnby Kim and Youngchan Hwang (HTML) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1-page Frame Analysis #1 of a manhwa or webtoon due by end of day 2. Comic Journal Check-In #2 (in-class)

Day 6

Dates and Readings	Activities and/or Assignments
FRIDAY, JUNE 12TH	Gyeongbokgung Palace
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Kim Da-eun, "Feminine Sketches of Korean Society" (HTML) ● Manhwa/webtoon of your choice (refer to list in Google Classroom) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reading Response #2: Why are webtoons so popular today? 2. Final Project Step #1 Close Reading due by end of day

Day 7

Dates and Readings	Activities and/or Assignments
SATURDAY, JUNE 13TH	⇒ Orientation for Japan ⇒ Movie Set
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dal Yong Jin, "Digital Convergence of Korea's Webtoons: Transmedia Storytelling," 193-209 ● "What's Wrong With Secretary Kim?" (HTML) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reading Response #3: What is transmedia storytelling? 2. Final Project Proposal Due by end of day

JAPAN

Day 8

Dates and Readings	Activities and/or Assignments
SUNDAY, JUNE 14TH	⇒ TRAVEL TO NAGOYA ⇒ Karaoke!

Day 9

Dates and Readings	Activities and/or Assignments
MONDAY, JUNE 15TH	Free Morning in Kyoto Class excursion in Kyoto
NO ASSIGNED READINGS	NO ASSIGNMENTS DUE

Day 10

Dates and Readings	Activities and/or Assignments
TUESDAY, JUNE 16TH	Toyota Commemorative Museum of Industry and Technology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sharon Kinsella, "A Short History of Manga," 19-49 	1. Comic Journal Check-In #3 (in-class)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kinko Ito, A History of Manga in the Context of History of Manga in the Context of Japanese Culture and Society” 456-475 • <i>Dr. Slump</i> by Akira Toriyama (HTML) 	2. Place and Text #3 due by end of day: Comics and Industry
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Day 11

Dates and Readings	Activities and/or Assignments
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17TH	Nagoya Castle
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soo Jung Hong, “Three Adaptations of the Japanese Comic Book Boys Over Flowers in the Asian Cultural Community: Analyzing Fidelity and Modification from the Perspective of Globalization and Glocalization,” 1-18 • <i>Boys Over Flowers</i> by Yoko Kamio (HTML) 	1. 1-page Frame Analysis #2 on Japanese manga or anime due by end of day

Day 12

Dates and Readings	Activities and/or Assignments
THURSDAY, JUNE 18TH	Osu Kannon and individual class excursions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ian Condry, <i>Soul of Anime</i>, excerpts from various chapters • <i>Phoenix</i> excerpt from in Manga! Manga! • <i>Princess Knight</i> by Osamu Tezuka 	1. Reading Response #4: Tezuka Osamu’s manga and influences 2. Place and Text #4 due by end of day: Past, present, and future

Day 13

Dates and Readings	Activities and/or Assignments
FRIDAY, JUNE 19TH	⇒ TRAVEL TO OSAKA ⇒ Activity with Osaka Kyoiku University students ⇒ Farewell Dinner
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rayna Denison, “Anime’s distribution world: Formal and information distribution in the analogue and digital eras,” 403-418 	1. Comic Journal Check-In #4 2. Final Project Step #2 Thesis and 1-2-page Rough Draft due by end of day

Day 14

Dates and Readings	Activities and/or Assignments
SATURDAY, JUNE 20TH	Shinsekai
NO ASSIGNED READINGS	1. Final project presentations in class 2. Final Project Due at 5PM (Note the time!)

Day 15

Dates and Readings	Activities and/or Assignments
SUNDAY, JUNE 21ST	TRAVEL TO US