This course examines the power of fantastic texts to illuminate, interrogate and subvert reality. It does so through readings and analyses of modern Chinese and Japanese short stories, novels and films. How can fantastic texts teach us to perceive problems in the cultural psyche from a more critical, insightful perspective? What is the cognitive function of fantastic fiction and film at the threshold of the modern and postmodern moments? How have modern Chinese and Japanese intellectuals and artists shaped the literary genre of the fantastic to fit their particular experiences? And how do these fantastic texts fit into the practice of modernism?

So as to find answers to these questions, we will read key examples of the modern fantastic genre in conjunction with theoretical articles and other secondary materials. We will define each fictional/cinematic text’s relationship to its particular historical-intellectual context and also consider the aesthetic bonds that tie the modern literary or visual text to its roots in classical Chinese and Japanese tradition. Throughout the course, we will also place the works in a comparative literary and theoretical framework that relates them to the Western tradition of fantastic writing and filmmaking, which influenced East Asian authors in important ways. This comparative, cross-cultural and interdisciplinary approach crosses genres and cultural boundaries and allows us to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning contained within each individual work of literary or cinematic art.

The course is arranged chronologically in that it presents material from late Qing China (ca. 1860-1911) and Meiji Japan (1868-1912), traces the modernist high points of the 20th century in both countries, and then culminates in a study of contemporary fiction and film. All literary texts will be available in English translation and the films will have subtitles. By experiencing these examples of the modern fantastic in China and Japan, students will understand interrelationships that exist between texts and authors from different periods and cultures, and thus trace some of the cultural flows that occurred – and continue to occur – between China, Japan and the rest of the world.

Some of the objectives of this course are 1) to read texts and films closely, 2) to engage in critical discussion, 3) to practice the skill of writing original, high-quality analytical essays and 4) to give well-structured, informative presentations.

**Requirements and Grades:**
1. Attendance, Class Participation, Session Opener Talks and Discussion Questions – 15%
2. 3 Response Papers (two pages, double-spaced) – 15%
3. Midterm Paper (6-8 pages) – 15%
4. Final Project Presentation (20-25 minutes) – 15%
5. Final Research Paper (12-15 pages) – 40%
Class Participation, Session Opener Talks and Discussion Questions: Each student will serve as discussion leader at least once during the semester. Your job is to open the seminar with a 15-20 minute session opener talk and then use that to drive our discussion of the themes that emerged from that week’s readings. In addition, the student discussant will also post a set of two to three substantive questions or issues for class discussion which should connect the primary texts and films to the secondary/theoretical readings. These questions should be between one and two pages long and posted to the class web site (Blackboard) by 5 pm on the Wednesday before class. All students are expected to read these questions before class and participate actively in class discussion.

Response Papers: You will each write three response papers, in which you will be asked to identify relevant themes in the assigned readings, raise questions or critical objections, locate difficulties, respond or make connections to other readings. Your response paper should be well-organized, have a clear focus and present a well thought-out, structured argument in a concise style. You may choose the specific primary and/or secondary texts you would like to discuss. Your paper may not be longer than two pages, double-spaced.

Midterm Paper: The Midterm paper, due at the beginning of class on the due date, is an opportunity for you to write a well-crafted, clearly-argued analysis of any text(s) or film(s) you choose. It should present a clear thesis and sufficient proof to substantiate your argument. You may engage theoretical readings if they are relevant for your analysis. The paper should be written in correct format and contain a title page, footnotes (or endnotes) and a complete bibliography according to the MLA Style or Chicago Manual of Style.

Final Project Presentations: Each student will have 20-25 minutes to present the findings and unresolved issues of the final research project. You should use this opportunity to 1) Introduce your work to your classmates in a well-organized, effective and engaging manner 2) Receive and reflect upon the critiques others may have about your work. You are welcome to use and present visual material and/or film excerpts if it is relevant for your project and presentation.

Final Research Paper and Proposal: For this assignment, you will choose one or two Chinese and/or Japanese primary texts and/or films belonging to the modern fantastic genre, research the text(s) thoroughly and present a concise, clearly-written, original 12-15 page paper that proves a central argument by means of textual analysis and evidence. Your critical essay should also engage theoretical readings we have discussed in the course. You may choose primary texts from our list of readings, or you may choose another text of any genre (literature, film, manga, animation) that interests you. Your paper should include a title page, footnotes (or endnotes) and a complete bibliography according to the MLA Style or Chicago Manual of Style. A one-page proposal for the paper should be written and submitted to me beforehand in week 9 (October 20th). I strongly encourage you to come see me during my office hours to discuss your paper proposal, bibliography, thesis and plans for the final presentation.

Note: Students are required to read all primary and secondary texts, and also see all films. We will view excerpts of the films together in class. Students are responsible for viewing the films in their entirety outside of class, as part of the reading assignment and class preparation. All films will be available on reserve at Leavey Library.
Required Texts:
The required readings for this course will consist of a Course Reader, journal articles that will be available on Blackboard, four books and readings provided by the instructor. The Course Reader and the books are available for purchase at the campus bookstore. I will provide you with all texts that are listed in the syllabus but are not in the Course Reader. These readings will be given to you either as handouts in class or on Blackboard prior to the classes in which we will discuss them.

1. Course Reader
2. Journal Articles: Items marked with (BB) are available as articles on Blackboard
3. Readings Provided by Instructor (in hard copy or on Blackboard)
5. Osamu Dazai, *No Longer Human.*

Recommended / Reserve Texts:
A copy of each of these books is available for reference on course reserve at Leavey Library. In addition, I will upload a list of additional/recommended (not required) readings for each class section to Blackboard. You can consult this list to find more relevant readings, which you may find useful for the research of your final projects.


Academic Integrity;
USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s
own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. Scampus, the student guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:
Students who need to request accommodations based on disability are required to register each semester with the Disability Services and Programs Office. In addition, a letter of verification to the course instructor, from the Disability Services and Programs Office, is needed for the semester in which you are enrolled in this course. If you have any questions concerning this procedure, please contact both the instructor of the course and the Disability Services and Programs Office.

Syllabus:

Week 1 (8/25) – Introduction: What is a Modern Fantastic Text? What is the Fantastic in Modern China and Japan?

- Introduction to the Course
- Sources and Methodologies
- In-class Reading, Discussion and Film

Week 2 (9/1) - From Classical Tale to Science Fiction: Fantastic Discourses in Late Qing China

David Wang, “Confused Horizons: Science Fantasy” in David Wang, Fin-de-Siècle Splendor: Repressed Modernities of Late Qing Fiction, 1849-1911. 252-312.
Dun Wang, “The Late Qing’s Other Utopias: China’s Science-Fictional Imagination, 1900-1910” in Concentric: Literary and Cultural Studies, volume 34, no. 2 (September 2008). 37-61.

Week 3 (9/8) - Fantastic Texts of Meiji Japan: Kōda Rohan, Izumi Kyōka and Natsume Sōseki

Donald Keene, “Introduction” and “Kōda Rohan” in *Dawn to the West: Japanese Literature of the Modern Era*. 1-9 and 150-164.
Natsume Sōseki, *Ten Nights’ Dreams*.

**Film:** *Ten Nights of Dream* by Takashi Shimizu (2007, 112 minutes).

Week 4 (9/15) - Modernist Iconoclasts of May 4th China: Lu Xun and Lao She

Lu Xun, “Diary of a Madman” and “New Year’s Sacrifice” in William Lyell, transl. *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*. 29-41 and 219-241.

**Film:** *New Year’s Sacrifice* by Sang Hu (1956, 94 minutes).
Week 5 (9/22) - Examining Problems of Identity: Ryūnosuke Akutagawa, Osamu Dazai and Akira Kurosawa’s Rashōmon

*** 1st Response Paper Due ***

Alan Wolfe, “Novel, Ghostly, and Negative Selves” in Alan Wolfe, Suicidal Narrative in Modern Japan: The Case of Dazai Oasamu. 77-96.
Ryūnosuke Akutagawa, “Rashōmon,” “In a Bamboo Grove,” “The Nose” and “Hell Screen” in Jay Rubin, Ryūnosuke Akutagawa: Rashōmon and Seventeen Other Stories. 3-9, 10-19, 20-27, 42-73.
Osamu Dazai, No Longer Human.

Film: Rashōmon by Akira Kurosawa (1950, 88 minutes).

Week 6 (9/29) - Chinese Modernist Fiction, Poetry and Film from the 1920’s to the 1960’s: Shi Zhecun, Shen Congwen, Dai Wangshu and China’s First Horror Film

Lydia Liu, “Narratives of Desire: Negotiating the Real and the Fantastic” in Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity – China, 1900-1937. 128-149.
Shi Zhecun, “Devil’s Road” in Shi Zhecun, One Rainy Evening. 56-80.
Shen Congwen, “The Housewife” and “Suicide” in Imperfect Paradise. 430-449.

Film: Song at Midnight by Ma-xu Weibang (1937, 113 minutes).
**Week 7 (10/6) - The Psychology of Desire, Obsession and Pain: Junichirō Tanizaki, Yukio Mishima and Jun Ishikawa**

William Atkinson, “Wrapping the Hole in the Middle of It All: Tanizaki’s Narrative Packages” in *College Literature*, volume 30, no. 3 (Summer 2003). 37-51. (BB)

Noriko Mizuta Lippit, “Tanizaki and Poe: The Grotesque and the Quest for Supernatural Beauty” in *Comparative Literature*, volume 29, no. 3 (Summer 1977). 221-240. (BB)


Yukio Mishima, “Death in Midsummer” in Yukio Mishima, *Death in Midsummer and Other Stories*. 1-29 and Chapter 2 of *Confessions of a Mask*. 34-100.


**Week 8 (10/13) - Motifs of Love, Madness and Sacrifice in the Writings of Eileen Chang**

*** Midterm Paper Due ***


Leo Lee, “Ang Lee’s ‘Lust, Caution’ and Its Reception” in *Boundary 2*, Volume 35, no. 3 (Fall 2008). (BB)


**Film:** *Lust, Caution* by Ang Lee (2007, 157 minutes). (not required to view entire film / will view excerpts in class)
Week 9 (10/20) - Postwar Japanese Visions of “Realistic Fantasy” and Dystopia: Yasunari Kawabata, Kenji Nakagami and Kōbō Abe

*** Proposal for Final Project Due ***

(BB)
Kenji Nakagami, “The Wind and the Light” and “Snakelust” in Andrew Rankin, transl., Snakelust. 23-40 and 41-70.
Abe Kōbō, The Woman in the Dunes.

Film: The Woman in the Dunes by Hiroshi Teshigahara (1964, 123 minutes).

Week 10 (10/27) - Transcultural Flows in the Art of Chinese and Japanese Animation Film: Manga and Anime from the 1940’s to the 1980’s

Susan Napier, “Introduction” in Anime: From Akira to Princess Mononoke. 3-34.
Information about the History and Art of Chinese Animation. (BB)

Films: (you choose one Chinese and one Japanese film to watch and discuss)
Princess Iron Fan by Wan Guchan (1941, 73 minutes) (first Chinese animated feature film).
Uproar in Heaven by Wan Laiming (1961, 106 minutes).
The Herd Boy’s Flute by Te Wei and Qian Jiajun (1964, 20 minutes).
Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind by Hayao Miyazaki (1984, 116 minutes).
Akira by Katsuhiro Otomo (1988, 125 minutes) (animated cyberpunk science fiction film).
Week 11 (11/3) - Metamorphoses from Normal to Monstrous and the Alien Within: Kōbō Abe, Yasutaka Tsutsui and Godzilla

*** 2nd Response Paper Due ***

Kōbō Abe, The Face of Another. 3-65.
Yasutaka Tsutsui, “The Dabba Dabba Tree” and “Rumours about Me” in Yasutaka Tsutsui, Salmonella Men on Planet Porno. 1-34.

Films:
Godzilla by Ishirō Honda (1954, 96 minutes).
The Face of Another by Hiroshi Teshigahara (1996, 122 minutes).

Week 12 (11/10) - Fiction, Poetry and Film as Subversion in Contemporary China: The Avant-Garde Art of Han Shaogong, Yu Hua, Can Xue and Bei Dao

Han Shaogong, “Homecoming?” in Martha Cheung, transl., Homecoming? And Other Stories by Han Shaogong. ix-xxi, 1-20.
Can Xue, “Skylight” and “The Instant When the Cuckoo Sings” in Ronald Janssen and Jian Zhang, transl., Dialogues in Paradise. 103-129.
Bei Dao, “Requiem,” “Nightmare,” “Memory,” “Questioning the Sky” and other Poems after Tiananmen Square.

Film: Suzhou River by Lou Ye (2000, 83 minutes).
Week 13 (11/17) - Technological Dystopias and Postmodern Antirealism in Contemporary Japan: Haruki Murakami, Kenzaburō Ōe and Yoshimoto Banana

*** 3rd Response Paper Due ***


Murakami Haruki, “Chapter One” from Norwegian Wood and “Barn Burning” from The Elephant Vanishes in Haruki Murakami, Vintage Murakami. 3-15 and 16-41.

Kenzaburo Ōe, “Teach us to Outgrow our Madness” in Teach us to Outgrow our Madness. 171-220.


Film: TBD

Week 14 (11/24) – Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 15 (12/1) – Final Projects Presentations and Conclusion

*** The Final Paper is due on 12/9 ***