

USC Iovine and Young Academy

*Arts, Technology and the Business
of Innovation*

**ACAD – 309: Dreams and Madness: The Art of Japan’s Golden
Age of Animation**

Units: 4

Term-Day-Time: W 3:30-6:50 pm

Location: SGM101

Instructor: Douglas Thomas

Office: ZOOM

Office Hours: Wednesday 1–3, and by appointment

Contact Info: douglast@usc.edu, 213.740.1943

IT Help:

<https://uscedu.sharepoint.com/sites/IYAStudent/SitePages/IT-Resources.aspx>

Hours of Service: M–F, 8:30am–6:30pm

Contact Info: iya.helpdesk@usc.edu

Recommended Preparation: None

Catalogue Description:

This class will provide an in-depth look at the art, politics, and cultural impact of several Japanese filmmakers including Isao Takahata, Hayao Miyazaki, Mamoru Hosoda and Makoto Shinkai.

Course Description:

We will explore films from three different periods to understand the material, cultural, spiritual, and political themes that emerge in the work of Japanese anime over a 30 year period and examine how they are reflected, communicated, and represented in animation art. Taking the medium of animation itself as a core topic, we will focus on the questions of what it is that the art of animation can uniquely express in general as well as how each director uses the “art of movement” to convey particular topics and themes. Format: After completing the introductory lectures and discussion, we will follow a format based on: 1. Introduction and Viewing Each film will be screened and students will be given a list of 10-12 discussion prompts to focus discussion about the film and engage specific topics from the week’s readings. 2. Weekly Seminar The seminar will consist of two parts: a lecture followed by student discussion. The lecture will focus on thematic analysis of each film structured around key concepts (2 hours). Students will then engage in a hour long guided discussion and debate regarding issues or moral dilemmas raised in the film.

Specific Topics to be Included:

Films have been selected to reflect key periods in the development of Japanese animation, to reflect key cultural and political themes, and, in part, on critical and popular success.

- Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind (1984)
- My Neighbor Totoro (1988)
- Princess Mononoke (1997)
- Spirited Away (2001)
- The Wind Rises (2013)
- Wolf Children (2012)
- The Tale of Princess Kaguya (2013)
- Your Name (2016)

Learning Objectives:

1. To better understand the artistic impact of several key directors' work on film generally and animation specifically.
2. To understand and analyze the connection between art and political, cultural and social expression.
3. To build critical skills in reading media texts.
4. To understand a theory of artistic world building.

Required Texts:

- Thomas Lamarre, *The Anime Machine: A Media Theory of Animation*, University of Minnesota, 2009. (AM)
- Colin Odell and Michelle Le Blanc, *Studio Ghibli: The Films of Hayao Miyazaki and Isao Takahata*, Kamera Books, 2009.
- Dani Cavallaro, *The Anime Art of Hayao Miyazaki*, McFarland and Co, 2006 (AAHM)
- Hayao Miyazaki, *Starting Point: 1979-1996*, VIZ Media, 2014 (SP)
- Hayao Miyazaki, *Turning Point: 1997-2008*, VIZ Media, 2014 (TP)
- Additional readings provided on Blackboard

Communication and Online Materials:

Please make it a habit to check your USC email account. If you do not regularly use that account, make sure you have it forwarded to the account you do use. Any emails I send to the class will use the USC email account. All course materials, including slides, audio examples, handouts, and assignments, as well as class grades will be available in Blackboard (<https://blackboard.usc.edu>). Be sure to check Blackboard if you need to miss a class. You are responsible for any materials presented and assignments made even if you are not in class that day.

Attendance and Class Participation:

This class is extremely sequential in nature. You need to be in class, ready to participate every day. Because of the importance of hands-on experience with this subject, attendance and participation in all classes is the only method of fully understanding the concepts of these specialized topics. Attendance will be taken at each class meeting and will count toward your final grade. After two absences, your grade will be lowered by 5% for each additional absence.

Assignments:

- Art/Scene Analyses: For each film, students will select a single image which reflects a core or central concept from our class discussion. The analysis will address aesthetics evaluation and thematic expression. 500 word limit. (2 pp)
- Mid Term Exam: Students will take a midterm exam, focused on the first 4 films in the class. The exam will include multiple choice, short answer and essay portions.
- Final Exam: Students will take a final exam, focused on the last 4 films in the class. The exam will include multiple choice, short answer and essay portions.

Grading Breakdown:

Class Participation	10%
Art/Scene Analyses (8)*	40%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	25%

*Assignments and projects will be submitted electronically, and must be submitted before the beginning of the class on the date the assignment is shown due in the class schedule, below. Any assignment submitted after 12:00pm on the due date will be considered late and penalized 10%. For each additional day (24-hour period) the assignment is late, it will be penalized an additional 10%/day.

Grading Scale: Please note that I do not round grades up.

92 – 100 = A	90 – <92 = A-	88 – <90 = B+
82 – <88 = B	80 – <82 = B-	78 – <80 = C+
72 – <78 = C	70 – <72 = C-	68 – <70 = D+
62 – <68 = D	60 – <62 = D-	<60 = F

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* <http://equity.usc.edu> or to the *Department of Public Safety* <http://adminopsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety>. This is important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men* <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage <http://sarc.usc.edu> describes reporting options and other resources.

Support Systems

- A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more.
- Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students.
- *The Office of Disability Services and Programs* http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations.

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis:

If an officially-declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* <http://emergency.usc.edu> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.