COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course looks at the thousand-year history of visual-verbal narratives – comics – in Japan. In particular we will concentrate on three forms of visual-verbal literature: the narrative picture scrolls of the classical and medieval period (ca. 11th-16th centuries), the “yellowback” comic books of the early modern period (18th-19th centuries), and the manga of the 20th-21st centuries.

The course is organized around three major objectives. The first is to trace the development of visual-verbal literature from the earliest narrative picture scrolls to the most contemporary manga. Although we will be exploring the origins of manga (i.e., modern Japanese comics), equal weight will be given to premodern texts in order to illuminate the rich tradition of comics and comics-like narratives in Japan.

The second objective is to give students a one-term introduction to Japanese cultural history from the classical period to the present, with comics as the unifying thread. In the process this course will take in the popular culture elements that students may expect from a comics course. In addition, however, the history of visual-verbal narratives will lead students to encounters with some of the most important examples of high culture in Japan’s history. We will consider the relationship of comics to Japanese fiction, poetry, painting, printing, theater, and film.

The third objective is to locate a discussion of comics within larger discourses on humanities. Is comics studies closer to literary history or art history? How does it relate to theater and cinema? Are comics necessarily a form of popular culture, or can they be the products of an elite for an elite? What kinds of relationships can exist between text and image? Students will be asked to consider these and other disciplinary questions surrounding literary and comics studies.

All course content will be in English. The course satisfies Arts and Letters and International Cultures requirements.

Expected Learning Outcomes:
i. Students will learn about Japanese culture from earliest times to the present through the medium of comics (broadly defined).
ii. Students will display their mastery of basic facts and concepts about Japanese culture and comics (broadly defined) on tests.
iii. Students will analyze selected comics texts (broadly defined) in carefully-argued, clearly-written essays.
GRADES:

Final grades will be calculated on the following basis:

- Attendance/participation: 25%
- Midterm exam 1: 15%
- Midterm exam 2: 15%
- Final exam: 25%
- Paper: 20%

Attendance/participation: Class meetings will be a combination of lecture and discussion. The attendance/participation grade will be a combination of coming to class and participating actively in the discussions. Discussions will proceed from the assumption that you have done the reading for that day.

Midterm exam 1: The first midterm exam will be held on Thursday, April 23, in class. It will cover the readings and lectures from Weeks 1 through 4.

Midterm exam 2: The second midterm exam will be held on Thursday, May 14, in class. It will cover the readings and lectures from Weeks 5 through 7.

Final exam: Will be held Monday, June 8, 12:30 pm, in the classroom. The first part of the exam will be a midterm for the last third of the course (Weeks 8 through 10), and will be identical in format to the two midterms. The second part of the exam will cover the entire course (Weeks 1 through 10).

Exam policies: Exams are closed note and closed book; no electronic devices of any kind (including cellphones, tablets, dictionaries, and laptops) may be used during the exams. Bring at least one green exam booklet to each test. Tests will include a range of questions including multiple choice, short answer, and essay.

Papers: You will write one paper for this class, choosing from the list of topics provided below. The paper will be due on Friday, June 12, at 5:00 pm. The paper should be 6 to 7 pages in length (double-spaced, no larger than 12 pt font). Papers should be submitted by email in one of the following formats: MSWord document (doc or docx); PDF; Google doc.

Late papers will be marked down 1/3 of a letter grade for each day they are late, beginning at 5:01 pm on June 12. I.e., 1/3 of a letter grade will be deducted for a paper submitted at 5:01 on June 12, 2/3 of a letter grade will be deducted for a paper submitted at 5:01 on June 13, and so on.

Papers should have clear, underlined thesis statements and careful arguments based on specific passages from the works being discussed. Papers will be evaluated based on clarity of organization, persuasiveness of argument, and quality of writing. Spelling and grammar count.
Choose from the following topics. Whichever topic you choose, your paper must discuss one example each from Unit 1, Unit 2, and Unit 3.

(a) Discuss the depiction of non-human characters in your 3 chosen works.

(b) Discuss the depiction of violence in your 3 chosen works.

(c) Discuss the depiction of marital or romantic partnership in your 3 chosen works.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:
Students are expected to know and comply with the standards for academic honesty as set forth in the University Student Conduct Code. If you are caught cheating or plagiarizing, you may receive a failing grade for the assignment in question, or even for the entire course, according to the instructor’s judgment.

The University of Oregon’s code of student conduct defines cheating as: “any act of deception by which a student misrepresents or misleadingly demonstrates that he or she has mastered information on an academic exercise that he or she has not mastered. Examples include but are not limited to: (a) Giving or receiving unauthorized help in an academic exercise; (b) Use of sources or resources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; (c) Acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the University faculty or staff; and (d) Engaging in any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion.”

The code defines plagiarism as “using the ideas or writings of another as one’s own. It includes, but is not limited to: (a) The use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement; and (b) The unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.”

If you are unsure as to the appropriateness of an action you are contemplating with regard to a paper, test, or other assignment, ask the instructor.

STUDENTS NEEDING SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS:
The university community is committed to making classes accessible to students with disabilities. Any student who presents the instructor with a letter from the Accessible Education Center (formerly the Office of Disability Services) documenting a disability and the accommodations appropriate for it can expect those accommodations to be made. The letter should be presented in by the end of Week 2 to allow appropriate arrangements for the first midterm exam.
SCHEDULE - for details about readings see “Readings” section on course Blackboard site

WEEK 1
MARCH 31 (TUES): Introduction to the course; explanation of syllabus.

APRIL 2 (THURS): Introduction to comics; introduction to comics in Japan; definitions.
Read: Scott McCloud, Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art, Chapter 1

UNIT 1: NARRATIVE PICTURE SCROLLS of the 12th through 17th centuries

WEEK 2
APRIL 7 (TUES): Ancient Japan; Imperial court culture; poetry, calligraphy, and painting
Read: excerpts from The Tale of Genji Scrolls (Genji monogatari emaki) and The Tale of Genji

APRIL 9 (THURS): Commoner culture; humor; folk-tales; narrative art techniques
Read: The Fortunate Man (Fukutomi zōshi)

WEEK 3
APRIL 14 (TUES): Medieval Japan; samurai; war
Read: excerpts from the Scrolls of the Mongol Invasions (Mōko shūrai emaki) by Takezaki Suenaga

APRIL 16 (THURS): Buddhism; nō theater, “picture-explainers”
Read: The Illustrated Scroll of the Origin of Dōjōji (Dōjōji engi emaki)

WEEK 4
APRIL 21 (TUES): Early modern Japan; haikai poetry and painting
Read: excerpts from Abandoned Bones: A Travelogue (Nozarashi kikō) by Bashō

APRIL 23 (THURS): Midterm exam 1

UNIT 2: CHAPBOOKS of the 18th and 19th centuries

WEEK 5
APRIL 28 (TUES): Early modern Japan, continued; children’s literature; chapbooks
Read: Murasaki Shikibu, Newly Published (Shinpan Murasaki Shikibu)

APRIL 30 (THURS): The pleasure quarters; kabuki and bunraku theater; the merchant class
Read: Playboy, Roasted á la Edo (Edo umare uwaki no kabayaki) by Santō Kyōden/Kitao Masanobu

WEEK 6
MAY 5 (TUES): Samurai revisited; satire; censorship
Read: The Fleacatcher’s Gaze: A Vendetta (Katakiuchi Nomitori manako) by Kyokutei Bakin/Kitao Shigemasa
MAY 7 (THURS): Marriage; monsters (yōkai); games  
Read: *Bride of the Monster!* (Bakemono no yomeiri) by Jippensha Ikku/Katsukawa Shun’ei

WEEK 7

MAY 12 (TUES): Chapbooks and classics; serialization; booklenders  
Read: excerpt from *A Rustic Genji by a Fake Murasaki* (Nise Murasaki inaka Genji) by Ryūtei Tanehiko/Utagawa Kunisada

MAY 14 (THURS): Midterm exam 2

**UNIT 3: COMICS of the 20th and 21st centuries**

WEEK 8

MAY 19 (TUES): The invention of manga; prewar manga; newspaper comics; emigration  
Read: excerpts from *The Four Immigrants Manga* (Manga yonin shosei) by Henry Kiyama (Kiyama Yoshitaka)

MAY 21 (THURS): Postwar children’s manga; Tezuka Osamu; animation; boys’ comix  
Read: excerpts from *Astro Boy* (Tetsuwan Atomu) by Tezuka Osamu

WEEK 9

MAY 26 (TUES): “Paper theater”; monsters, revisited; World War II  
Read: excerpts from *Onward Towards Our Noble Deaths* (Sōin gyokusai seyo!) by Mizuki Shigeru

MAY 28 (THURS): “Cinematic comix”; underground comix; Japan in the 1960s; samurai revisited  
Read: excerpts from *Lone Wolf and Cub* (Kozure ōkami) by Koike Kazuo/Kojima Goseki

WEEK 10

JUNE 2 (TUES): Girls’ comix; manga and classics; the 1970s and 1980s  
Read: excerpts from *The Tale of Genji* (Asaki yume mishi) by Yamato Waki

JUNE 4 (THURS): Contemporary comix; salarymen and OLs; manga magazines; wrap-up  
Read: excerpts from *Workerman* (Hatarakiman) by Anno Moyoco

FINAL EXAM
JUNE 8 (MON), 12:30 pm

PAPER DUE
JUNE 12 (FRI), 5:00 pm