

Manga and Japanese History Sample Assignment and Rubric Midterm/Final Essays

Midterm (20%) and Final (20%) Essays: 40%

Students will complete two analytical essays of 6-8 pages (double-spaced, 12-point font). These take-home essays will require students to closely analyze 3 assigned manga of the student's choosing, with attention to how they engage with a major Japanese historical development, issue, or debate. Your essay should also engage meaningfully with at least two secondary sources (scholarly articles, books, and/or book chapters); these can be sources on the syllabus, or sources you locate on your own.

For these essays, you are welcome and encouraged to build on one or more of your shorter analytical assignments. Potential essay topics include (but are not limited to): shifting moral paradigms; WWII and/or its aftermath; nuclear discourses; evolving gender and/or sexual roles and relations; evolving paradigms of nation; technology and identity; recessionary Japanese life; youth cultures/subcultures. We will dedicate class time to workshopping your essay drafts.

A rubric is provided on the following page:

	A Range	B Range	C Range	D to F Range
Introduction	The essay includes an introductory paragraph(s) that provides a clear, concise overview of the manga and related historical theme(s) the author will explore in their analysis.	The essay includes an introductory paragraph(s) that adequately overviews the manga and related historical theme(s) the author will explore in their analysis.	The essay includes an introductory paragraph(s), but it is vague in its description of the manga and/or historical theme(s) the author will explore in their analysis.	The essay fails to include an introductory paragraph(s).
Content	The essay makes a strong argument concerning the manga and related historical theme(s) it sets out to explore. It avoids generalizations and demonstrates a very strong understanding of the manga analyzed, and of their place in Japanese history. On the whole, the essay achieves its stated aim as described in the introduction.	The essay makes a viable argument concerning the manga and related historical theme(s) it sets out to explore. It mostly avoids generalizations and demonstrates a strong understanding of the manga analyzed, and of their place in Japanese history. On the whole, the essay achieves its stated aim as described in the introduction.	The essay provides some discussion of the manga and related historical theme(s) it sets out to explore. It often relies on generalizations and sometimes fails to demonstrate understanding of the manga analyzed and/or their place in Japanese history. The essay occasionally strays from the main topic.	The essay fails to engage meaningfully with any aspects of the manga analyzed and/or their place in Japanese history. The essay fails to make a cohesive argument.
Engagement With Sources	The essay analyzes a minimum of 3 manga explored in class. It avoids generalizations and demonstrates a very strong understanding of the texts through close analysis of specific elements (language, imagery, scenes, stylistic features, etc.). It explains fully and clearly <i>what</i> each manga reveals about the historical theme being explored. The essay cites at least two scholarly sources and demonstrates a strong understanding of their central arguments	The essay analyzes a minimum of 3 manga explored in class. It mostly avoids generalizations and demonstrates an adequate understanding of the texts through close analysis of specific elements. It explains clearly <i>what</i> each manga reveals about the historical theme being explored. The essay cites at least two scholarly sources and demonstrates basic understanding of their central arguments and	The essay analyzes some but not all of the 3 required manga explored in class. It relies mostly on generalizations and provides minimal close analysis of specific elements. It fails to adequately explain <i>what</i> each manga reveals about the historical theme being explored. The essay cites one scholarly source and demonstrates basic understanding of its central argument and connection to the	The essay fails to engage meaningfully with assigned manga and/or scholarly sources.

	and the historical evidence they draw upon. It explains fully and clearly <i>how</i> each source connects to the theme being explored in the essay.	the historical evidence they draw upon. It provides a general sense of <i>how</i> each source connects to the theme being explored in the essay.	theme being explored in the essay.	
Organization and Technical Issues	The organization of the essay is logical and makes it easy for the reader to follow by using paragraph breaks and clear transitions between paragraphs/topics; the essay is virtually free of spelling and grammatical errors.	The organization of the essay makes it mostly easy for the reader to follow; the essay contains some minor spelling and/or grammatical errors.	The organization of the essay makes it sometimes difficult to follow; the essay contains significant spelling and/or grammatical errors.	The organization of the essay makes it extremely difficult to follow; the essay contains errors that obscure the author's meaning.