

Academic year 2022-23 (תשפ"ג)**Course title (English):** Fullmetal Alchemist: Comics, Serialization, and Japanese Fiction**Course title (Hebrew):** אלכימאי המתכת: קומיקס, סדרתיות, וסיפורת יפנית**Course number:** 132.1.0343+132.1.0353**Course slot (semester/s, weekday/s, hours):** Yearly course, Mondays, 16:00-18:00**Lecturer:** Priel Cohanim**Lecturer's conference hour and contact details:** Thursdays, 12:00-14:00 or by appointment, priel27@gmail.com**Course description & objectives:**4 Credit Points, Elective Course

This yearly course will introduce students to Japanese manga and provide them with tools to analyze manga as literature worthy of analysis. Together, we will read Hiromu Arakawa's *Fullmetal Alchemist*—one of the most celebrated masterpieces of contemporary manga history—in its entirety: 27 volumes, comprising 108 chapters and over 5000 pages of content. Throughout the year, we will learn how to analyze comics as literary scholars, and practice what we learn on *Fullmetal Alchemist* by exploring the series' development of themes like identity, adolescence, race, gender, and self-sacrifice. We will also learn how to approach the analysis of massive, serialized literature whose plot develops over multiple volumes—an important skill in literary and media studies nowadays, considering an increasing number of contemporary works are either serialized or part of a shared "narrative universe." Students in the course will also discuss a Japanese work, possibly for the first time in an academic context. We will, therefore, discuss the complexities of analyzing an English translation of a Japanese manga in an Israeli classroom, and the ways in which visual and narrative elements influenced by European literary traditions come across in *Fullmetal Alchemist*. We will further learn how to identify aesthetic elements that are inherent to Japanese manga, and to distinguish such elements from the aesthetics of American comics. Finally, we will explore important theoretical issues and questions in current comics and manga scholarship, including "is manga an aesthetic choice or a cultural creation?" and "does the use of Japanese manga aesthetics in a Western context amount to cultural appropriation?"

Keywords: comics; manga; visual analysis; close reading; themes; serialization.

Course requirements:

Attendance is required

Active participation and attendance – 10%

Reading journals – 10%

Short paper – Fall semester (3 pages) – 20%

Final paper – Spring semester (6 pages) – 60%

Topics & bibliography

- Fall Semester:

- Japanese Manga: Definition and History
- Critical Vocabulary and Visual Analysis
- Serialized Literature: From Victorian Era Serials to Contemporary Manga
- Volumes 1-8: Identity, Chimerism, and Disability
- Volumes 9-12: The Homunculus, Femininity, and the Far East

- Spring Semester:

- Volumes 13-16: Orientalism, the Holocaust, and the European Colonizer
- Japanese Manga in the Israeli Classroom: Theoretical Issues and Cultural Appropriation
- Volumes 17-20: The Faustian Myth and the Christian Father
- Volumes 21-27: Sacrifice, God, and the Truth

Primary Sources:

- Hiromu Arakawa, *Fullmetal Alchemist*

Secondary Sources: (We will read excerpts from the following tentative list of texts)

- Anderman, Elizabeth. "Serialization, Illustration, and the Art of Sensation." *Victorian Periodicals Review*, vol. 52, no. 1, 2019, pp. 27-56.
- Brienza, Casey E. "Books, Not Comics: Publishing Fields, Globalization, and Japanese Manga in the United States." *Publishing Research Quarterly*, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 101-17.
- Cohanim, Priel. "Reclaiming Ishbal: Opposing European Dominance in Hiromu Arakawa's *Fullmetal Alchemist*." *8th Euroacademia International Conference: Europe Inside-Out: Europe and Europeanness Exposed to Plural Observers*, 30 Sep 2018, Lucca, Italy. Conference Presentation.

- Gallacher, Lesley-Anne. "(Fullmetal) Alchemy: The Monstrosity of Reading Words and Pictures in Shonen Manga." *Cultural Geographies*, vol. 18, no. 4, 2011, pp. 457-73.
- Kacsuk, Zoltan. "Re-Examining the 'What is Manga' Problematic: The Tension and Interrelationship between the "Style" Versus "Made in Japan" Positions." *Arts*, vol. 7, no. 3, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.3390/arts7030026>. Accessed 02 January 2009.
- Mellette, Justin. "Serialization and Empire in Neil Gaiman's *The Sandman*." *Studies in the Novel*, vol. 47, no. 3, 2015, pp. 319-34.
- Wallin, Jason J. and Jennifer A. Sandlin. "Plastic Fantasies: Globalization and the Japanese Cultural Imaginary." *Critical Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*, vol. 20, no. 6, pp. 524-34.