Course Description: Japan has a rich history of ghosts, spirits, demons, monsters, and otherwise “supernatural” beings. In this course, we will focus on the stories and visual imagery related to these beings from both a historical, as well as psychological perspective, with a particular emphasis on early modern and modern manifestations of the supernatural (roughly 17th c. to present). We will explore a variety of prose narrative, painting, theater and film, as well as short theoretical readings that attempt to make sense of 1) the nearly universal human endeavor of imagining a realm of spirits and the dead, and 2) the particular iconography and manifestations of other-worldly spirits in a Japanese context. In doing so, we will consider just how these stories and images allow or fail to allow us a means by which to confront otherwise uncomfortable aspects of life and death, materiality and immateriality, and the chains of memory, psychological repression, and karmatic retribution. In doing such, we will ultimately consider why these ghosts, monsters, and spirits simply don’t disappear under the regime of a rational, scientific worldview. Students will be evaluated in terms of how well they participate in the class discussions, how well prepared they are for class, an in-class presentation, and three short writing assignments based on guided, out-of-class assignments such as internet research on visual images of Edo–period ghosts, interviewing fellow students regarding their beliefs in the immaterial and metaphysical, and a film analysis.

Student Learning Objectives:
Students who satisfactorily complete the course can expect to be able to do the following:
1) To gain a better understanding of the cultural history of Japan and to consider contemporary cultural formations
2) Critical reading, writing, and research skills
3) To analyze the relationship between national, gender, and class identity on the one hand, and cultural production and consumption on the other
4) To become familiar with several Japanese cultural and academic texts related to the supernatural
5) Be able to discuss various conditions that influence cultural consumption and production in Japan over the last 300 years, and to particularly look at the relationship between written and visual representations of the supernatural

Course Requirements and Grading Criteria:
- General Participation: 20%
- Presentation of reading: 20%
- In-class presentation of independent research: 30%
- Two short writing assignments: 3 x 10% = 30%

Attendance: It is assumed that you are taking this course so as to not only satisfy your personal curiosities, but to engage in a collective learning experience. It is therefore important to be respectful of others opinions and ideas, and sincere in articulating your own thoughts and insights. Therefore I am expecting you to demonstrate your integrity as a student and as a fellow participant throughout the course. Part of this general expectation means coming to class prepared and on time every day. Therefore, you will be granted only one absence during the course of the term. If you fail to abide by this policy, your final grade will be reduced by 5% for
each absence beyond the allotted one freebie. Of course, certain extenuating circumstances (for example, proven abduction by aliens, sudden possession by malignant spirits, etc.) may be considered a legitimate excuse for absence at the discretion of the academic and/or administrative director of the program.

**Papers & Presentations:** Because the course is offered at two levels, different criteria apply. Those taking it as 2090 are expected to turn in three short writing assignments of 2 pages (typed, double-spaced, 12 pt. standard font) each. The presentation of reading should be approximately 10 minutes and include a summary of the reading, followed by your own thoughts on the reading, and finally, a series of two or three open ended questions that serve as a spring board into a larger class discussion. Your in-class presentation of independent research during the final week should be approximately 15 minutes and include both visual materials and scholarly engagement. It is expected that those taking this course at the 4391 or as Tulane credit (ASTA 3920) will produce a ten-page paper related to their final presentation and read all the optional reading assignments. These students will give two presentations of readings (with at least one being an optional reading).

**Plagiarism:** All quotations, paraphrases, and summaries must be documented in MLA, *Chicago Manual, Monumenta Nipponica* or other approved style, with footnotes and a “Works Cited” page. Plagiarism, the use of someone else’s ideas or words without adequate acknowledgment, is grounds for failure. Students unclear about what constitutes plagiarism should consult [http://www.studentaffairs.uno.edu/judicial/judicial_pdf/judicial_code_pdf.pdf](http://www.studentaffairs.uno.edu/judicial/judicial_pdf/judicial_code_pdf.pdf); scroll down to the section on “Academic Dishonesty” (pages 5-8). This section explains the concept of plagiarism and its consequences fairly thoroughly.

**Electronic Devices:** All electronic devices—cell phones, iPods, handheld video games, etc.—should be turned off and put away for the duration of each day’s class. The only exception is the use of laptop computers for the sole purpose of taking notes or presenting.

**Accessibility:** UNO and Tulane University are committed to making all of their programs accessible and friendly to students with documented disabilities. Students requiring special accommodations must notify the academic and/or administrative director at the earliest possible date so their needs can be properly assessed and reasonably accommodated.

**Honors Option:** Students in the UNO Honors Program have the option of taking the course for honors credit. In addition to the regular course requirements, students choosing the honors option must complete an additional ten pages of written work related to their final project, incorporating at least three outside scholarly sources (i.e., critical articles or books; please note that articles can be accessed via Internet through the UNO library’s databases, so make certain you have access to a laptop while in Kyoto).

**Required Texts:**

3. All other readings will be provided in the form of PDF file
Schedule of Study:

**Week 1 (MAY)**

Tu 28  Introduction

W 29  Shamanism and other Pre-Buddhist World Views  
Read: Selections from *Tales of Genji*

Th 30  *The Tale of Genji* and Notions of Wandering Souls  
Screen and discuss the animated version of *Tale of Genji*  
Read: Selections from *Japanese Tales*

F 31  Buddhism and other Continental World Views  
Read: Selections from *Japanese Tales*

**Week 2 (JUNE)**

M  3  Discussion of Readings  
Read: Selections from *Japanese Tales*

Tu  4  The Gempei Wars and other Medieval Maladies  
Read: Noh plays

W  5  Screen and discuss noh and/or kyōgen drama  
Read: Introduction to *Tales of Moonlight and Rain*

Th  6  Ghosts and early-modern Japanese society

F  7  Present your findings in your interview with Japanese student (see below)

Weekly Short Writing Assignment: Ask your conversation partner or other Japanese student about belief in and the existence of ghosts, spirits, and/or monsters. How do they make sense of these beliefs? If they personally believe in such phenomena, how is the experience understood visually? Do they have a favorite spectral being? How is the metaphysical realm of ghosts and others spectral phenomena a regional, national, and/or trans-national experience? Finally, ask them to tell you about one “Japanese” ghost or spirit. Summarize what you have learned from this conversation in a 3-page paper. It will be collected in class on Friday.

**Week 3**

M  10 Kabuki, woodblock prints, and the social configuration of the metaphysical  
Read: *Tales of Moonlight and Rain* Book One and Two

Tu  11 View Kabuki Play  
Read: *Tales of Moonlight and Rain* Book Three, Four and Five

W  12 Discuss Early Modern Ghosts  
Read: Kabuki play *Yotsuya kaidan*

Th  13 Modernity and Ghosts

F  14 Present your findings related to Edo-period visual ghosts (see below)
Weekly Short Writing Assignment: Try to find either two- or three-dimensional images of a particular ghost from the Edo period (1600-1868) on the Internet or in the library. Write a summary of this particular ghost/spirit/monster, any variations, and your social, cultural, historical, or psychological interpretation of this ghost. How are his/her/its physical attributes related to the particular narratives you discover? Feel free to include imagery, however I am expecting at least three pages of written text as well. It will be collected Friday.

**Week 4**

M 17 Modernizing Monsters: Ghosts of the Meiji Era
   Read: *Kwaidan* pp. 1-50

Tu 18 Revival of the Dead: The Emperor system, Yanagida Kunio, and Reactionaries
   Read: *Kwaidan* pp. 51-100

W 19 Discuss Lafcadio Hearn
   Read: *Kwaidan* pp. 101-178

Th 20 Film screening, TBA

F 21 Discuss film
   Read: “Horror after Hiroshima”

Weekly Short Writing Assignment: Do a film analysis of the film screened in class this week. It will be collected in class on Friday.

**Week 5**

M 24 Film Screening
   Read: “Techno-Horror and Urban Alienation”

Tu 25 Film Screening
   Read: “Yōkai Culture: Past, Present, Future”

W 26 Techno-horror, J-Horror, and the Japanese Ghost as Transnational Commodity

Th 27 Film Screening

F 28 class presentations; wrap-up

**Important websites**

1) [http://www.obakemono.com](http://www.obakemono.com)
3) [http://hyakumonogatari.com](http://hyakumonogatari.com)