Conclusion

The Online Future(s) of Teaching Japanese Popular Culture

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Introduction

One thread winding its way through this volume has been the importance of technology in teaching about and with Japanese popular culture (JPC). During the past few decades, instructors gradually replaced grainy audiocassettes and VCR tapes with CDs and DVDs, before eventually finding much popular culture on the Internet. This has meant fewer technical problems such as incompatible DVD region codes, and it has meant the availability of seemingly endless content. Contributors to this volume cite the Internet’s usefulness for allowing students and instructors to virtually travel or quickly locate media, such as images (both historical and contemporary), music videos, print and television advertisements, or film and television clips, all of which hopefully will do more than just be a hook to attract students. Even content originally intended to be held in one’s hand, like manga, may be scanned, uploaded, and translated for global consumption, turning it into digital media. There seems to be a consensus among our contributors that the Internet has vastly enhanced teaching JPC and in fact would be virtually impossible without it.

Additionally, many contributors acknowledge the importance of the Internet and other technologies not only for exposing students to JPC but also for providing them with a way to communicate with like-minded individuals around the world. For students interested in games, cosplay, J-pop, television dramas, and more, the Internet has become an

indispensable tool for keeping abreast of the latest trends and participating in geographically dispersed communities. Indeed, it is clear that the Internet and related technologies are a driving force in attracting students to JPC courses.

Clearly, the Internet has become indispensable to teaching JPC. This seems likely to remain the case in the future. However, although those who teach about Japan have long been at the forefront of using popular culture to cross physical and intellectual borders, they have been very slow to actually teach JPC via the Internet. In other words, Japanese studies instructors and students have been tapping into online sources to discover content and build communities for years, but they have not actually created or taken courses online. In this chapter, I analyze why this is the case by outlining some of the potential rewards and obstacles associated with Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). MOOCs may vastly expand the global population of students learning about Japanese popular culture. However, in order to reach such a goal, those who teach with or about Japanese popular culture must navigate the confusing waters of copyright.

What might the future hold for MOOCs about or incorporating Japanese popular culture? This chapter addresses this question and explains the relevance of the topic for anyone engaged in teaching Japanese popular culture. This includes not only individuals who teach courses in film, media, or cultural studies departments specifically about Japanese film, anime, manga, games, cosplay, literature, music, television dramas, and so on, but also those who use examples from popular culture to teach about something else, such as history, sociology, anthropology, geography, politics, international relations, marketing, business, and more. This chapter should help anyone who relies on Japanese popular culture to make a point, provide an example, define a term, or even entertain, to understand how MOOCs might shape what they do and how they do it. It reviews literature about MOOCs in general and incorporates the comments of scholars from around the world who have developed MOOCs rich in popular culture in order to (1) define MOOCs and trace their recent growth, acclaim, and controversy; (2) discuss challenges that must be overcome to take advantage of MOOCs, most notably copyright; and (3) suggest future applications of MOOCs, including in “flipped classrooms.”
Defining MOOCs

Since 2012 the growth of MOOCs has stirred excitement and controversy in higher education. Open-access, fully online courses are but the latest advance in a long history of distance learning. However, the recent combination of advanced course-hosting technologies, enthusiasm for MOOCs at institutions like Harvard and Stanford, and vast start-up capital for MOOC providers like Coursera, edX, and Udacity has led to speculation that MOOCs may drastically alter higher education, for better or worse. They have been called “the single most important experiment in higher education.” Others see them as a “game changer” that will open higher education to “hundreds of millions of people.” And still others consider them a “massive, terrible idea for the future of college.” They have stirred almost religious fervor among advocates and doomsday scenarios among opponents. However, for anyone unfamiliar with the term MOOC, some explanation is necessary.

By definition a MOOC can have a massive number of learners. For instance, over 160,000 students from over 190 countries signed up for Sebastian Thrun and Peter Norvig’s Artificial Intelligence course in 2011, spurring Thrun to give up tenure at Stanford and found the MOOC provider Udacity. Because it is online and can be fully automated, in theory a MOOC can have an unlimited number of participants and be running constantly.

By definition a MOOC should be open to learners regardless of institutional affiliation, academic status, age, sex, religion, race, or geographic location. In addition, most MOOCs are still free of charge, allowing anyone access to classes taught by faculty at some of the world’s top institutions. In theory anyone with a computer and Internet access can enroll in any MOOC.

By definition a MOOC is online. Like radio, television, VHS tapes, cassette tapes, CDs, and DVDs before, the Internet ushered in a new era in distance learning. Advanced course-hosting technologies now allow nearly all materials to be accessible through one online portal, including lectures, discussion forums, and assessments. While some MOOCs show lectures videotaped in front of students, others are specially produced for online learners, with an instructor speaking directly to the camera or over lecture slides, and include homework, discussion forums, and assessments specially designed for an online learning environment.
Finally, a MOOC is a course. It is not a single lecture, or even a series of lectures one can view online. Nor is it learning materials or lesson plans found online that can be used to supplement a course. Instead, a MOOC is a self-contained course that follows a syllabus and includes assessment. Unlike most courses, however, successful completion of a MOOC typically does not earn the student credit toward the completion of a degree. In lieu of credit, instructors may offer a certificate of completion.

The term MOOC was coined by Dave Cormier in 2008 in reference to the University of Manitoba’s Connectivism and Connective Knowledge course. Precursors like Open Educational Resources (OER) have been praised for their potential to assist developing countries by enabling anyone to pursue higher education. However, the MOOC idea did not garner much attention until Stanford’s “AI” course in 2011, with its startling enrolment of 160,000. In the intervening years, MOOCs have continued to grow in ways none of their pioneers ever imagined, with established MOOC providers now located around the world, including Australia, Canada, Germany, Great Britain, Spain, and the United States.

Godzilla-Size Growth

The New York Times declared 2012 “The Year of the MOOC,” stating, “The shimmery hope is that free courses can bring the best education in the world to the most remote corners of the planet, help people in their careers, and expand intellectual and personal networks.” Indeed, most MOOC providers portray themselves as democratizing education. For instance, Udacity claims, “Our mission is to bring accessible, affordable, engaging, and highly effective higher education to the world. We believe that higher education is a basic human right, and we seek to empower our students to advance their education and careers.” Coursera has similar aims: “We envision a future where everyone has access to a world-class education that has so far been available to a select few. We aim to empower people with education that will improve their lives, the lives of their families, and the communities they live in.” Finally, edX also sees itself opening the doors to learning: “We present the best of higher education online, offering opportunity to anyone who wants to achieve, thrive, and grow.”

The admirable goal of opening higher education to anyone, coupled with a world of potential learners, has led to immense growth in the number of MOOC platforms, partner universities, course offerings, and enrolled students over the past few years. For instance, Coursera, founded in April
2012, maintains a ticker on its homepage that in mid-2015 boasted more than 11 million students, 900 courses, and 118 partner institutions. Such growth may be unsustainable. Massive open online courses might be a fad. However, the growth has been too sudden and widespread to ignore. With enrollment figures for courses about Japan constantly in flux due to unpredictable economic and cultural factors, faculty members who teach about Japan might see MOOCs as a way to reach more learners, including the possibility of reaching more students in a single MOOC than in a thirty-year career in the classroom. While some may argue that education should be focused more on quality than quantity, dwindling enrollments have justified the closure of many departments over the decades, and there is nothing sacrosanct about Japanese studies or courses on Japan in general. At some point, faculty members may need to decide whether to create, reject, or adopt the MOOC platform.

The stakes for joining (or not) the MOOC revolution are higher for institutions. Given the ever-increasing costs of higher education and growing student debt, MOOCs provide an opportunity for highly selective and/or expensive institutions to be seen as opening their (online) doors to anyone who wants to learn, regardless of their financial circumstances. Moreover, in a globally competitive higher education marketplace, many institutions consider MOOCs a major pedagogical shift that cannot be missed. Early advocacy of MOOCs by top-tier institutions like Stanford and Harvard has left some others scrambling to join existing MOOC platforms, create their own, or even actively reject the model.

**Democratizing Education?**

Enthusiasm for the potential of MOOCs to democratize education recently has become tempered by serious questions about the centralization of knowledge, academic freedom, and the potential hollowing out of institutions. Some of these concerns were sparked by a MOOC titled Justice, offered by edX and taught by Harvard government professor Michael Sandel. Japan scholars might recall Sandel’s recent popularity in Japan, where his public lectures attracted tens of thousands. In early 2013, a dean at San Jose State University suggested that its Philosophy Department assign Sandel’s MOOC lectures as homework, which students would watch before class, then discuss with the instructor during class. Some experts consider this “flipped classroom” approach a promising innovation enabled by MOOCs, a point to which I return later. In this
case, however, the San Jose State Philosophy Department balked. In an open letter to Sandel published in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, it implicated him in a process that may one day dismantle departments and narrow the production of knowledge in higher education: “We fear that two classes of universities will be created: one, well-funded colleges and universities in which privileged students get their own real professor; the other, financially stressed private and public universities in which students watch a bunch of videotaped lectures and interact, if indeed any interaction is available on their home campuses, with a professor that this model of education has turned into a glorified teaching assistant.”

Indeed, the contention that MOOCs help democratize education may be undermined by the possibility that they could lead to a concentration of knowledge production and dissemination in the hands of a few elite institutions and celebrity academics, as well as less academic freedom for faculty members required to use MOOCs in “flipped” or “blended” environments. As the San Jose State faculty note: “Teaching justice through an educational model that is spearheading the creation of two social classes in academia thus amounts to a cruel joke.” Sandel responded to the letter, supporting the department’s academic freedom. However, he admitted, “The worry that the widespread use of online courses will damage departments in public universities facing budgetary pressures is a legitimate concern that deserves serious debate, at edX and throughout higher education.”

In an era of cost cutting throughout higher education it will be difficult for many institutions to resist the dual allure of (1) reducing labor costs by reducing new hires or hiring qualified scholars as lower-paid “glorified teaching assistants” and (2) offering students at less prestigious institutions credit for MOOCs from global brand-name universities. As the San Jose State Philosophy Department points out, this may lead to “the creation of two social classes in academia,” a division that might be further exacerbated among those who teach about or with Japanese popular culture. The reason is simple: copyright.

**Copyright and Fair Use in MOOCs**

Continued expansion of course offerings by Coursera, edX, Udacity, and others means students can choose from hundreds of courses in STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) disciplines, the humanities, and the social sciences. However, only a handful of courses focus on popular
culture (see table C.1), and only two incorporate any type of Japanese popular culture. One is *Visualizing Japan (1850s–1930s): Westernization, Protest, Modernity* (MITx and HarvardX). The other is *Visualizing Postwar Tokyo* (UTokyoX). Both courses are offered by edX. The former is made by the collaborators at MIT and Harvard behind Visualizing Cultures, a website that contains images, narratives, and lesson plans devoted to image-driven scholarship about East Asian history. To be clear, neither of these would fit most people’s definition of a popular culture course, nor do they advertise themselves that way. Both are history courses that rely heavily on the visual historical record: woodblock prints, postcards, magazine advertisements, TV programs, and other media that were the popular culture of their day. For instance, in *Visualizing Postwar Tokyo*, students “Analyze the history of change and development in postwar Tokyo from different perspectives using archived photographs, films, and TV programs.” These courses are an important first step, but no one has yet built a MOOC specifically about Japanese film, anime, manga, games, characters, fashion, literature, music, television, and so on. Whoever does so will face hurdles.

Existing online technologies enable any course to reach millions of learners; however, it is no wonder that the first and most common MOOCs have been in STEM fields. Particularly at the introductory level, such courses do not require major adjustments each year. Students can simply watch a series of video lectures and do online problem sets that scaffold their learning of content and skills. Courses like those mentioned in this volume, on the other hand, involve more interaction between students and faculty. Plus the content constantly shifts to keep up with trends in popular culture and scholarship on it.

This is not the only disadvantage suffered by humanities and social science courses in online education though. Of particular concern is the issue of fair use: the informal doctrine that in the case of the United States allows the “performance or display of a work by instructors or pupils in the course of face-to-face teaching activities of a nonprofit educational institution, in a classroom or similar place devoted to instruction.” Fair use allows instructors to show film or television clips, artwork, music, or anything else protected by any country’s copyright laws without fear of prosecution by copyright holders. Without such protection, the classroom would be a space absent of all media other than that specifically created by the instructor and students.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider (courses related to popular culture / total courses)</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Instructor and Affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coursera (14/939)</td>
<td>Marriage and the Movies: A History</td>
<td>Jeanine Basinger, Wesleyan University</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scandinavian Film and Television</td>
<td>Ib Bondebjerg, University of Copenhagen</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Music's Big Bang: The Genesis of Rock 'n' Roll</td>
<td>David Carlson, University of Florida</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Online Games: Literature, New Media, and Narrative</td>
<td>Jay Clayton, Vanderbilt University</td>
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<td></td>
<td>History of Rock, Pt One</td>
<td>John Covach, University of Rochester</td>
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<td>History of Rock, Pt Two</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The Music of the Rolling Stones</td>
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<td>The Music of the Beatles</td>
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<td>Warhol</td>
<td>Glyn Davis, The University of Edinburgh</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The Language of Hollywood: Storytelling, Sound, and Color</td>
<td>Scott Higgins, Wesleyan University</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Comic Books and Graphic Novels</td>
<td>William Kuskin, University of Colorado, Boulder</td>
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<td>Listening to World Music</td>
<td>Carol Muller, University of Pennsylvania</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Live: A History of Art for Artists, Animators, and Gamers</td>
<td>Jeannene Przyblyski, California Institute of the Arts</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The Camera Never Lies</td>
<td>Emmett Sullivan, Royal Holloway, University of London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>edX (4/411)</td>
<td>Visualizing Japan (1850s–1930s): Westernization, Protest, Modernity</td>
<td>John Dower, MIT; Andrew Gordon, Harvard University; Shigeru Miyagawa, MIT; Gennifer Weisenfeld, Duke University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Music in the 20th Century (in Mandarin)</td>
<td>Bryan Minghui, Peking University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Udacity (0/57)</td>
<td>Visualizing Postwar Tokyo, Part 1</td>
<td>Shunya Yoshimi, University of Tokyo</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Visualizing Postwar Tokyo, Part 2</td>
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Table C.1. Courses About, or Widely Incorporating, Popular Culture Offered by Major MOOC Providers (mid-2015)
In general, the fair use doctrine applies to MOOCs. For instance, Coursera, one of the leading providers, states that the fair use doctrine applies when:

1. The image shown is being directly criticized. For example, in a photography course, a photo is being shown to illustrate the problems with over-exposing film;
2. The image is being used in a transformative way; that is, the purpose for use in the course is completely different than its original purpose. For example, in a course about web design it is acceptable to show web screen shots to demonstrate good and bad web design techniques.

Criticism and transformation have long been central to the fair use argument for including media in classrooms, and based on its statement, Coursera appears to recognize the importance of fair use. In fact, however, MOOC providers and institutions have been advising instructors designing MOOCs to secure copyright permissions or remove anything protected by copyright.

Caution stems from two points. First, like all digital scholarship and learning platforms (e.g., websites, wikis, blogs, Moodle), MOOCs are not confined to the physical classroom. Therefore, the “face-to-face” requirement mentioned above does not necessarily apply. Also, fair use protection is limited to “nonprofit educational institutions.” Since many MOOC providers are actually for-profit corporations that only partner with educational institutions, this protection may not apply. Some MOOC providers charge students for course access (e.g., Udacity’s nanodegree programs incur a monthly fee) or completion certificates (e.g., Coursera’s verified certificate), while some providers charge institutions to use their MOOCs for credit-earning courses. For these reasons, MOOC providers urge caution when using third-party content, which Coursera defines as “content that is not self-created, such as graphs, charts, artwork, photos, screenshots, clip art, trademarks and videos.” The company provides this advice to faculty making MOOCs: “While this is not to rule out fair use as an option, it is to be used with care, and in parallel with consultation with your university’s attorneys or legal personnel.” In fact it recommends securing permission for all copyright-protected materials “as if you were the author of a textbook, obtaining rights for materials you would like to include in your book.” Many instructors will find it unrealistic to consult with university legal personnel about every piece of third-party content to be shown in class, since this is precisely what the fair use doctrine is meant to help them avoid.
Taking this cautious approach to copyright requires altering many teaching practices. For instance, Ib Bondebjerg, whose course Scandinavian Film and Television premiered in 2014 with Coursera, acknowledged, “The question of copyright is indeed much more complicated in a MOOC course like this reaching many thousand students from a wide variety of countries.” During the planning stages Bondebjerg met with others who have created MOOCs: “We were advised not to upload or show any clips ourselves. I do this all the time in my normal classes, so this is indeed a restriction. I had hoped to be able to imbed clips in my video presentations, but unless I somehow clear the rights (which I am working on) this cannot be done.”

If this cautious approach prevails, I believe the limitations of fair use in MOOCs may create a chasm between institutions with sufficient financial, staffing, and legal support to produce media-rich MOOCs and those without. Developing any MOOC related to Japanese popular culture will require one of three options: (1) stripping the course of all copyright-protected material, (2) testing the limits of fair use protection, or (3) securing copyright permission from all content creators. For the majority of instructors, only the second option is feasible for teaching popular culture. Despite the potential for effective education via the other two options, I argue that testing the limits of fair use protection is necessary for retaining the integrity of the fair use principle in education and maintaining the greatest potential for the democratization of learning via MOOCs.

Playing It Safe: The Content-Free Course

The first option, not including any third-party content protected by copyright, is already the norm for MOOCs in STEM fields. Here courses rely on images (graphs, animations) created by MOOC faculty and their support teams. For courses in the humanities and social sciences that may have included copyright-protected content in the past, it may be easy to remove such material that simply illustrates a concept or phenomenon. For instance, in my Introduction to Japanese Studies course, a residential course for 460 students at the National University of Singapore, when I teach about the recent decline in lifetime employment and the emergence of dispatched workers, I do not need to show a five-minute clip from the 2007 NipponTV drama Haken no hinkaku (Dignity of Special Temporary Staff). The clip may grab student attention and help introduce the topic, but it is not essential. If I developed this module into a MOOC, I could drop the television clip without much sacrifice.
However, how could one teach a media studies course without showing at least something protected by copyright? How could one teach a course on manga using only work in the public domain? How could one teach a film studies course? Screenshots are acceptable in MOOCs, but they are insufficient to achieve the kind of close and repetitive viewing necessary when teaching about the moving image. While television and film clips are covered by fair use in the classroom due to the tireless efforts of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies and others, in the area of MOOCs, Bondebjerg and others have been encouraged to err on the side of caution, to the point of removing all third-party content from their online courses. If the fair use doctrine fails to transfer to MOOCs and all copyright-protected material is excised from film and media studies classes, many departments and scholars around the world will be unable to fully participate in this new world of online education, hamstrung by the inability to include the very object of criticism and debate in their lectures.

Alternatively, one could remove all copyright-protected material from a MOOC and encourage students to purchase it. This has been the strategy for some popular culture MOOCs. For instance, on the course description page for History of Rock, Part One, John Covach notes, “Unfortunately, the expense of licensing music to support a course like this is prohibitive. Students are therefore asked to seek out the music discussed here (most of which is readily available on the internet). Because artists cannot be paid otherwise, we encourage all students to purchase the music they enjoy when possible.” Of course, this assumes that students can purchase content regardless of their location. Similarly, in his film course entitled The Language of Hollywood: Storytelling, Sound, and Color, instructor Scott Higgins points students to potential outlets for the required films: “They are readily available on DVD and available for RENTAL via NETFLIX or a similar service. Some of them are available streaming on the internet. All are available for purchase from AMAZON or another vendor.” Of course, the requirement that students view films outside class in this MOOC means Higgins’s film choices are restricted to what is available for rental or purchase, possibly limiting what he can teach about filmmaking in the early twentieth century. More disconcertingly, prohibitive shipping costs, incompatible DVD region codes, and inaccessible online versions will make the films unobtainable for many potential learners outside the United States and may prevent students from registering for or completing the course.
After removing all copyright-protected content, one can also point students to it elsewhere on the Internet. However, linking to external sites is only feasible if one is certain a link will remain active and if the content is legally accessible to students around the world. Of course, when creating a MOOC, one should not link students to pirated content; however, can one mention that such websites exist, letting students find them on their own? How should one react if students use discussion forums to provide other students with links to sites that violate copyright? In his film studies class, Higgins soon discovered that students turned to alternative methods for the sake of learning. He writes, “As soon as the course launched some students set up a Facebook page for it where they listed torrents for most of the movies. I monitored the Coursera discussion board and removed any reference to this, and any attempt to provide links to the films directly.”

Those who teach about or with Japanese popular culture understand well the barriers to learning erected by prohibitive shipping costs, incompatible DVD region codes, and online inaccessibility. Like Higgins’s students, many instructors engage in legally questionable tactics in order to stay on top of popular culture trends in Japan and curate pedagogically appropriate materials for the classroom. After decades of sharing these works with students under the protection of fair use, instructors will be unable to incorporate them into a MOOC without bending the rules or insisting on fair use protection through transformative use of the original.

**Pushing the Limits of Fair Use Online**

For those who cannot conceive of a course on Japanese popular culture without any third-party content directly in the course, one can push the limits of fair use in the MOOC era. To do so, instructors must insist on including popular culture content in their courses and constantly stand by the “transformative” principle in the fair use doctrine. One example of this in practice is Scott Higgins and his MOOC. When creating his MOOC, Higgins took the issue of copyright very seriously, as did the legal and administrative teams at his institution and Coursera. Still, he proceeded with using third-party content. He explains, “I did use quite a few clips in my lectures, but always with running commentary and/or interrupted. Also I used Screenflow to produce the lectures, so the film clip is always embedded, never full frame.” In this way, he contends he is criticizing and transforming the original. In preparation for potential copyright issues, Higgins composed a letter to his provost justifying his incorporation of stills and clips into lectures. His rule of thumb is useful
for anyone considering a MOOC on popular culture: “My personal litmus test for this practice is to ask, ‘Am I ruining the sequence in some way?’ In other words, if I am destroying the entertainment value of the sequence through a critical intervention, then I am probably safe.”

Higgins is not the only MOOC instructor incorporating film clips. In a piece in the New Yorker, Nathan Heller introduced The Ancient Greek Hero, a MOOC from edX led by Gregory Nagy. Heller describes a lecture relevant to the discussion of fair use.

The segment started with a head shot of Nagy talking about the 1982 movie Blade Runner. His lecture was intercut with a muted clip showing the rain-drenched death soliloquy of Roy Batty, the movie’s replicant antagonist. “I’ve seen things you people wouldn’t believe. … All those moments will be lost in time, like tears in rain. Time to die.” Nagy spoke the crucial words and started teasing them apart.

Nagy pushes the boundaries of fair use by showing the clip in its entirety, but he voices the character’s last words himself.

William Kuskin has taken a less cautious approach with his course Comic Books and Graphic Novels. The course, on Coursera, is entirely image driven. Therefore, while planning it he explained, “I will definitely show images, by hook, by crook, by copyright, or by fair use. I can’t teach the class otherwise”. Two years, two iterations, and seventy thousand students later, Kuskin admits, “[I] freely incorporated as much material as I wanted, both visual and textual, from a variety of sources.” In fact, he says, “We never asked for copyright, and none was given, but I cited everything as carefully as if I were writing a textbook.” In his videos, Kuskin fits the “transformative” model of fair use by thumbing through comic books, directing students’ attention to key aspects of the design, ink, and more. In other words, while the course may increase the entertainment value of comic books and graphic novels in general for students, they could not watch his videos in lieu of purchasing this third-party content. For this reason, he is testing the limits of Coursera’s advice and counting on the transferability of the fair use doctrine from the classroom to the MOOC.

**Playing It Safe: Negotiating Permissions**

For those who wish to remain as cautious as possible in the MOOC era while still retaining the vibrancy of a course that teaches about or with popular culture, one can contact the necessary publishers, production companies,
website administrators, and advertising agencies for permission to use each image, film and television clip, advertisement, or song used in class. Some copyright holders may be generous with their assets and willing to cooperate. A prime example is the cosmetics company Shiseido, which allowed the edX course Visualizing Japan (1850s–1930s): Westernization, Protest, Modernity to use its advertisements from the 1920s and 30s. Thanks to Shiseido’s generosity, the course could use these vivid images to make points about gender, consumption, and modernity of the era. In fact, MIT negotiated a creative commons copyright license with Shiseido years before the MOOC was proposed, when the images and associated essays and lesson plans were posted on the Visualizing Cultures website mentioned earlier. As Shigeru Miyagawa, one of the MOOC’s producers, explains, “For copyright, we were in the unusual situation of basing our virtually entire work on Visualizing Cultures, a 10-year project in which we cleared the copyright to the images. … We have Creative Commons agreement with over 200 museums and other collections.” Similarly, in creating the course Visualizing Postwar Tokyo, instructors at the University of Tokyo needed to negotiate (and sometimes purchase) rights to show archived photographs, films, and TV programs, specifically footage from the national broadcast network NHK. It is unclear how much impact the institutions (MIT and Harvard in the former case, in the former case, the University of Tokyo in the latter) had in convincing the copyright holders to cooperate. However, it is clear that similarly content-rich MOOCs will require vast institutional support (staff, legal assistance, course release for instructors, and financial support for the purchase of usage rights when needed) to negotiate the inclusion of third-party content.

Given these demands, even the most enthusiastic faculty member and institution may conclude that developing a Japanese popular-culture-focused MOOC is not worth the effort. The thought of liaising with university lawyers (assuming one’s institution has full-time lawyers with time to devote to copyright issues) and chasing down the copyright holders for bottled green tea commercials or out-of-print manga may sound unreasonable to many. And even if copyright is secured for enough material to create a course, instructors may have to settle on a second- or third-best example. More seriously, securing permissions may require an investment of time and money beyond the reach of most scholars and institutions. Much as McLaren and Spies emphasize the importance of understanding who is producing popular culture and under what conditions, the emergence of MOOCs highlights the need to make clear
who is producing academic knowledge about Japan and Japanese popular culture. Specifically, if one takes the cautious approach to including third-party content encouraged by Coursera, it is likely that only institutions with deep pockets, large legal teams, and savvy tech support will be able to produce MOOCs of the highest scholarly caliber. Echoing the concerns of the San Jose State Philosophy Department, such practices threaten to widen the gap between higher education institutions by ensuring that top-tier schools strengthen their hold on the production of knowledge about Japan and Japanese popular culture.

**MOOCs as Teaching Tools**

Despite the challenges related to developing MOOCs outlined above, I believe they will soon prove instrumental in teaching Japanese popular culture. One promising avenue relates to the controversy involving Michael Sandel. In that case the Harvard professor’s video lectures were to be viewed by San Jose State philosophy students as homework, then discussed in class. While the San Jose State faculty protested, due in part to its lack of input in the decision, I argue that such a “flipped classroom” approach may one day offer a potential future for the teaching of Japanese popular culture online. Two MOOCs related to Japanese popular culture already exist, and it seems inevitable that other scholars will eventually assemble the creative energies, financial resources, time, and technological know-how to create more. Depending on who builds these MOOCs, concerns may linger about the concentration of the construction and dissemination of knowledge in a handful of top-tier institutions. However, hopefully there will eventually be a range of content-rich MOOCs that bring the study of Japanese popular culture to a wide global audience, and that through the flipped classroom approach even instructors without the resources to develop their own MOOC can take advantage of the work of others. In this final section I introduce the idea of the flipped classroom and some ways in which one might take advantage of MOOCs.

The flipped classroom is defined by the displacement of the traditional lecture to a time and space outside regular class time, thereby freeing class time for discussion, problem solving, group work, peer instruction, and so on.\(^{58}\) The idea of using class time for something other than lectures is not new. In some courses in the humanities and arts the bulk of class time has always been devoted to the discussion of novels, films, artwork, and other works that were read or viewed beforehand. However, for disciplines
that rely heavily on the lecture, and particularly those whose classes have been scaled up over the years to fill larger lecture theaters, the idea of students gathering in a lecture theater to do something besides listen to a lecture remains relatively new. Professor Shigeru Miyagawa of MIT used the online lectures from his course Visualizing Japan (1850s–1930s): Westernization, Protest, Modernity to flip his classroom, using class time to ask questions of the students and reinforce what they had learned beforehand. The experience was summarized this way.

In the classroom, the MOOC material became a new form of textbook. The students found the video lectures easy to follow. They could watch each bite-sized two- to seven-minute video in its entirety and retain the information. The finger exercises following the video further reinforced their learning. Instead of teaching the information covered in the assignment, Miyagawa was able to delve deeper into the subject matter.59

Miyagawa believes that the real promise of MOOCs is in this flipped classroom format, causing him to declare, “I don’t think I can ever go back to a pure lecture-style teaching.”60

Once a library of MOOCs related to Japanese popular culture is available online, students around the world will be able to learn about their passions from a scholarly perspective, whether they be anime, film, manga, fashion, drama, or J-pop. Moreover, instructors based anywhere will be able to curate and select high-quality, engaging lectures on popular culture topics from around the world. The use of these lectures before class could replace time typically spent in content delivery, such as historicizing a particular television drama, with more time for classroom discussion or other learning activities. Students could be assigned lectures from a series of experts, or they could be charged with finding and reviewing lectures on topics of their choice from within the available MOOCs. Instead of just using the Internet to follow their interests and build fan communities, they could participate in learning communities. Moreover, instructors would have the intellectual freedom to challenge the lectures they assign as required viewing. The MOOC lecture videos could be treated not as the authoritative voice on a particular aspect of Japanese popular culture but as just another perspective to be analyzed critically.

Of course, this future will require some significant changes. First, more instructors will have to take the plunge and develop MOOCs taught about or with Japanese popular culture. These individuals will need strong support networks in their institutions and MOOC providers willing to
support their content-heavy endeavors. Second, more MOOCs will need to remain permanently accessible. Currently, most MOOCs run for six to ten weeks, with a definite start and stop date. This is deemed necessary to maintain the flow of a course, as well as to facilitate the assessments that require deadlines, participation in online forums, and more. However, for instructors to take full advantage of the flipped classroom potential of MOOCs, they will need access to the lecture videos year-round. At present, few MOOCs provide this option, including the two Visualizing Japan courses at edX mentioned here. Although instructors and students cannot take advantage of any of the interactive learning tools associated with the full course, they can freely view all the videos. It is hoped that more MOOCs will follow this pattern in the future, enabling others to utilize these tools and further broadening the audience for learning about Japanese popular culture.

Conclusion

It is both exhilarating and daunting to think about how MOOCs may affect the future of Japanese studies and higher education as a whole. Because of their relative newness, it may be years before we understand either the full repercussions of creating MOOCs or their effectiveness in learning and instruction. There are still many issues that need to be resolved about MOOCs. For instance, how will they affect graduate-training, hiring, salary, and promotion decisions? Might MOOCs raise the bar on teaching in higher education, not only by encouraging more carefully planned courses and sound pedagogical choices by MOOC instructors but also by providing faculty members around the world an opportunity to keep abreast of pedagogical innovations and cutting-edge content delivered by peers at other institutions? Might scholarly journals that already feature book reviews add MOOC reviews? Although speculative, these are all questions that the emergence of MOOCs suggest.

The open and online nature of MOOCs and the extremely cautious application of fair use by institutions and providers threaten to limit the global, democratizing impact envisioned by MOOC advocates and create two classes of institutions. If we fail to properly address fair use and copyright in MOOCs, those who teach about or with Japanese popular culture may find themselves on either side of a chasm. On one side will be those with the institutional support to develop media-rich courses that offer the greatest level of academic freedom and attract the largest number
of students. On the other side will be those marginalized by MOOCs, unable to contribute to student learning with the same resources and on the same scale.

The flipped classroom provides one potential bridge across this gulf, enabling instructors anywhere not only to take advantage of the hard work of others but also to build widespread learning communities that could reduce the alienation often associated with teaching Japanese popular culture. Moreover, as was stated in the introduction, many new faculty members feel an acute lack of pedagogical training when they create new courses and lectures on popular culture. With a library of excellent MOOCs available in the future, maybe future instructors will no longer feel such anxiety and tap into the hard work of others. The future of teaching Japanese popular culture may depend on it.
Notes

I would like to thank all the faculty members quoted in this chapter for their willingness to share their experiences. I also thank Deborah Shamoon for her feedback at several critical stages of the work’s development. Portions of this chapter previously appeared as a journal article, “Teaching Japanese Popular Culture in the MOOC World,” *electronic journal of contemporary japanese studies* 13 no. 2 (2013). I thank the editor for permission to reproduce those sections here.


12 Coursera, “Homepage,” https://www.coursera.org/. This represents significant growth since June 10, 2013, when Coursera had more than 3.7 million students, 384 courses, and 81 partner institutions.
13 See, for instance, Robert Zemsky, “With a MOOC MOOC Here and a MOOC MOOC There, Here a MOOC, There a MOOC, Everywhere a MOOC MOOC,” Journal of General Education: A Curricular Commons of the Humanities and Sciences, 63, no. 4 (2014): 237–43. Zemsky calls 2012 the high-water mark for MOOCs and cites a number of negative appraisals since, particularly due to incredibly low completion rates of courses.
15 A colleague at the National University of Singapore’s Department of Philosophy recently put it this way. His MOOC, titled Reason and Persuasion: Thinking through Three Dialogues by Plato, enrolled more students in its first iteration (ten thousand plus) than he could reach in three decades of typical classes. See the Coursera website, https://www.coursera.org/course/reasonandpersuasion.


22 Philosophy Department, San Jose University, “Open Letter.”


25 Philosophy Department, San Jose State University, “Open Letter.”


27 edX, Visualizing Postwar Tokyo, https://www.edx.org/course/visualizing-postwar-tokyo-part-1-utokyox-utokyo001x#.VL3AUy7sSqM.


29 See chapter 10, by Philip Seaton, in this volume.

30 edX, Visualizing Postwar Tokyo.


34 Coursera, personal communication, May 9, 2013.


37 Coursera, personal communication, May 9, 2013.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

40 Ib Bondebjerg, personal communication, June 11, 2013.

41 Ibid.

42 See NipponTV, http://www.ntv.co.jp/haken/.


46 See McLelland, “Ethical and Legal Issues.”


48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.


51 William Kuskin, personal communication, June 18, 2013.

52 William Kuskin, personal communication, January 22, 2015.

53 Ibid.

54 Gennifer Weisenfeld, personal communication, January 21, 2015.

55 Shigeru Miyagawa, personal communication, January 21, 2015.

56 A colleague at the National University of Singapore who teaches Japanese language told me of her efforts to secure permission to use a bottled green tea advertisement in an academic conference paper. She contacted the company and waited months before finally receiving permission. In the meantime, the conference was already over, and she had not used the clip.

57 See chapter 1, by Sally McLaren and Alwyn Spies, in this volume.

58 Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams, *Flip Your Classroom: Reach Every Student in Every Class Every Day* (Washington, DC: International Society for


60 Ibid.
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Interest in Japanese popular culture is high among students at all levels, driving enrollment in Japanese Studies programs. However, there has been little reflection on the pedagogy of teaching Japanese popular culture. Now is the time for critical reflection on teaching practices related to teaching about and with Japanese popular culture. This volume encompasses theoretical engagement with pedagogy of popular culture as well as practical considerations of curriculum design, lesson planning, assessment, and student outcomes. While the main focus is undergraduate teaching, there is also discussion of K-12 teaching, with authors discussing their experiences teaching Japanese popular culture not only in North America, but also in Australia, Germany, Singapore, and Japan, both in Japanese-language and English-language institutions.

“This is an incredibly valuable book. It might well be retitled ‘Taking Japanese Popular Culture Seriously.’ The book demonstrates how much study of Japanese popular culture has matured over the last two decades, and also shows off Japanese popular culture in all its richness and variety. Accessibly written but theoretically engaged, the book offers a fascinating variety of approaches to a fascinating variety of subjects. It will be invaluable both to those of us who work on popular culture and in Japanese Studies.”

— Susan J. Napier. Professor of Japanese Studies, Tufts University

“As Japanese popular culture has captured the imagination of youth around the world, educators have struggled to integrate diverse and rapidly evolving forms like manga, anime, J-pop, and video games into their classrooms. This pioneering collection on the pedagogy of Japanese pop offers practical advice as well as theoretical reflections on the opportunities and challenges of teaching with (and about) Japan’s globalized media products. Instructors at all levels (from K-12 through university) and in all disciplines (including language teachers) will find this volume timely, stimulating, and thoroughly useful.”

— William M. Tsutsui, President, Hendrix College, AR

“Two decades since ‘cool Japan’ began to attract widespread interest in the university classroom, resources on the teaching of Japan’s popular culture remain scarce. This outstanding collection does much to fill this gap - offering insightful, hands-on approaches to help students engage critically with pop culture materials. Featuring chapters on curriculum design, language pedagogy, and the use of popular music, television and fashion as well as manga and anime, the editors have brought together an essential volume that needs to be read by all those engaged with Japanese culture in the classroom.”

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Edited by Deborah Shamoon and Chris McMorran

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