**IDH 2930 (Un)Common Reads: Phoenix Syllabus**

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Office Hours: MWF 1:00pm-2:00pm or by appointment

**Course Description**

This seminar studies Tezuka Osamu’s *Phoenix* (*Hi no tori*), which he described as his “life’s work.” In eleven volumes published sporadically from 1967-1988, *Phoenix* moves from Japan’s distant past to its distant future and back again, seeming to eventually converge on the present. With one hand, *Phoenix* tackles the history of Japan that had legitimated state power during the war years of Tezuka’s childhood. With the other, the text examines the deep future and questions whether humans can ever stop repeating the patterns of violence and oppression that characterized the twentieth century. Students will not only engage in a deep reading of *Phoenix,* but also learn about issues of Japanese history and ideology the text is caught up in.

**Required Textbooks**

The eleven volumes of *Phoenix* are available on reserve at Library West. They are not available for purchase in the bookstore because the publisher rarely reprints physical books. However, all the volumes are available as ebooks, which you may want to purchase for more convenient reading (available from Amazon, Google Books, and other sites).

Other readings will be posted on Canvas (e-Learning).

**Class Policies**

**Absences**

You are allowed one unexcused absences without question. After that, each additional unexcused absence will result in a 5% drop in your final grade. An unexcused absence will, of course, result in a zero for your class participation grade for that day.

**Late Work**

The essay is due at the assigned time and date. Late essays will be marked down 10% for every 24 hours late (i.e., if an essay is due at 10:59 P.M. on Monday, submissions between 11:00 P.M. Monday and 10:59 P.M. Tuesday will be marked down 10%, submissions between 11:00 P.M. Tuesday and 10:59 P.M. Wednesday will be marked down 20%, and so on).

**Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty, either in the form of cheating or plagiarism, will not be tolerated. Any proven instances may result in an automatic grade of "E" for the entire course and WILL result in referral to the Dean of Students Office.

Examine the UF honor code at <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/students/student-conduct-code/>: particularly the following:

On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied:

"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

VIOLATIONS OF THE STUDENT HONOR CODE.

 (a) Plagiarism. A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

1. Quoting oral or written materials including but not limited to those found on the internet, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.

2. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.

To avoid common issues remember: when in doubt, cite.

* Words taken verbatim from another source, whether a whole paragraph, a sentence, or part of a sentence, must be placed in quotes and cited. Changing a few words here and there does not make it your original work.
* If you take an idea from another source, you should acknowledge your borrowing in the text of the essay and provide a citation.

**Accommodations**

Students who need accommodations in class or on exams are warmly encouraged to contact the Dean of Students Office. See <https://drc.dso.ufl.edu/> for more info. You are welcome to visit me during office hours to discuss your needs, but note that I need authorization from the DSO to make accommodations.

**Technology Policy**

This class is “tech friendly,” but devices are expected to be used to read PDFs, take notes, or look up information. Non-class-related activities, especially those that distract your classmates, like texting, checking social media, or playing games will result in a zero for your class participation grade that day.

**Grading**

Grades will be calculated with the following weights. See below for descriptions:

Class participation - 25%

Weekly blog posts and discussions - 25%

6-page final paper - 50%

**Assignments**

**Class Participation**

In this type of class it is vital that you come to class prepared and participate in class discussions. To receive a full class participation grade you should come to class prepared to fully participate. That means engaging the assigned texts with active reading, taking notes or highlighting as necessary. If it is evident you have not done the reading or are not prepared to participate fully in the class you will receive a grade of zero for the day. (Hint: answering a question with “I dunno” or “I don’t remember reading that” tells me you are not prepared!) Remember, an unexcused absence automatically results in a zero for your participation grade for that day. See the Absence Policy above.

**Blog Project**

In this class you will create and maintain a Tumblr blog. The goal of the blog project is to give you a personal space to write informally about the class readings. This is like the reflection papers many classes use, except that you have ownership of your own writings collected on your blog, so you have a kind of journal of your thoughts as you go through the course. You can also see other students’ posts and comment on them, and they can see and comment on yours.

You should publish a blog post every day *before* class, by midnight the night before, about that day’s reading or viewing. Each post should be roughly three paragraphs long, and contain at least one relevant image.

Other than that, you are free to write what you want, as long as it deals with the day’s reading. This isn’t formal writing, so you don’t need to have a thesis or avoid first person or anything like that. Write in your own style about what you thought was interesting about the reading/viewing: what stood out to you, what you had questions about, random thoughts you had, whatever. The only stipulation is that it should be a *thoughtful* reflection on the day’s assignment, not just a reaction. In other words, it’s fine to write about your reaction to the text (you liked or disliked it, it made you happy or sad), but don’t stop there: think about *why* you reacted that way. What feature of the text made you feel that way, and why?

This assignment is graded on completion. As long as you post something of a reasonable length that engages with the text thoughtfully somehow, and post it on time, you get 100%.

You must also post at least two thoughtful comments on classmates’ blog posts each day *before* class (at least one hour before) to get full credit. Post comments by reblogging your classmates’ posts and adding your own comment.

Note that this is your own blog that belongs to you: you can keep using it after this class, and you can certainly post other things to it besides class stuff. Just make sure your classmates can find the class posts and that the material is appropriate for class!

See my blog, [prof-csmith.tumblr.com](https://prof-csmith.tumblr.com) , for instructions on getting started.

**6-page final paper**

You will write a six-page final essay, due on the day indicated on the schedule. This is a persuasive essay that presents a thesis about *Phoenix* and defends it by citing evidence in the form of quotations from the text. At least two scholarly secondary sources are required. Scholarly sources are books from academic presses or articles from academic journals. Encyclopedias, newspapers, magazines, personal websites, and organizational websites are not scholarly sources. Neither are unpublished theses or papers, although exceptions are possible. You should cite other scholars *making an argument that supports your argument*, not random or well-known facts. See the separate “Essay Tips” handout.

Use Chicago citation format.

There are no assigned topics. You should develop your own thesis about the text. You can write about one particular volume, or tackle the whole series. Keep in mind, however, that the main grading criteria are a) is your thesis strong? and b) do you successfully persuade your reader of your thesis? You must prove a strong thesis that *analyzes* the text and uncovers something new about it.