

## **JS 2231 Japan in Southeast Asia**

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### **Description**

This module will provide an overview of the history and the connection of Japan with Southeast Asia from prewar to today with various non-fiction and fictional visual materials. We will look closely at examples drawn from a pool of selected newsreel, political cartoons, comics, animated film and live-action film from Japanese as well as those produced in the region with different agendas, whether it was meant for promotion of certain ideas, dissemination of news or mass entertainment.

Considering this region has been enthusiastically consuming Japanese cultural produces for decades, in the second half of the module, we will mainly focus on exploring the flow, influence and significance of Japanese visual culture in Southeast Asia. This includes a careful reading of works by contemporary comic artists and animators from Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia that utilize manga-based aspects. These works will be considered in the context of their modes of origination within their respective countries, and the ways in which Japanese forms have been adapted to relate to the interests and social settings of local audiences.

The purpose here is to expose you to a wider spectrum of “Japanese influenced” media products made in the region, recognize its complexity and foster analytical and critical viewpoint towards concepts and ideas developed in the West concerning these visual cultures. The question of whether the spread of media products were always initiated from the Japan side or were sometimes initiated by group outsiders of Japan will also be explored.

Some example of works we are going to look at:

- Momotarō no umiwashi (Momotarō Sea Eagles, 1942)
- Momotarō umishinpei (Momotarō Sea Warriors, 1945)
- The Tiger of Malaya (1943)
- Sandakan No.8 (1974)
- Comics publishes by Gempak Starz (Malaysia), Komik M (Syariah compliant, Malaysia), Curhat Anak Bangsa (Indonesia), EQ Plus (Thailand)
- Alternative independent comics labels from Southeast Asia

### **Field trip**

There will be a three nights four days excursion to Penang, Malaysia. We are going to participate in Penang Bon Odori (one of the biggest Japanese related events in Penang), visiting a few old cinema theatres located in George Town where its inner part is listed as UNESCO World Heritage Site, Cintra Street where the Karayuki-san were active in the late 19th century until the prewar, Japanese cemetery, walking tours and many others exciting events, including attending talks by local comics artists and art historian.