University of Gdańsk

Subject card

Subject name and code	Communication on the Internet: Memes and Participatory Culture, PG_00205719		
Field of study	Japanese Studies		
Date of commencement of studies	October 2026	Academic year of realisation of subject	2026/2027
Education level	Bachelor's studies	Subject group	Obligatory subject group in the field of study Optional subject group
Mode of study	full-time studies	Mode of delivery	at the university
Year of study	1	Language of instruction	Polish
Semester of study	2	ECTS credits	2.0
Learning profile	academic	Assessment form	credit
Conducting unit			
Name and surname of lecturer (lecturers)	Subject supervisor	dr Aleksandra Klimkiewicz	
	Teachers		

Lesson types	Lesson type	Lecture	Tutorial	Laboratory	Project	Seminar	SUM
	Number of study hours	30.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30
	E-learning hours included: 0.0						

Learning activity and number of study hours	Learning activity	Participation in didactic classes included in study plan	Participation in consultation hours	Self-study	SUM
	Number of study hours	30	2.0	18.0	50

Subject objectives	The course aims to familiarize students with the mechanisms of contemporary online communication understood as a form of participatory culture (Web 2.0), in which content is not merely transmitted but is continuously created, transformed, remixed, and reinterpreted by users. Particular emphasis is placed on: the analysis of internet memes as units of cultural communication; understanding the concept of folklore in both its traditional sense and its transformation into digital (online) folklore; identifying the mechanisms underlying the creation, circulation, and dissemination of viral content, including memes, copypastas, and hashtags; examining phenomena such as absurd memes, non-linear humor, and post-ironic forms of communication.

Learning outcomes

Course outcome	Subject outcome	Method of verification
[JAPL3_K01] Student is aware of the scope of his professional knowledge and skills and understands the need for further continuous development in professional skills, as well as personal and social competence.	The student understands the scope of their knowledge and skills in the field of online communication analysis and digital culture, and identifies the need for their continuous development and updating in the context of the dynamic transformations of contemporary forms of online communication.	[SK1] oral statement/conversation/ discussion
[JAPL3_U10] Student can argue substantively using the views of other authors and to formulate conclusions.	The student is able to formulate and justify arguments concerning phenomena of online communication, as well as draw conclusions regarding the functioning of memes, digital folklore, and other forms of online communication.	[SU4] test/exam - oral or written
[JAPL3_U19] Student can work in a group, taking on different roles in it.	Student is able to work collaboratively in a group within the analysis of online communication phenomena, taking on different roles in teamwork focused on the interpretation and discussion of digital culture materials (e.g. memes, online narratives, and forms of digital folklore).	[SU1] oral statement/conversation/ discussion
[JAPL3_W01] Student is familiar with the terminology of the humanities such as cultural and religious studies, linguistics and literary studies, as well as history, cultural anthropology, philosophy and art sciences relevant to the Japanese studies major.	Knows and understands the basic terminology in the field of communication studies and digital culture, including concepts related to online communication, digital folklore, memes, hashtags, and selected linguistic and cultural phenomena of contemporary online communication.	[SW3] text preparation/written work

Subject contents

1. Communication and online participation: interpersonal communication in digital environments, virtual spaces of communication, transformations of communication models from Web 1.0 to Web 5.0, participatory culture and Text 2.0.
2. Carnivalesque communication in digital culture: Bakhtin’s concept of carnival, laughter as a social practice, inversion of hierarchies, grotesque, parody, and transgression of norms in online communication.
3. Folklore and internet folklore: classical and contemporary approaches to folklore, digital folklore, memes as units of internet folklore, hashtags and collective narrative formations in online spaces.
4. Internet memes and their typologies: simple, complex, and absurd memes; Polish and global meme cultures; image macros, rage faces, demotivators, and copypastas.
5. Language and emotions in online communication: transformations of internet language, emotional communication, aggression and vulgarization in online environments, emoticons, emojis, and kaomoji.
6. Intertextuality and cyberculture: cultural remix, intertextuality and intervisuality, circulation of images and symbols online, functions of hashtags.
7. Memes as tools of social discourse: stereotypes, representations of social groups, political, media, and religious discourse in internet culture.
8. Internet humor: theories of humor and comedy, absurd and post-ironic humor, “dad jokes” and copypastas, online communities of laughter, and mechanisms of virality in humorous content.

Prerequisites and co-requisites

Assessment methods and criteria

Subject passing criteria	Passing threshold	Percentage of the final grade
Knowledge Test	51.0%	100.0%

Recommended reading	Basic literature	1. Bachtin M., Twórczość Franciszka Rabelais'go a kultura ludowa średniowiecza i renesansu, przeł. A. i A. Goreniowie, Wydaw. Literackie, Kraków 1995. 2. Bergson H., Śmiech. Esej o komizmie. Tł. S. Cichowicz, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 1977. 3. Brodie R., Wirus umysłu: Nowa nauka o memach, przeł. P. Turski, Te Ta Publishing, Łódź 1997, s. 41. 4. Burkacka I., Intertekstualnosc współczesnej komunikacji. Memy a teksty kultury, „Poznańskie Spotkania Językoznawcze", 2016, nr, 32, s. 75–91. 5. Camus A., Mit Syzyfa, przeł. J. Guze, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1999, s. 21-29. 6. Dawkins R., Samolubny gen, przeł. Marek Skoneczny, Warszawa 2006. 7. Gajewski K., Mem internetowy jako gatunek wypowiedzi, [w:] Z teorii i praktyki komunikacji społecznej. Stan i rozwój badań w Polsce, Libron, Kraków 2018. 8. Godlewska E., Emocje w sieci. Ekspresywność wybranych memów internetowych. [w:] Odkrywanie słowa – historia i współczesność. Sokólska U., (Ed.). Białystok 2015. 9. Shifman L., Memes in Digital Culture, The MIT Press, Cambrige, Massachusetts, London 2014.
	Supplementary literature	1. Juza M., Memy internetowe – tworzenie, rozpowszechnianie, znaczenie społeczne. „Studia Medioznawcze" 2013, nr 4, s. 44–60. 2. Piskorz K., Internetowe memy – hieroglify XXI wieku, [w:] Współczesne media. Język mediów. Hofman I., Kepa-Figura D., (Ed.). Wydawnictwo UMCS, Lublin, 2013. 3. Śliz A., Demotywator — emblemat kultury uczestnictwa? (wokół problemów definicyjnych memów oraz memów internetowych), „Zagadnienia Rodzajów Literackich", LVII z.1, 2014, s. 152–165.
	eResources addresses	
Example issues/ example questions/ tasks being completed		
Work placement	Not applicable	

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