



Yale-New Haven  
Teachers Institute®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
2005 Volume I: Stories around the World in Film and Literature

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## Japanese Ghosts, Demons, and Haunted Spaces

Guide for Curriculum Unit 05.01.09  
by Matthew P. Bachand

Japan is cool. Students love its animated cartoons, are intrigued by its stark differences from American culture, are curious about its history, zealously seek Japanese electronics, and have even fallen in love with their card games (Yu-Gi-Oh). However, students know very little else about this island country that has been, at different times, the victim of our gunboat diplomacy, our most enthusiastic fan, our enemy, our outpost, number two trading partner, our ally, and our competitor. Now, Japanese popular culture has more entrée with American audiences than at any time in its history. In fact, this author believes that Japan may be the one nation with which American youth culture has a pop culture trade deficit: Japan seems to have little need for our television and children's literature, while we are voraciously consuming theirs. All of these elements provide a "teachable moment" for prospective teachers of world literature.

This unit explores three Japanese films and six texts that incorporate the supernatural. Students will be guided through an exploration of Japanese cultural beliefs about the supernatural and the ways in which Japanese authors and filmmakers convey the supernatural world to their audience, resulting in a critical analysis of the artists' craft.

(Recommended English and Social Studies, grade 10.)

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