In present-day America, whole channels show nothing but anime, translations of Japanese manga crowd shelves in bookstores, sushi sells even in chain supermarkets, and a giant inflated Hello Kitty sails over Manhattan every year in the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade. Where did all this come from? In this course, we will undertake a long overview of Japanese “civilization,” in part to understand something of the context that produced those products of international renown. We will also examine elements of Japanese history and culture that are less familiar outside of Japan. This introductory course is intended for anyone with a broad curiosity about things Japanese. Knowledge of the Japanese language, familiarity with Japanese media (manga, anime, television serials, film, video games, etc.), or experience with daily life in Japan will be helpful, but is not required.