Quiz 8: Due November 8 in class.

To prepare for Project 3 on ‘cultures of circulation,’ we would like you to write a short proposal for your project. For certain projects (such as research on the Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales or on a specific scanlation group), only one person or group can do it, and so we would like you to come up with two possible projects but rank them in order of preference so we know which one you would prefer to do. Chances are very good that you will get your first choice. Please give us no less than a paragraph but no more than a page for each project, in accordance with the guidelines below.

First, the project must be related to manga, and we would prefer one-person or two-person projects, but if you can justify it to us, three-person projects are okay. If you are doing a group project, make sure to give us the name(s) of your partner(s).

Second, here are some basic decisions you will need to make in formulating your project.

1. Pick a language or languages — Chinese, Japanese, French, English, etc. If you want to work on something in Chinese or Japanese or French and don’t have any good ideas, you can consult with Fu Meng about projects related to China, with Ariane Mignault about French-language projects in Montreal, and with Tom Lamarre about Japan projects.
2. Are you going to do interviews or be an observer? Note: we encourage you to do interviews but only if you really feel they are important and worthwhile taking someone’s time. And a great deal can be done as observer.
3. Do you want to do something on the Internet or in Montreal?
4. If you’re interested in doing a convention or festival or cosplay, but there are none currently happening, you can do a short research paper on that activity instead of fieldwork. But let us know.
5. Do you want to submit your work as a paper (about 5 pages), as a class presentation (15-20 minutes), or in manga form (about 5 pages)? The last two days of class — November 29 and December 1 — are reserved for presentations. As for a manga project, since this is very labor-intensive, we don’t expect more than five pages, but if you can’t fit all your ideas into five pages, please attach additional pages of written explanation.

Third, here are some possible sites for fieldwork or research, but we are open to other possibilities not listed here. In class, we will introduce more specific questions and guidelines for the project. At this stage, keep in mind that the general idea is to consider how value is created through circulation, which means that you will be looking at how manga are presented, displayed, or exhibited; what kind of manga; what kind of economy and community; and by whom and for whom — or to be more precise, what is the ‘implied seller’ and the ‘implied buyer’?

Scanlation: because this course would have been impossible without the work of scanlators, we would like to see many of you work on this topic. In addition to the big aggregate scanlation sites used in class (Manga Fox, One Manga, etc.), there are a large number of sites more specialized in particular genres or forms of manga. The Baka Updates Manga site provides a long list of scanlators: http://www.mangaupdates.com/groups.html

Dôjin Groups: we also really like this topic, since so much of the class has been about so-called amateur manga. There are both French and English dôjin groups in Montreal (such as Kyowa Québec <http://kyowaquebec.com> and musebasement <<http://www.musebasement.com/about.php>> — and you can locate others on line), but you can also explore on-line dôjin production in Chinese, Japanese, Korean, French, English, German, and any number of other languages.

Manga review or forum: There are many websites offering reviews of manga, and there are many on-line forums and discussion groups. You can study, for instance, the general rules of engagement, etc. But please do not do a study of someone’s blog! There is also the Montreal-based Protoculture Addicts — <http://www.protoculture.ca/Proto/index.htm> — which spawned the website <http://www.animenewsnetwork.com/> — which also includes manga information and reviews. You can find many other magazines, both print and digital, on line.

Bookstores: You could look at a bookstore or bookstores in Montreal, either large bookstores (Indigo, Chapters, Renaud-Bray, Archambault, etc.) or smaller stores specialized in manga (Manga Thé — http://www.manga-the.com/), with an eye to presentation and layout and implied sellers and buyers. You could also explore on-line manga stores, or compare different kinds of stores.

Libraries: In addition to the Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales in Montreal, there are a number of town and neighbourhood libraries of various sizes such as Westmount Library, Mile End Library, Outremont Library, etc. You could examine how money is allocated for manga in comparison to other kinds of books, what the circulation figures are, and how patrons interact with manga in the library itself.

Activities: There is a broad range of manga-related activities, from conventions or ‘cons’ such as Montreal’s Otakuthon, to local maid cafés and cosplay events. One source of information is Otaku Lounge <http://www.otakulounge.com/> which is also a bookstore and manga reading site. Because there are not so many of these activities happening in November in Montreal, we are open to more general research papers on manga cons, manga tourism and festivals, maid or butler cafés, cosplay, etc.; or even on manga-related areas such as Akihabara, Otome Road, etc.