Course instructor

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Course description

This course is designed for students who have never previously studied Japanese. The course will introduce the overall structure of Japanese, basic vocabulary, the two syllabaries of the phonetic system, and some characters (Kanji). The course will also introduce the notion of "cultural appropriateness for expressions," and will provide practice and evaluations for all four necessary skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Participation in two group meetings (Mondays and Wednesdays) and two small group practice sessions (Tuesdays and Thursdays) per week are required throughout the semester.

As mentioned above, this course is designed to teach students who have no background in Japanese. If you have studied Japanese before coming to this course, please talk to your professor.

Required books

1. *The Grammar Textbook*;
2. *Workbook 1*;
3. *The Writing Practice Book (ebook)*

Students can purchase *The Grammar Textbook* and *Workbook 1* at Amherst Books in town. The website to purchase *The Writing Practice Book (ebook)* will be announced in the course site.

Course objectives

At Amherst, it takes three semesters for most students to master the following:
1. most of the essential structures of Japanese, including complex structures;
2. several hundred Kanji for writing and an additional few hundred for reading;
3. being able to engage in different kinds of conversations (some practical and some abstract) comfortably in Japanese;
4. being able to read different kinds of materials independently with the aid of dictionaries and instructors;
5. being able to write cohesive paragraphs using good structures in a culturally appropriate manner.
Course organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Activity Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>The class meets in Webster 101. New material will be introduced. <strong>Before coming to this class, students are expected to thoroughly read the material to be covered in class. We do not expect the students to have learned the new vocabulary for this class.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Small group practice sessions will be held in Webster 101. The material introduced on Monday will be practiced. <strong>Before coming to this class, students are expected to have reviewed the Monday material and have learned the new vocabulary.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>The class meets in Webster 101. New material will be introduced. <strong>Before coming to this class, students are expected to thoroughly read the material to be covered in class. We do not expect the students to have learned the new vocabulary for this class.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Small group practice sessions will be held in Webster 101. The material introduced on Wednesday will be practiced. <strong>Before coming to this class, students are expected to have reviewed the Wednesday material and have learned the new vocabulary.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Either (1) a written quiz or (2) a homework assignment will be scheduled.</td>
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1. Division of large classes and small practice sessions:

   The Japanese courses numbered 01 through 06 (sometimes even in Japanese 11-12) have large classes and small practice sessions. There is a good reason for us to have the two different classes. In the large classes, the students learn new material, which they learn how to use in the small practice sessions.

   In Japanese 01 and 02, the use of some English in the large classes has proved to be more efficient than trying to do everything in Japanese because certain new concepts must be clarified, and some grammar or other questions must be answered efficiently. The use of English even in large classes, however, will be reduced as the class advances each semester.

   **In practice sessions, however, there is really no reason for the students and the teacher to be using English, even in Japanese 01 and 02, because this is where the students should be immersed in the language, and, in fact, this is the only place where they can be immersed.**

2. What to bring to the class:

   Please know the function of each book of this textbook series:

   **Grammar Textbook:**
   Students must read the assigned pages in this grammar textbook before coming to class. This book should also be used to review any grammatical points. There is no need for you to bring this book to class. In fact, you are not allowed to use this book or the notes you make during class.

   **Workbook:**
   This workbook will guide you through learning the material introduced in the Grammar textbook. **You must bring this workbook to every class** because each class will be carried out with this book.
Writing Practice Book:
This book should be used to practice writing in the Japanese scripts. There is no need to bring this book to class, unless otherwise specified in the daily schedule.

3. Practice session time (Tuesday and Thursday):
Please sign up for one of the following sessions for the first week or so. We will then assign a permanent session to everyone. Once we make the permanent schedule for the practice sessions, all students must stay in the same session.

(1) 9:10 – 9:50  (2) 10:00 – 10:40  (3) 10:50 – 11:30  (4) 11:40 – 12:20
(5) 3:00 – 3:40  (6) 3:50 – 4:30

4. Things to remember in practice sessions:
(1) The students are required to study the material BEFORE coming to each practice session so that the practice sessions will move smoothly and meaningfully.
(2) Come to every practice session. This is probably the most important way to participate in class and learn.
(3) No English is allowed as soon as you enter your practice session. Japanese should be used among the students in the room as well as with the teacher. Imagine that you are among people who speak no English in Japan. You have to speak Japanese to communicate. Your teacher or an English-speaking person will not be able to accompany you everywhere you go in Japan.
(4) Please avoid any grammar questions. If you must ask, wait until the session is over. When you have other questions (such as a meaning of a certain word), ask in Japanese.
(5) Do not be afraid to make mistakes. We will not take any points off for mistakes in the practice sessions. It is natural to make more mistakes when you speak more.
(6) Do not take it personally when corrected. Being corrected is one of the best ways to learn to speak. In fact, you must get used to being corrected all the time.

Daily schedules
The daily schedules will be posted to the CMS course site. You will find class contents, the preparation necessary for each class, and information about quizzes and assignments in the daily schedules.

Grade distribution

| Class attendance and participation (all four days) | 5% |
| Practice session performance | 10% |
| Homework assignments (quantity/quality) | 10% |
| 4 Written quizzes | 40% (10% each) |
| 2 Oral quizzes (mid-term and final) | 10% (5% each) |
| Final written examination | 15% |
### Kanji/katakana quizzes

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<tr>
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<th>5%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effort</td>
<td>5%</td>
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#### Policies

Being successful in a Japanese language class requires meeting deadlines for frequent assignments and preparing thoroughly for quizzes and classes. We understand, however, that keeping up with frequent requirements for a Japanese class may be difficult at times. We have therefore made the following policies on homework assignments and quizzes to have a little more flexibility. Policies on attendance and performance are also stated below.

1. **Homework assignments**

Each homework assignment will be graded (√+, √, or √-). For your final cumulative grade, your lowest grade on any assignment will be dropped.

**Corrections:**

When corrections are required, correct your mistakes on your own as much as you can and resubmit your work on the following Tuesday by 3 pm. Make sure to come to ask questions when you cannot make the corrections yourself. Second and complete submissions must be made by Thursday at 3 pm. Some points may be added to the original grade, and the number of points depends on the quality of the corrections. An assignment with corrections unfinished or not made by the deadline will be considered incomplete work.

**Late option:**

You are allowed to submit one homework assignment late per semester without any penalty. The late assignment must be completed by Monday of the following week or the time you and your instructor have agreed upon. Speak with your instructor prior to the original due date, when you use this option.

2. **Four written quizzes**

No make-up quizzes will be given under any circumstances.

**Corrections:**

When corrections are required, correct your mistakes on your own as much as you can and resubmit your work on the following Tuesday by 3 pm. Make sure to come to ask questions when you cannot make the corrections yourself. Second and complete submission must be made by Thursday at 3 pm. Some points may be added to the original grade, and the number of points depends on the quality of the corrections.

**Late option:**

You are allowed to take one written quiz late per semester without any penalty. The late quiz must be completed by Monday of the following week or the time you and your instructor have agreed upon. Speak with your instructor prior to the original quiz date, when you use this option.

3. **Two oral quizzes (mid-term and final)**

No make-up quizzes will be given under any circumstances.
No delays are allowed for the two oral quizzes.

4. Final written examination

No make-up examinations will be given under any circumstances.

No delays are allowed for the written final examination.

The final examination will be a self-scheduled examination, in which the students choose one of the ten specified exam periods during the final examination period, 12/18 (F) - 12/22 (T). The time and place for the self-scheduled examination will be designated by the College and announced on the Registrar's website later in the semester. It is the student's responsibility to check this information.

Registrar’s site:
https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/registrar/finalexams/selfscheduledexams

**IMPORTANT: For five-college interchange students**

Unfortunately, the academic calendar of the five-colleges is not uniform. It is our expectation, however, that all students who take Japanese at Amherst will follow the Amherst calendar, including the final examination schedule as well as the daily schedule. To be fair to other students, we will NOT be able to make special arrangements for final examinations for the five-college students.

5. Kanji/katakana quizzes

No make-up quizzes will be given under any circumstances.

For your final cumulative grade, your lowest grade on any kanji/katakana quiz will be dropped.

**Late option:**
You are allowed to take one kanji/katakana quiz late per semester without any penalty. The late quiz must be completed within a week from the original quiz date or the time you and your instructor have agreed upon. Speak with your instructor prior to the original quiz date, when you use this option.

6. Class attendance and participation

**When you need to miss a class, let your instructor know beforehand.** Your absence not only affects you but everyone in your class. We work hard to make each class as efficient and effective as possible and we may need to reorganize groups if someone will be absent. It is not possible to give a make-up class or make-up practice session to a student who was absent. It is your responsibility to check the daily schedule and to know what you have missed. Please do not ask your instructor if you have missed anything important when you were absent because the answer is always YES. If you have specific questions, we would be happy to meet with you. See also “Practice Session Performance” below.

7. Practice session performance

In each practice session, you will be graded in terms of “preparedness” and “performance”.


Your first two absences from practice sessions will not affect your grade. After that, you will receive 0 points when you miss a practice session.

**8. Other exceptions**

Other exceptions can be made only with the class Dean's note or your doctor's note.

**Recommendations**

1. **Studying and practicing regularly is the single most important requirement for learning Japanese well for the course.** We have observed over and over again a strong correlation between steady study habits and performance in this class: we have never met a student who did well in this course without attending classes and evaluation sessions regularly. On the other hand, everyone who takes attendance seriously does well in the course.

2. **Use Japanese as much as possible in all sessions.**

3. **Communicate with your instructor regularly.** Everyone has problems in learning Japanese. Silence or absence from classes is not an effective way to communicate your issues. No problem is a small problem. We deal with every issue seriously, so please bring any issues you have to us as soon and as often as possible.

**Online learning tools**

The following site gives you:
(1) some useful learning tools for Japanese, as well as
(2) instructions for setting up your computer so that you can use it to read and write in Japanese.

[https://cms.amherst.edu/offices/it/teaching_research/resources/languages/japanese](https://cms.amherst.edu/offices/it/teaching_research/resources/languages/japanese)

**Kanji (character) reference books – not required (optional)**

The following books are not required, but for those who wish to have some reference books, especially on the characters, we can recommend any of the following three:


   A concise Kanji dictionary, in which you can find all Joyo Kanji (the Kanji determined by the Japanese government to be necessary for all educated people to know – about 2000 Kanji) with necessary information, such as radicals, different readings, and example words for each Kanji. This is a very convenient first Kanji dictionary, but it is not a comprehensive one, so you will not be able to use it to look up words in Kanji compounds that you may need in intermediate and advanced Japanese classes. 394 pages total.


   This is a good source book for learning the origin of each character, or Kanji, which may help students of Japanese to learn Kanji more effectively. It even gives a mnemonic method for each
character. A weakness of this book is that the model characters are not well drawn. It is very important for students to have well-formed models when practicing the characters. 673 pages total.


This is a very compact and fun book about Kanji characters. The book explains the system of Kanji, its origins, and provides readings of Kanji compounds. It is light reading and quite entertaining. But you should be aware that some of the Kanji that the author uses are old; knowing old Kanji could be helpful in some ways but is not necessary. 159 pages total.

☆ We have not ordered these books at any bookstores in town because we do not know how many students are interested in them. You can order any of them through any bookstore in town or via the internet. The basic information on characters is given in our textbooks and will be explained in class, but having a book that explains them in greater detail will certainly facilitate your learning of the characters.