

Japanese Writing System

Course Description: This course introduces the characteristics of the Japanese writing system and their communicative functions in contemporary Japanese. The students will analyze how the four types of scripts (2 sets of syllabic alphabets or *hiragana* and *katakana*, *kanji*, and roman alphabet) had developed and are used in texts in various genres, such as in social media, manga, advertisement, and newspaper articles. By realizing the socio-cultural meaning of selective use of the four types of alphabets, the students will facilitate the development of literacy in Japanese. The course also teaches how best to learn and retain kanji characters and offers Japanese calligraphy workshops to experience the Japanese sense of the aesthetics of the kanji characters. By the end of the semester, the students should be able to improve their communicative skills in writing and apply the learning strategies to their future study of Japanese.
3 credit hours

Prerequisite: JAPN2020 or permission of instructor.

Instructor: Shinobu Watanabe, Instructor of Japanese

Meeting Time: T/TR11:20 AM- 12:45PM

Course Material: No textbook is required. Worksheets will be downloaded from eCourseware.

Evaluation:

- 1) **Weekly Portfolio:** The students are to practice and learn the list of kanji each week taken from the weekly theme. In addition, they are to produce a short written work (essay, haiku poem, manga, journal, etc.) and maintain their weekly works into their electric portfolio. The portfolio will be inside the eCourseware and the content will be shared with their classmates and instructor to receive comments. The work uploaded into the Portfolio will receive weekly feedback from the instructor and their classmates throughout the semester.
- 2) **Participation/Performance (Attendance):** Because learning a language requires contact with that language, attendance is mandatory. Be aware that your class participation/ performance score will not add automatically by simply being in the class. It is based upon such factors as being active and constructive in class, group, and pair work. Those inactive or distracting students (talking to others in English, using a cell phone, surfing the net etc.) receive zero performance score for the day even if they are in class. No food is allowed during the class too.
- 3) **Kanji Quiz:** By-weekly kanji quizzes are given during the semester to monitor your progress and give you feedback. You will have 5 to 10 minutes to complete these quizzes at the beginning of a class. See below for my make-up policy. The lowest quiz score will be dropped when calculating your grade IF and only if you do not miss any quiz.

Preparation of Kanji Quiz: Here is how you will prepare for the kanji quizzes each week. You will decide how many kanji (choose a realistic number that you can complete in ten minutes) there will be on your quiz. You will also decide on which kanji you wish to be quizzed as well as whether you will be quizzed on reading or writing them. You will turn in your **kanji Preparation Sheet** on Monday morning each week.

- 4) **Masu-Masu Kanji:** Every Monday there will be an activity which will test how many kanji you can write in 3 minutes (How many spaces you can fill in). Your homework each week will be to find out how you can more kanji than before in the same time frame. This (**Kanji Strategy Sheet**) will also be due Monday morning of each week.

- 5) **Homework:** Each week, you have a homework task to learn more about the Japanese writing system. Based on the weekly theme, you will read on an issue surrounding the Japanese writing system to prepare for the class discussion. The readings, which are from academic journals or newspaper articles, are on the history of the Japanese writing system, debates about the national language policy, and new trends in the writing system.
- 6) **Final Project (Final exam):** As a summative evaluation, the students will produce a written work (writing a short story, family history book, children's picture book, opinion essay for newspaper, a video clip with text, manga, etc.) and share their work with classmates as the final exam. The students present their final project during the last week of the semester. This presentation will be the 30 % of the final exam. The due date of the final product (70% of the final exam) is on the final exam day.

***Make-up Policy:** There are basically no make-ups for quizzes. It is your responsibility to attend each class, including days when quizzes are administered. The only exception is for pre-arranged make-ups **due to participation in official university business (official documentation will be required)**, not for personal reasons.

Grade Distribution:

(1) Attendance	15%
(2) Weekly Portfolio (Please see below for content and due dates)	25%
(3) Kanji Quiz	15%
(4) Homework (Practice writing kanji on the weekly theme)	15%
(5) Final project (Please see above for details)	30%

A+ (96 ~ 100%) A (93 ~ 95%) A- (90 ~ 92%) B+ (86 ~ 89%) B (83 ~ 85%) B- (80 ~ 82%)
 C+ (76 ~ 79%) C (73 ~ 75%) C- (70 ~ 72%) D+ (66 ~ 69%) D (60 ~ 65%) F (0 ~ 59%)

Weekly Schedule

- **Week 1-2** **The origin of the Japanese writing system (Kanji and development of Hiragana)**
- **Week 3-4** **How to learn Kanji effectively (classification, compounding, and morphology)**
- **Week 5-6** **Japanese Calligraphy and the Japanese sense of aesthetics**
- **Week 7-8** **Japanese writing system in the age of Web 2.0 (Facebook posting, text message, emoji)**
- **Week 9-10** **Japanese writing in manga**
- **Week 11-12** **Japanese writing in newspapers**
- **Week 13-14** **Japanese writing in commercial media**
- **Week 15** **Evaluation (portfolio) Presentation of their written work**