



AP Japanese Language and Culture Syllabus

Ryuko Kubota

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Note: This is an existing course taught by another instructor. The author modified the existing syllabus.

School Profile

School Location and Environment: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH) is a flagship state university in North Carolina. It is located in Chapel Hill, a small but fast-growing college town. The state policy stipulates that 82 percent of first-year undergraduate students have in-state status. Thus, a majority of the students in the Japanese program are in-state students.

Grades/Levels: Postsecondary, undergraduate

Type: Public

Total Enrollment: 16,525 students (undergraduate)

Ethnic Diversity: UNC-CH undergraduate student body has the following ethnic diversity: 74 percent white, 11 percent African American, 6 percent Asian, 3 percent Hispanic, and 6 percent other.

Personal Philosophy

In teaching Japanese language and culture, I try to use the following approaches in order to enhance student learning:

- **Focus on the development of proficiency through using the language in meaningful contexts:** Acquiring individual vocabulary items, expressions, kanji, and grammatical structures through daily practice is important. However, in the real world, language is always used in specific situations for particular purposes. Thus, these linguistic items need to be presented and used in meaningful contexts and connected with meaningful content.
- **Integrate the four skills or three modes of communication with cultural learning:** In real-life situations, we engage in communication through listening, speaking, reading, and writing—or interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational modes—in an integrated manner in a specific cultural context. Wherever possible, the four skills and cultural

learning should be integrated in instruction.

- **Integrate what students already know and what is new to them:** Language learning consists of an accumulation of knowledge and skills exercised regularly in an integrated manner. Proficiency is enhanced through constantly combining already-acquired knowledge and skills with new information and using the language in various situations.
- **Develop critical inquiry into language and culture:** Learning a language is not a neutral activity—it influences and is influenced by the ways people view the culture, society, and language of the self and the other. Posing critical questions on knowledge previously taken for granted about culture, society, and various social categories such as gender, race, ethnicity, class, and age encourages students to develop critical reflection, a necessary skill for global citizens.
- **Develop learning strategies and study skills that are conducive to lifelong learning of languages:** Students should be encouraged to become autonomous learners who can develop their skills consistently, systematically, and independently. However, no single learning strategy works for every student. Thus, various strategies for learning tasks, such as how to learn vocabulary and kanji or how to develop speaking skills, should be shared and discussed often in the classroom.

Class Profile

Japanese 104 is offered in the second (spring) semester of the second-year Japanese program. By the end of this course, students who began in the Japanese 101 course will have completed 300 hours of classroom instruction. The course consists of lecture classes taught by a lecturer on Tuesdays and Thursdays and recitation classes taught by a teaching assistant on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Each class meets for 50 minutes. The student enrollment for the lecture class ranges from 20 to 30 and for the recitation class from 10 to 20.

Course Prerequisites

Japanese 101, 102, and 103, or equivalent

Course Overview

The Japanese language program at UNC-CH is structured based on student competency goals for the first- through the fifth-year levels. The competency goals are informed by the following three sets of nationally recognized guidelines/standards: (1) ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, (2) K-16 National Standards for Japanese Language Learning, and (3) ACTFL/NCATE Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers. The third set of standards was incorporated because it provides guidelines for the K-12 Japanese teacher licensure program offered by the UNC-CH School of Education.

The 5 Cs of the K-16 National Standards for Japanese Language Learning reconceptualize the linguistic competency areas by dividing communication into "interpersonal," "interpretive," and "presentational" modes. However, our goals divide expected student competencies mainly into traditional skills area (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and specify a competency

level for each category. The skills described below are goals to be measured by spontaneous or on-demand, rather than prepared, tasks in spoken and written language. The 5 Cs of the National Standards for Japanese Language Learning are integrated in instruction. Note that the UNC-CH Japanese program specifies proficiency goals for all levels (first-year through fifth-year).

Listening—Intermediate, low:

- Understand sentence-length utterances consisting of recombinations of learned elements in familiar contexts and content (e.g., basic personal information and needs, social situations such as getting meals, receiving simple instructions and directions, and so on)
- Comprehend basic questions with words such as *dare*, *doko*, *nani*, *itsu*, *nan*-[counter], *dooshite*, *donna*, *doo*; statements; high-frequency commands; and courtesy formulas in face-to-face contexts
- May require repetition and rephrasing for comprehension

Speaking—Intermediate, low:

- Express own thoughts using complete sentences and strings of sentences when interacting on familiar and predictable topics without falling back on English
- Express personal meaning by combining and recombining into short statements what students know and what they hear from their interlocutors
- Sustain face-to-face and telephone conversations by asking and answering a range of simple questions on familiar topics
- Begin to use some cohesive devices to make sentences longer and more complex
- Communicate most accurately when talking about very familiar topics using frequently used phrases
- Use, with some inconsistencies, communication strategies such as paraphrasing and asking for repetition, clarification, and translation
- Use an increased number of memorized expressions and increased amount of body language that are culturally appropriate for daily needs and for presentations

Reading—Intermediate, low:

- Recognize an increased number of vocabulary items in authentic materials such as menus, schedules, timetables, maps, and signs
- Recognize the main purpose of simple practical authentic materials such as job advertisements, product advertisements, public signs, and information on public facilities
- Understand the main ideas and most details from simple connected texts with controlled structure and vocabulary dealing with basic personal and social needs (e.g., description, narration, and explanation)
- Recognize 400 kanji

Writing—Novice, high:

- Meet basic writing needs such as the creation of lists, short messages, postcards, simple notes, and diaries by hand and by word processing
- Begin to recombine learned vocabulary and structures to create connected simple sentences
- Demonstrate emerging use of cohesive devices (e.g., *node*, *toki ni*, *mae ni*, *ato de*, *ga*, *te*, *tari*, *temo*) to create complex sentences
- Begin to produce different text types (description, narration, and explanation) on familiar topics
- Write about Intermediate topics with about 75 percent success and accuracy

Culture/Community:

- Continue to identify daily products (media, traditional objects, etc.) and practices (holidays, festivals, campus life, etc.)
- Continue to identify perspectives (values and beliefs) that are often used to characterize Japanese culture
- Identify diversity in Japanese language and culture (e.g., identify different language registers, dialects, and ethnic groups, and language/cultural differences associated with region, gender, and occupation)
- Continue to use Japanese and appreciate Japanese culture in communities and activities outside the language classroom (e.g., watching films, eating food, participating in cultural events)

Learning strategies:

- Look up kanji by radicals, pronunciation, or stroke orders using a simple kanji dictionary
- Use simple Japanese-English and English-Japanese dictionaries
- Look up commonly used katakana words in English-Japanese dictionaries for accurate writing
- Try to combine learned vocabulary, expressions, and structures to produce the target language orally and in writing

In addition to these goals, our curriculum emphasizes integrating the 5 Cs of the National Standards in the following ways:

Communication:

- Interpersonal mode: Students engage in various oral and written activities, such as role-playing, task-based activities, and keeping a dialogue journal.
- Interpretive mode: Students listen to various types of input, such as authentic and instructional videos, and oral presentations given by peers. They also develop reading competency through reading a variety of texts, such as formal and informal letters, essays, dialogues, diaries, and so on.
- Presentational mode: Students give informal and formal oral presentations. They also write a formal essay.

Cultures:

Students engage in cultural learning through class discussions and participation in various events (see the goals above).

Connections:

Through reading and class discussions, students explore various themes in the field of intercultural communication and develop critical understandings of cultural differences.

Comparisons:

Students engage in class discussions as they compare and contrast language use and cultural practices between the target language/culture and their own, in order to develop insight into language and culture.

Communities:

Students actively participate in on- and off-campus cultural events, including a speech contest.

Course Planner

The spring semester lasts 14 1/2 weeks, starting in mid-January and ending in late April. The textbook used for the first two years of the UNC-CH Japanese program is the *Genki* series. Japanese 104 introduces materials from chapters 19 to 23 of book 2 of *Genki* as well as the first two chapters of *An Integrated Approach to Intermediate Japanese*. The course also integrates an essay project followed by an oral presentation. In this project, each student writes an essay (which serves later as a script for a speech) on a familiar topic, and presents it orally. Through peer and teacher evaluation, several students are selected to participate in the speech contest for college students held at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina.

In addition to the essay/presentation project, students engage in other regular learning activities throughout the semester:

- **Write a journal entry once a week and submit it every Monday.** The main objectives are: to express themselves freely in writing, to develop writing fluency, and to use learned vocabulary and expressions in a real-life context. Each entry should be approximately 200 words long. The instructor provides comments mainly on the content. The idea is similar to the dialogue journal (see Peyton, 1993). Grammatical or lexical accuracy is not graded; the completion of the task counts toward the final grade as part of homework assignments.
- **Practice speaking through role-playing.** Using the vocabulary learned in class and grammar/expressions learned since completing Japanese 101, students practice a dialogue in each lecture and recitation class. Model dialogues are presented and at least two pairs of students present dialogues at the beginning of each class. The performance is evaluated in terms of fluency, accuracy, complexity, and appropriateness.
- **Give at least three short presentations in a show-and-tell format.** In each class, one or two students give a one-minute presentation about something that they want to share with their classmates (e.g., family members, trip, part-time job, hobby, favorite book or anime). The student chooses a different topic each time. The presentation is evaluated in terms of fluency, accuracy, complexity, and effectiveness (including the use of visuals).
- **Conduct self-evaluations of efforts to use the target language daily in class.** (See Kubota, Yamaguchi, and Giamoni, 2005.) Students assess their own efforts to use Japanese with the teacher and peers during each class. Points are determined by both self-evaluation and instructor's evaluation of the observed effort. The points count toward the final grade.

As for summative evaluation, there are three exams: two midterm exams and one final exam. The final exam is given during the exam week scheduled by the university, while the midterm exams are given during the regular class. In addition, a short quiz on kanji and vocabulary is given in each class.

Weeks 1 and 2: Formal and casual modes of communication (1): Honorific expressions

Using film clips (from movies, dramas, and Ujie, 1988), personal letters, email exchanges, and so on, students learn basic types and usages of honorific expressions in speaking and writing, and contrast them with casual expressions. In this unit, students also learn other expressions in the textbook.

Class activities:

- Listen to the soundtrack of dialogues from video clips and identify the social status of each speaker judging from the expressions used. Watch the video for confirmation
- Practice using honorific expressions through role-playing
- Read personal letters with different registers (i.e., casual and formal) and identify the social relationship between the writer and the reader
- Read and understand the reading materials in the textbook

Weeks 3 and 4: Formal and casual modes of communication (2): Humble expressions

Again using film clips, personal letters, email exchanges, and so on, students learn basic types and usages of humble expressions in speaking and writing, and contrast them with casual expressions. In this unit, students also learn other expressions in the textbook. Also during this unit, students begin to explore a topic (e.g., memorable trip, vacation, family members, childhood memories, hometown, favorite campus event, hobby, best friend, etc.), brainstorm about the content, and start writing a draft of an essay. Each student will give an oral presentation based on the essay during week 7. The class will select the best presenters to send to the speech contest at Duke University.

Class activities:

- Do similar activities to those used in weeks 1 and 2
- Practice using formal and casual modes of speech through role-playing involving a variety of social situations and relationships (e.g., talking with a peer student, teacher, stranger on the street, customer, sales clerk, receptionist on the phone)
- Write letters/email messages to people with different social statuses
- Read and understand the reading materials in the textbook

Weeks 5 and 6: Expressions of inconveniences caused by others/situations

The first midterm exam is given at the beginning of this unit. Using the conversation in the textbook and instructional video materials (Ujie, 1988), students learn what passive expressions are, in what contexts they are used, and how to use them in simulated situations. In this unit, students also learn other expressions in the textbook. Also during this unit, students revise their essay draft and produce the final copy. In preparation for the oral presentation, the class discusses qualities for effective presentations and responsibilities of the presenter and the audience. Students also write a brief note in Japanese to invite international students from Japan on campus and professors/instructors who speak Japanese to the oral presentations.

Class activities:

- View video clips; understand and produce the expressions learned in this unit to describe particular situations
- Learn how to write an invitation note and create one to invite Japanese students and professors to the oral presentations
- Discuss what makes good oral presentations and what responsibility the audience has
- Read and understand the reading materials in the textbook

Week 7: Student oral presentations

Each student presents his/her essay orally using visuals, such as PowerPoint® slides, posters, maps, pictures, real objects, and so on. The class is encouraged to direct questions to the presenter in a clear and comprehensible manner. At the end, the students and the instructor select several presenters to send to the speech contest.

Class activities:

- Practice presenting in small groups and then present to a larger audience
- Ask pertinent questions of the presenter

Weeks 8 and 9: Expressions of making someone do something

Using the conversation in the textbook and instructional video materials (Ujie, 1988), students learn what causative expressions are, in what contexts they are used, and how to use them in simulated situations. In this unit, students also learn other expressions in the textbook.

Class activities:

- Through viewing video clips, understand and produce the expressions to describe particular situations
- Read dialogues containing a causative verb plus *te itadaku/morau*, discuss nuances, and orally practice the expressions
- Read and understand the reading materials in the textbook

Weeks 10 and 11: Expressions of being made to do something

The second midterm exam is given. Using the conversation in the textbook and instructional video materials (Ujie, 1988), students learn what causative-passive expressions are, in what contexts they are used, and how to use them in simulated situations. In this unit, students also learn other expressions in the textbook.

Class activities:

- Listen to a dialogue about parents' and teachers' expectations during one's childhood and understand the gist and some details
- Ask and answer questions about one's childhood by following the pattern of the dialogue above
- Read and understand the reading materials in the textbook
- Read an abridged version of folktales such as "A Grateful Crane" and "Ballad of Narayama" and understand the gist, sentence structures, and cultural significance

Weeks 12 and 13: Introducing oneself as an international student in Japan

By reading the dialogues and diaries in the first lesson of *An integrated approach to intermediate Japanese*, students review how to introduce themselves and learn how to engage in small talk with a person whom they meet for the first time. In this unit, students also learn to understand and to use other key expressions in the textbook.

Class activities:

- Listen to and read the dialogues in the textbook
- Listen to other self-introductory scenes from film clips and understand the gist
- Watch a video of the debate on whether international students in Japan should be required to live with a host family and comprehend pros and cons
- Read and comprehend the journal entries in the textbook

Weeks 14 and 15: Expressions for greetings

Students read the dialogues and the essay in the second lesson of the textbook, increase their repertoires of expressions for greetings, and analyze their cultural meanings. In this unit, students also learn to understand and to use other key expressions in the textbook.

Class activities:

- Practice how to greet people with different social statuses in various settings through role-playing
- Engage in small talk after exchanging greetings
- Compare and contrast various expressions for greetings in Japanese with these terms in the student's native language; explore cultural nuances
- Read sample letters and analyze how greetings are used in written correspondence. Practice writing one formal letter with a conventional opening and one casual letter with informal greetings

Student Evaluation

The midterm and final exams assess students' skills in listening, speaking, grammar, vocabulary, kanji, reading comprehension, and impromptu writing. Items are presented in context and/or as authentic tasks as much as possible. The daily kanji and vocabulary quizzes assess students' productive and receptive skills in a cumulative manner. (Note that items are presented in sentences rather than in isolation.) The essay is evaluated on the dimensions of structural and lexical accuracy, complexity, and content of the final copy. Drafts are not evaluated. The oral presentation is evaluated on the dimensions of structural and lexical accuracy, fluency, appropriateness (e.g., voice projection, register, posture, body language), and effectiveness (e.g., using visuals, answering questions). For the evaluation of role-playing, short oral presentations, journal entries, and efforts to use Japanese, see page 5.

The weights of items for evaluation are shown below:

Two midterm exams	20 percent (10 percent each)
Final exam	20 percent
Kanji/Vocabulary quizzes	20 percent
Essay/Presentation project	10 percent (5 percent for essay and 5 percent for presentation)
Role playing and short oral presentations	10 percent
Homework assignments and journal	10 percent
Efforts to use Japanese in class	10 percent

Classroom Policies

- All students should follow the university honor code: "The Instrument of Student Judicial Governance requires that you sign a pledge on all written work ("On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this assignment"). This includes all written homework assignments, exams, and quizzes. For example, you may not have a native speaker of Japanese help you write or correct your compositions, journals, and other homework assignments. You may, however, seek help from a native speaker for oral practice (dialogue memorization and oral presentation). In fact, practicing with a native speaker is an excellent way to develop oral proficiency. The first time you hand in an assignment, I expect you to write out the pledge in full. After that, you may simply write 'Pledge' and sign your name."
- Exams and quizzes: All in-class exams and quizzes in this class are to be taken without the assistance of books, notes, or other people.
- Attendance: Each absence, from either the lecture or recitation class, counts one point against the final grade.
- Tardiness: Roll is taken at the beginning of every class. If a student is not in his or her seat when roll is taken, he or she is counted as late. Three late arrivals becomes one absence.

Teacher Resources

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. *ACTFL/NCATE Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers* (2002). Yonkers, New York: American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines* ("Listening," "Reading"; revised 1986). Available at www.gwu.edu/~slavic/actfl.htm.

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines—Speaking* (revised 1999). Available at www.yearoflanguages.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3325.

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines—Writing* (revised 2001). Available at www.yearoflanguages.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3326.

Kubota, Ryuko, Wakako Yamaguchi, and Patti Giamoni. "Did I Make Efforts to Use Japanese in Class Today?: Student Self-Assessment" (2005). *Oshirase* 13, No. 2: 50-51.

National Standards in Foreign Language Project. *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (1999). Yonkers, New York: American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

Peyton, Joy Kreeft. "Dialogue Journals: Interactive Writing to Develop Language and Literacy" (1993). *ERIC Digest*: ED354789. Available at www.ericdigests.org/1993/journals.htm.

Ujie, Kenichi. *Video-Cued Structural Drills* (1988); (1. Passives, 2. Causative/Causative-Passives, 5. Honorific Expressions 1 (Honorifics), 6. Honorific Expressions 2 (Use of Honorific Language in Real Situations). Tokyo: Shoseki.