

Cultural and Linguistic Variation in Japan

Instructor: Kaori Idemaru

Language of Instruction: English

UO Credits: 6

In-class contact hours: 51 hours

Fieldwork and field activities: 24 hours

Excursions: 64 hours

Assignment hours: 45 hours

Total: 183 hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students will gain knowledge of and experience cultural and linguistic variations in this introductory course taught in Japan with the focus on four themes: Food and Language, the Writing System, Youth Language, Gender, and Language. In each unit, students will explore, in readings as well as in fieldwork, the traditional expectations as well as the current practices in the topic area in order to experience and gain a better understanding of Japanese culture and language.

The course will include survival language lessons, lectures, discussion, fieldwork, and structured interaction with Japanese college students led by the instructor, as well as cultural excursions led by a vendor. The class will typically meet for three hours in the morning from Monday through Thursday. Afternoons will be dedicated to fieldwork, excursions, or self-directed study. There will be day trips or overnight trips planned for Fridays.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Instructional Goals. This course will:

- Train students in survival Japanese necessary for daily life and fieldwork
- Introduce students to anthropological studies on Japanese food and related language
- Introduce students to the development of writing system and current usage, including both normative and non-normative patterns
- Introduce students to the analysis of youth language (*wakamono kotoba*) and gendered features, including both normative and non-normative patterns
- Examine the connection between language choice/features and identity/affect
- Examine attitude/perception of non-normative use of language
- Train students in fieldwork methods, e.g., interviewing informants and conducting surveys
- Train students in analyzing and summarizing interview and survey responses

Student Outcomes. Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Use at least some survival Japanese to function in Japan
- Understand and describe some traditional and current concepts about food, the writing system, language usage
- Understand and describe normative and non-normative use of some language features
- Analyze language use and its social and affective significance
- Collect data (e.g., interviews, surveys) and analyze them to address research questions
- Communicate research findings effectively
- Work collegially and effectively with team members

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

This course will make use of a wide range of instructional methods, materials, and opportunities, from readings (see below) and lectures, to interactions with Japanese college students, fieldwork involving data collection, collaborative data analysis with classmates, presentations, and individual reflections.

METHOD OF EVALUATION (GRADING)

The course grade will be based on the following components:

- Class participation during program, including excursions 35%
 - This includes notes and blog posts about fieldwork and weekly reflection
- Reading responses for the assigned readings 20%
 - Each response summarizing the key points, points that are unclear, and discussion questions should have approximately 500 - 1000 words
- Mini-research: Data collection and analysis 15%
 - This includes interview/survey data from at least 3 informants for each topic
- An oral presentation of the mini-research 10%
- Final research report as a blog post (due two weeks after the program) 20%
 - The length of blog post should be from 1000 to 1500 words

TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE

Weekly structure

Monday-Thursday: 9:00-12:00 language lesson, lecture, discussion
 1:00-5:00 fieldwork, activities, excursions
 (one or a few days per week, PM hours are designated for self-directed study)

Friday: Excursions

Weekends: Unstructured free time
 (a few excursions occur on weekends)

	Topic, Readings, and activities	Student work submitted
WEEK 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food and Language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Readings on: <i>Washoku</i>, rice, McDonald ○ Discussion: tradition, authenticity, innovation • Fieldwork <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Nishiki</i> food market and McDonalds • Other activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Orientation ○ Welcome dinner ○ Guided walking tours of Kyoto ○ Guided day trip to Nara 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading responses • Field notes, pictures, blog posts • Weekly reflection

WEEK 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Writing system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Readings on: history of scripts, norm and variation ○ Discussion: script choice and imagery ● Fieldwork <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Examination of store signs ○ Japan Kanji Museum ● Other activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Calligraphy class ○ Overnight excursion to Tokyo, guided tours of Tokyo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading responses ● Field notes, pictures, blog posts ● Weekly reflection
WEEK 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Youth language (<i>wakamono kotoba</i>) and Gender <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Readings on: sociolinguistics, <i>wakamono kotoba</i>, gender and language ○ Discussion: language choice, identity, stance, affect ● Fieldwork <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop interview protocol (and possibly survey) and practice interview ● Other activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Guided walking tour of Kyoto ○ Guided walking tour of Osaka ○ Cooking class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading responses ● Field notes, pictures, blog posts ● Interview protocol, survey ● Weekly reflection
WEEK 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Youth language (<i>wakamono kotoba</i>) and Gender ● Fieldwork <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Interview with Osaka U students about their language use and perception ● Collaborative data analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Quantitative and qualitative analysis ● Oral presentation of research findings ● Other activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ [Possibly] Guest lecture by Prof Scott North, Osaka U ○ Visit to Gion Festival ○ Final program debrief 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading responses ● Field notes, pictures, blog posts ● Interview/survey data ● Analysis of the data ● Final research report as a blog post (2 weeks later) ● Final reflection (2 weeks later)

READINGS

Food and language -- 4-6 readings from

Bestor, T. (2018). Washoku, Far and Near. In Yamashita, S. H. (2020). *Devouring Japan: Global Perspectives on Japanese Culinary Identity* ed. by Nancy K. Stalker. *The Journal of Japanese Studies*, 46(1), 271-275.

Ohnuki-Tierney, E. (1990). The ambivalent self of the contemporary Japanese. *Cultural Anthropology*, 5(2), 197-216.

Ohnuki-Tierney, E. (1995). Structure, event and historical metaphor: Rice and identities in Japanese history. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 227-253.

Ohnuki-Tierney, E. (1997). McDonald's in Japan: changing manners and etiquette. In: *Golden Arches East – McDonald's in East Asia*, ed. by James Watson. Stanford University Press. 161-182.

Toratani, K. (2022). Loanword sushi in English. *The Language of Food in Japanese: Cognitive perspectives and beyond*, 25, 161.

Traphagan, J. W., & Brown, L. K. (2002). Fast Food and Intergenerational Commensality in Japan: New Styles and Old Patterns. *Ethnology*, 41(2), 119–134.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/4153002>

Writing system – 4-6 readings from:

Bentley, J. R. (2001). The origin of man'yōgana. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 64(1), 59-73.

Frellesvig, B. (2010). *A history of the Japanese language*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1 (early writing), 157-162, 178-183 (development of kana),

Lurie, D. (2012). The Development of Writing in Japan, in *The Shape of Script: How and Why Writing Systems Change*, ed. Stephen Houston, SAR Press, 159-186.

Miller (2011) “Subversive Script and Novel Graphs in Japanese Girls’ Culture,” *Language & Communication* 31 (2011): 16-26

Robertson (1999) “Orthography, Foreigners, and Fluency: Indexicality and Script Selection in Japanese Manga,” *Japanese Studies*, 35:2, 205-222.

Taylor, I., & Taylor M.M. (2014). *Writing and Literacy in Chinese, Korean, and Japanese (revised edition)*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

[available as an e-book on the library website:

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uoregon/detail.action?pq-origsite=primo&docID=1882659>]

Chapter 16 (early writing), Chapter 17 (development of kana), Chapter 21 (modern usage)

Youth Language -- 2-3 readings from:

Bucholtz, M. (1999). “Why be normal?”: Language and identity practices in a community of nerd girls. *Language in society*, 28(2), 203-223.

Bucholtz, M., & Hall, K. (2004). Language and identity. *A companion to linguistic anthropology*, 1, 369-394.

Eckert, P. (1989). *Jocks and burnouts: Social categories and identity in the high school*. Teachers college press.
Chapters to be selected later

Eckert, P. (2008). Variation and the indexical field 1. *Journal of sociolinguistics*, 12(4), 453-476.

Eckert, P. (2017). Age as a sociolinguistic variable. *The handbook of sociolinguistics*, 151-167.

References for the instructor

Yamaguchi, N. (2007). *若者言葉に耳をすませば (Listen to the Youth Language)*. Tokyo: Kodansha.

Chapter 1 Words young people use, Chapter 2 Characteristics and purposes of the youth language, Chapter 5 How the middle-aged and the elderly view the youth language, Chapter 7 Words of the middle-aged and the elderly that young people admire

Horio, K. (2022). *若者言葉の研究—SNS時代の言語変化 (A study of youth language – Language change in the era of SNS)*. Kyushu University Press.

Chapter 3 New adjectives, Chapter 4 Adverbs of degree, Chapter 6 Hedges

Gender and language – 2-3 readings from:

Abe, H. (2010). *Queer Japanese: Gender and sexual identities through linguistic practices*. Springer.
Chapters to be selected later

Gilbert, C. & Ito, R. (2020). Neither hero nor heroine: Problematizing the representation of gender non-conforming characters in Japanese *anime*. In the Proceedings of the 28th Central Association of Teachers of Japanese Conference, May 30-31, Macalester.

Hasegawa, Y. (2014). *Japanese: A linguistic introduction*. Cambridge University Press.
Chapters to be selected later

Maree, C. (2020). *Queerqueen: Linguistic excess in Japanese media*. Oxford University Press, USA.

Okamoto, S. (2012). “Tasteless” Japanese: Less “feminine” speech among young Japanese women. In *Gender articulated* (pp. 297-325). Routledge.

Starr, R. L. (2015). Sweet voice: The role of voice quality in a Japanese feminine style. *Language in Society*, 44(1), 1-34.

SturtzSreetharan, C. L. (2006). Gentlemanly gender? Japanese men's use of clause-final politeness in casual conversations 1. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 10(1), 70-92.

SturtzSreetharan, C. L. (2009). Ore and omae: Japanese men's uses of first-and second-person pronouns. *Pragmatics. Quarterly Publication of the International Pragmatics Association (IPrA)*, 19(2), 253-278.

Ueno, J. (2006). Shojo and adult women: a linguistic analysis of gender identity in manga (Japanese comics). *Women and language*, 29(1), 16.