Japanese

Professors: Walker, Sugimori

The Japanese program provides students with exposure to the language, literature, and culture of Japan. The multiple levels of Japanese language courses offer a balanced emphasis on listening, reading, writing, and speaking, establishing a good foundation for ongoing language study. Students may study abroad in Japan or take part in other forms of advanced study to continue developing their language skills. Japanese Studies courses (in English) acquaint students with Japanese literary works and their social, political, and cultural contexts.

Due to the overlap in requirements, it is not possible for students to major in East Asian Studies and minor in Chinese or Japanese unless they are pursuing coursework in both languages.

Requirements for the Minor in Japanese

Number of Units
6 total units are required; not including JAPN 101-102

Required Courses: (5 units)
1. Language courses (at least 4 units)
   JAPN 103, 201, 202, 203 (or approved equivalent courses for a total of four units)

   All students wishing to count equivalent language courses taken off campus must demonstrate the appropriate aptitude with a placement exam. Please note that placement exams are only offered at the beginnings of each quarter.

   It is also important to note that Japanese language courses are offered in the Fall-Winter-Spring sequence for both JAPN-101-102-103 and JAPN-201-202-203. JAPN-101 and JAPN-201 are only offered in the Fall quarter.

   1. One Japanese Studies course taken on campus (1 unit)
      From among JAPN 236, JAPN 237, JAPN 238, JAPN 239, JAPN 240, JAPN 245, JAPN 250, JAPN 255

Elective Course: (1 Unit)

Minors must complete one additional elective course. This course can be a second Japanese Studies course taken on campus, an advanced Japanese language course above JAPN 203 taken on campus, or an approved non-language course taken on study abroad. With approval, additional special topics one-time course offerings with Japanese Studies content many count as an elective.

Related Programs

The Japanese program is also an essential part of the East Asian Studies program and contributes to the International and Area Studies program as well. Students may major in East Asian Studies or in International and Area Studies with a focus on East Asia. Interested students should consult with the director of East Asian Studies. See catalog listings for East Asian Studies or International and Area Studies for requirements for these majors.

Study Abroad Opportunities

The College has established several programs in Japan. Please consult with the Center for International Programs on the different options available. To maximize the benefits of studying abroad, students are strongly encouraged to complete
JAPN-203 before leaving for Japan. For more details about language preparation for study abroad, consult early with professors and the Center for International Programs.

**Japanese courses**

**JAPN 101 Beginning Japanese I**
Introductory course; basic grammar and vocabulary; emphasis on listening and oral foundations; hiragana and katakana and an introduction to kanji. Students are encouraged to begin this course sequence in their first year in order to complete the three-quarter sequence (JAPN 101, 102, 103) required for study abroad, as well as the second year sequence (JAPN 201, 202, 203) before study abroad.

**JAPN 102 Beginning Japanese II**
Further introduction to basic grammar and vocabulary; development of fundamental reading and writing skills using hiragana, katakana, and approximately 50 kanji. 
*Prerequisite: JAPN-101; Must take JAPN-102L concurrently*

**JAPN 103 Beginning Japanese III**
Reinforcement of basic listening and development of oral and aural competency; further achievement of reading and writing skills using the kana and approximately 100 kanji. 
*Prerequisite: JAPN-102 or equivalent placement; JAPN-103L must be taken concurrently*

**JAPN 201 Intermediate Japanese I**
Further work in conversation, oral interpretation, and elementary composition using approximately 200 kanji; study of idioms fundamental to an active use of spoken and written Japanese. 
*Prerequisite: JAPN-103 or equivalent placement; JAPN-201L must be taken concurrently*

**JAPN 202 Intermediate Japanese II**
Further refinement in areas studied in JAPN 201. 
*Prerequisite: JAPN 201; JAPN-202L must be taken concurrently*

**JAPN 203 Intermediate Japanese III**
Further refinement in areas studied in JAPN 202. 
*Prerequisite: JAPN-202 or equivalent placement; JAPN-203L must be taken concurrently*

**JAPN 236 Pre-Modern Japanese Literature**
The ghoulish, the monstrous, and the supernatural are staples of familiar Japanese culture like anime, manga, and J-horror but these themes have roots in Japan as old as the written word. This course explores pre-20th century Japanese literature, drama (including noh and kabuki theater), folklore, and visual culture to examine the vengeful ghosts, witches, wizards, fantastic beasts, and ambulatory tea kettles of the premodern Japanese imagination. No knowledge of Japanese language is required.

**JAPN 238 Post-War Japanese Literature in Translation**
This course surveys important Japanese writers of the post-World War II era, with special attention to the profound transformations that followed the dissolution of the Japanese Empire in 1945. In the immediate postwar period the physical map of "Japan" shrank dramatically, and a national imagination that had for decades ranged across the plains of Manchuria and far into South Asia collapsed in on itself. This course investigates the ways in which prominent writers (and a few filmmakers) confronted this collapse and everything it implied, from a tentative renegotiation of Japan's place in the world (largely via its relationship with the United States), to a rapidly urbanizing society's relationship to its own hinterlands. Authors covered include Dazai Osamu, Abe Kobo, Murakami Ryu, Tawada Yoko, and Furukawa Hideo. All readings, lectures, and discussions in English.

**JAPN 239 Modern Japanese Literature in Translation**
This course will examine a number of Japanese authors, from the late 19th century through the early 20th century, who have addressed the cultural and psychic disease that resulted from Japan's encounter with the West and transformation of Japan into a modern, nationalistic state. Authors read will include: Natsume Soseki, Mori Ogai, Higuchi Ichiyo, and Tanzaki Jun'ichiro.

**JAPN 240 Japanese Culture through Film**
From animation to the avant-garde, this course treads the border lines of Japanese film. Students will interrogate both the concept of "national cinema" and the familiar conventions of narrative film through analysis of films that cross international borders as often as they defy formal conventions. The course calls attention to the work of underrepresented demographics within Japanese film, including women (Kawase Naomi) and ethnic Koreans living in Japan (Yang Yong-hi). Animated films include Miyazaki Hayao's Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind and Momotaro and the Divine Sea Warriors, the first full length Japanese animation feature. Documentaries examine topics ranging from war crimes to Japanese professional
wrestling. No knowledge of Japanese language is required.

**JAPN 245 Japanese Language in Society**
This course explores several major aspects of language use associated with Japanese culture and society. The course aims not only at familiarizing students with various aspects of Japanese language with reference to culture and society, but also their developing an appreciation for a different culture. When discussing the inherent inter-relationship between language and culture, including the beliefs, values, and social organization, we will focus on the ideas of power, hierarchy, gender, and history. No previous knowledge of Japanese or linguistics is assumed or required. Readings, lectures, and discussion are all in English.

**JAPN 250 Manga/Anime and Gender in Modern Japan**
Why are manga/anime so popular? Let's find out. This course undertakes a critical analysis of manga (comics) and anime (animation). We will examine these media's historical origins, narrative features, the world's reception and much more. The samurai warrior, the bishôôcir;nen (beautiful boy), and the sexy cyborg-gender in Japanese culture has vivid representations. This course explores constructions of masculinity and femininity, paying attention to the figures of the girl as the postwar descendant of the bishôôcir;nen, the ostensibly undersocialized otaku and yaoi culture and transgender manga where imagination opens the door to alternate and critical realities.

**JAPN 255 Japanese Science Fiction**
This course will look at the relationship between popular culture, media, and Japanese society through the lens of science fiction literature and film. Looking across the 20th century and into the 21st, we will use sci-fi to ask: how does popular culture reflect its moment, and how does it critique it? What role does genre play in our understanding of a text? How do genres travel internationally? In doing so, we'll develop skills for analyzing pop culture, as well as communicating that understanding in a variety of registers. No Japanese language ability is required.

**JAPN 295/SEMN 294 Visions of Utopia, Dystopia, and Apocalypse**
From anarchism to Akira, from Buddhism to the bomb, modern Japanese culture has continually produced visions of a world perfected through its own utter devastation. This class explores visions of utopia, dystopia, and apocalypse that reveal volumes about the societies from which they arise, even as they point to the future. Topics include the use of utopic or apocalyptic visions in political discourse, human impact on the natural world and its flourishing or destruction, and the potential of technology to improve human life or to destroy it entirely. Primary readings range from radical Japanese feminism of the early 1900s to the 1954 film Godzilla. Critical readings will introduce ecocritical and post-human approaches to the world in which we live.

*Prerequisite: Sophomores only*

**JAPN 301 High Intermediate Japanese Language**
This course is the first level of the third-year Japanese language sequence, offering more advanced training in the four skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

*Prerequisite: JAPN-203 or equivalent placement*

**JAPN 302 High Intermediate Japanese Language II**
This course is the second of the third-year Japanese language sequence, offering more advanced training in the four skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

*Prerequisite: JAPN-301 or equivalent placement*

**JAPN 401 Advanced Japanese**
This class is an advanced level class. It is expected that students will have a strong base in Japanese grammar and the four language skills of Japanese: reading, writing, listening, and speaking, as well as aspects of Japanese culture and society.

*Prerequisite: Placement or at least six-month study abroad and permission.*

**JAPN 593 Senior Integrated Project**
Each program or department sets its own requirements for Senior Integrated Projects done in that department, including the range of acceptable projects, the required background of students doing projects, the format of the SIP, and the expected scope and depth of projects. See the Kalamazoo Curriculum -&gt; Senior Integrated Project section of the Academic Catalog for more details.

*Prerequisite: Permission of department and SIP supervisor required.*
The Academic Catalog contains the most accurate information available at the time of publication. Statements contained therein are not contractual obligations, and verbal or other representations that are inconsistent with or not contained within the catalogues' offerings or policies are not binding. Kalamazoo College reserves the right to change, without specific notice, offerings, policies, procedures, qualifications, fees, and other conditions.

This content was last updated on October 19 2021.