

Curriculum Change to Address Students' Diverse Needs and Proficiency Levels

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Problems

- ▶ Learners develop proficiency and language skills at different speed.
- ▶ Learners have to move through sequence of courses.
- ▶ Demands from major courses conflict with taking Japanese.
- ▶ Low enrollment/cancellation of upper level courses.

Trial in Japanese 302

- ▶ Sequence at UWEC: 101-102, 201-202, 301-302
- ▶ Japanese 302-Spring 2020: Students who had taken up to 201 were allowed to take 302 with instructor's permission. 9 students total, 3 (301) + 5 (201).
- ▶ Students with different preparation in one class
- ▶ Diverse learning styles and interests

Curriculum Overview

- ▶ JAPN302.901 “This course aims to further your study of Japanese through Extensive Reading, Intensive Reading, and One-on-One instructions (face-to-face or online). An objective of the course is to improve your reading, speaking, listening and writing skills in Japanese from where you are.”
- ▶ 4 credits, Hybrid
- ▶ Face to Face twice a week (Wed & Fri)
- ▶ Self-study for minimum 2 hours/day (Tue & Thu)
- ▶ Textbook(s) and reading materials of one’s choice
- ▶ Biweekly individual meeting (15 mins/student)

Course Requirements

- ▶ Class Participation on Wed and Fri 5%
- ▶ Weekly Individual Instruction Participation 5%
- ▶ Extensive & Intensive Reading 15%
- ▶ Vocabulary List 10%
- ▶ Kanji List 10%
- ▶ Quizzes (Kanji & Vocab) 10%
- ▶ Book Introduction Video 10%
- ▶ Mini Performances 5%
- ▶ Story Writing and Sharing 10%
- ▶ Free topic presentation 5%
- ▶ Oral Proficiency Tests 5%
- ▶ E-Portfolio with Reflection paper 10%





(3) Extensive and Intensive Reading

Extensive Reading: Read many easy books quickly and enjoy reading. DO NOT use dictionary when you read. Keep a reading log each week.

Intensive Reading: Read a short difficult paragraph, pay attention to sentence structures and vocabulary, look up kanji and words you don't know and make a vocabulary list and a kanji list. Translate from Japanese to English. Use Intensive Reading Notes template to record your progress.

Both are effective ways to learn a language, so we will do both. You can decide how much of each you will do depending on your preference, as long as you do both each week. You must read at least an hour outside of class, intensively or extensively, on Tue and Thu. Words and kanji for your vocabulary list and kanji list should mainly come from your intensive reading as you are not supposed to use a dictionary when you do the extensive reading. However, you might pick up new words or sentence structures naturally by reading extensively without a dictionary. In that case, those words should be put on your vocab list.






(4) Vocabulary List: Make a list of at least 10 words from your intensive reading each week. These words should be beyond what you have learned before. Follow the instruction on Vocabulary List Template on OneDrive. Then learn them for your vocab quiz.

(5) Kanji List: Make a list of at least 10 kanji words from your intensive reading each week. Follow the instruction on Kanji List Template on OneDrive. Then learn them for your kanji quiz.

Vocab and Kanji lists from the previous week's reading are due every Tuesday. Then you will be quizzed on them on Friday.



(7) Book Introduction Videos: Aims of this assignment is to give us a chance to practice talking about books we have read and to improve our oral fluency. Since we don't meet in class on Tue and Thu, we will video record our reading report on Canvas. But please do NOT give away the ending of the book so as not to spoil other people's reading experience. Whenever physically possible, show the book you are talking about on the camera. Please follow the following template in the beginning. Once you get used to vocabulary and sentence structures to talk about books, you can diverge from the template.

私は_____という本を読みました。(or 私が読んだのは_____という本です。)

I read a book called _____. (The one I read is a book called _____.)

この本は_____についての本です。(Use この if you are showing the book, if not, use その.)

This book is a book about _____.

おも とうじょうじんぶつ
主な登場人物は A と B と C です。A は_____で、B は_____で、C は_____です。

Main characters are A, B, and C. A is ____, B is ____, C is _____. (Talk about each main character's jobs, personalities, etc.)

この本の中で、_____。 Describe what happens in the book without telling the end.

In this book, _____.


私は、この本が好き／きらい です。なぜなら、_____からです。

I like/dislike this book. That's because _____.

みなさんも、き気にいるかもしれません。よ読んでみてください。／みなさんは、読まないほうがいいかもしれません。

You might like it too. Please read it and find out. /You might be better off not reading it.


If you get tired of talking about books, you may talk about other things, such as current news, how to make something, how to do/play something, travel experiences, comparison of two or more things, pros and cons about something, description of your favorite place, future plans, etc. Try to talk about different things each time.



(8) Mini Performances: Aims of these assignments are to improve oral fluency and to help you understand and analyze a story. We will use the class time to get started with the preparation, but you will need to prepare and practice outside the class. On the day of the performance, please bring appropriate props to make it fun.

1. Act It Out: Choose and act out a scene from a book you have read. First, form a group of 4, and discuss which book may be suitable to act out. Then choose a scene to act out. Practice with your group outside the class and present to others in class.

2. Minidrama/skit: Write and perform a short drama/skit based on a book of your (group's) choice. First, form a group of 4, and discuss which book people want to turn to a minidrama.



(9) Story Writing: Since we will read a lot in this class, we will try writing our own story. The purpose of this assignment is to use words, phrases and sentence structures you learned from your readings creatively while practicing writing. The story we create will be made available to other students learning Japanese. There is no length limits, as long as it tells a story and has multiple pages with illustrations, pictures, photos, etc to suit your creative ability. Please make sure to bind your story in a book format. Choose one of the following four types of story.


Story type 1: Change characters from an existing book/story and create a slightly different story.

Story type 2: Create a parody. Change a sad story fun, a fun story sad, a funny story scary, etc. You can also make a funny story funnier. You may use the same characters from the original story or create new characters.

Story type 3: Write a continuation of a story of your choice. Create a story about what happens after the original story concludes.

Story type 4: Create your own picture book. Your readers may be children or adults, you decide before you write your book.

If you chose type 1, 2 or 3, you will present the original story together with your story. We will share your story in class on the day the story is due.



(10) Free topic presentation (5 minutes presentation + 3 minutes Q&A):

Choose a topic that you care about, a topic you would like to be able to discuss in detail in Japanese, a topic you want to share with your classmates, or anything else. You must choose your topic by Friday April 24. You may work on this presentation individually or with a partner.

Presentation format: Choose a format you prefer: PowerPoint, Performance/mini skit, Poster, Panel, Video, or anything else?

(11) Oral Proficiency Interviews:

Your oral proficiency will be assessed at the beginning and the end of the semester. Your performance on these tests are very important so please show your best performance.

(12) E-Portfolio with lists, daily record and reflection paper.

You are required to keep a record of your work in an E-portfolio created on OneDrive. You are responsible to show that you are making progress with your study of Japanese. Your record needs to be updated weekly. In addition to reading intensively or extensively at least for an hour each day, you are expected to study kanji, vocabulary, grammar, listening, or speaking outside the class for one to two hours every day. You need to write down what you did as a proof of your study.

Reflection Paper (in English or in Japanese)

Write an essay reflecting upon what you learned this semester. What did you enjoy doing? What went well? How so? What didn't go well? Why do you think it didn't go well? What would you have done differently? What are your strengths and weaknesses? What do you hope to learn in the future? How do you plan to do that? These are some of the questions you can ask yourself when reflecting on your study but you don't have to limit yourself to these questions.

Student Survey Responses

Six out of seven students responded to an end of semester survey about different components of the course and about the overall course experience.

What are the advantages of this course compared to regular Japanese courses you have taken?

Freedom to explore topics and practice skills chosen by the learner, allowing for relevant learning.

The self study is nice compared to the regular way of every one learning the same thing, as it allows individual students to learn at their own pace and to do so in ways that they find engaging.

There is more independence study involved.

I love how geared it was toward personal interest. I felt I was much better able to retain new vocabulary words and kanji because I had assembled my own lists from interesting reading material!

You are able to look at what you like specifically and the smaller groups let you work more intimately with others. This is better than single study because you remain motivated, but not as overwhelming as class work.

you are able to choose your own textbook to study

What are the disadvantages of this course compared to regular Japanese courses you have taken?

This course requires a basic understanding of Japanese, so it is not for everyone. There is much less structure provided by the instructor and that **can be overwhelming to some**.

The lack of a solid learning structure **may prevent students from learning as much as they could be in a given time**, and they may spend more time on older structures and such rather than be pushed to keep learning and using new forms and grammar.

None

It **wasn't as interactive as other Japanese courses I've taken**; it was much more self-directed. However, I don't see this as much of a disadvantage, and **I actually preferred learning in this way**. This might not be the case for other students, though.

I think if a person is shy they **may end up in their own shell**. Really, it's hard to judge because the Coronavirus sort of changed a lot of expectations.

You have to create your own assignments, vocabulary, and kanji, which can be hard because we are use to getting specific assignments assigned all the time.

Q5 - I prefer Extensive Reading (reading a lot quickly) more than Intensive Reading (reading carefully, looking up words).

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	50.00%	3
2	No	50.00%	3
	Total	100%	6

Q8 - Please explain why you prefer Extensive Reading.

It helps practice reading the words quickly and could help with speech speed as well.

I am better at it, so that may be a bias since this is the first time I've intensive read. But intensive reading feels slower and it's harder to get context.

Extensive reading helps with speaking Japanese without stuttering or thinking how to read or pronounce the word.

Q10 - Please explain why you prefer Intensive Reading.

I find myself easily lost if I miss critical contextual details.

I learn more words that way

I absorb much more material with intensive reading-- it's more difficult, but it's also more rewarding!

Q13 - Intensive Reading (reading carefully, looking up words) helped me learn:

#	Answer	%	Count
1	new kanji	23.53%	4
2	vocabulary	35.29%	6
3	sentence structures	23.53%	4
4	reading skills	17.65%	3
5	Other:	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	17

Q14 - Extensive Reading (reading a lot quickly) helped me learn:

#	Answer	%	Count
1	new kanji	0.00%	0
2	vocabulary	30.77%	4
3	sentence structures	30.77%	4
4	reading skills	38.46%	5
5	Other:	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	13

Q15 - Act-it-out (Acting out a scene from a story) was:

#	Answer	%	Count
1	fun.	60.00%	6
2	more work than it was worth.	0.00%	0
3	helped me learn how to use new words.	20.00%	2
4	helped me learn how to use Japanese sentence structures.	0.00%	0
5	helped me understand the story better.	20.00%	2
6	Other:	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	10

Q17 - Posting two videos per week was:

#	Answer	%	Count
1	valuable learning experience.	20.00%	2
2	helpful for developing my oral proficiency.	30.00%	3
3	somewhat Valuable learning experience.	20.00%	2
4	more time consuming than it is worth.	10.00%	1
5	Other:	20.00%	2
	Total	100%	10

Q17 - Posting two videos per week was:

Other: - Text

I preferred making instructional videos over describing books

I think the concept was good, but as I mentioned before, I would have enjoyed more variability with the format.

Q18 - Keeping the learning portfolio was:

#	Answer	%	Count
1	more time consuming than it is worth.	21.43%	3
2	helpful for organizing my study.	21.43%	3
3	helpful for reviewing materials.	21.43%	3
4	useful for tracking my learning progress.	14.29%	2
5	boring.	7.14%	1
6	fun.	7.14%	1
7	Other:	7.14%	1
	Total	100%	14

Q18 - Keeping the learning portfolio was:

Other: - Text

One issue I ran into was having to scroll through so much material as the semester progressed. Though I would have like to keep a personal copy of everything I had learned so far, I think I would have preferred simply updating an existing template with just one or two weeks' worth of material at a time.

The course syllabus states: “This course aims to further your study of Japanese through Extensive Reading, Intensive Reading, and One-on-One instructions (face-to-face or online). An objective of the course is to improve your reading, speaking, listening and writing skills in Japanese from where you are.”

In your opinion, did the course achieve its objective? Please explain your answer

The course achieved this objective in that I am more confident in my Japanese language skills than when I started the course.

Yes, I feel like the course did achieve its objective, as the majority of work was concerned with reading books and learning new vocabulary from them. There were also semi-weekly meetings with the instructor to practice speaking, and various activities were implemented to help students use their language skills in different situations.

Yes. I got some much needed practice in.

Yes! Our coursework was not only geared toward personal interest, but it also required that we spend extensive time with reading materials, grammar books, etc. We also had regular opportunities to practice our speaking and listening comprehension abilities in the classroom with peers.

Yes, though obviously Dr. Kakegawa had to make a lot of adjustments due to the change in our teaching environment. I think if she is able to plan ahead for this sort of thing it will be even better. The in-class work was gruelling but rewarding.

I believe there should have been more one on one instruction but other than that it did meet the objectives.

Summary

Japanese 302:

- ▶ Group activities: mini performances, talking about the books they read, writing and sharing their stories, and free-topic presentation.
- ▶ Individual activities: Extensive and Intensive Readings, One-on-One meetings, creating videos, studying with a textbook of their choice.
- ▶ Students' feedback: Mostly positive, more interaction in face-to-face class, varied topics for videos, modification to portfolio format.

Thank you.

▶ Any Questions or Comments, please?