

JAPANESE STUDIES

The Japanese Studies Programme offers three courses of study: the **Major in Japanese Studies**, the **Minor in Japanese Language**, and the **Minor in Japanese Culture**.

The **Major in Japanese Studies** combines intensive training in Japanese language with a range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives into Japanese history, literature, society, and culture. Students follow a core language pathway for three years, developing a high level of proficiency in Japanese while simultaneously enriching their understanding of Japan through a diverse selection of elective courses taught in Japanese and English. These electives fall into three categories:

List A: English-medium electives

List B: Japanese-medium electives

List C: Cross-listed electives offered in other Programmes

We encourage all students intending to major in Japanese Studies to participate in the exchange programmes in Japan, preferably for a full academic year, since our most advanced courses assume a familiarity with Japanese language and culture that is best acquired through in-country study.

The **Minor in Japanese Language** follows the first three years of the core Japanese language pathway, presenting an attractive option for students wishing to learn Japanese to complement other courses of study.

The **Minor in Japanese Culture** is taught entirely in English. It allows students to explore Japanese society and culture through a rich variety of academic perspectives, without requiring study of the Japanese language.

Admission to the **Major in Japanese Studies** requires a minimum grade of C+ in **all three** Prerequisite Courses (**JAPN1011**, **JAPN1088**, **JAPN1099**). Admission to the **Minor in Japanese Language** requires a minimum grade of C+ in the two language Prerequisite Courses (**JAPN1088**, **JAPN1099**).

The Major and Minor requirements listed below are for students with **no** prior knowledge of Japanese. Students **with** prior knowledge of Japanese can complete a Major in Japanese Studies or a Minor in Japanese Language by entering the core language pathway at a higher level and taking additional elective courses to complete the total number of required credits. These students should contact the School of Modern Languages and Cultures for information on the date and time of the placement test, which is normally held during the first week of the add/drop period.

Major in Japanese Studies (72 credits)

- **Prerequisite courses (18 credits):**

JAPN1011. Introduction to Japanese Studies (6 credits)

JAPN1088. Japanese language I (Part 1) (6 credits)

JAPN1099. Japanese language I (Part 2) (6 credits)

- **Core language courses (24 credits):**

JAPN2088. Japanese language II (Part 1) (6 credits)

JAPN2099. Japanese language II (Part 2) (6 credits)

JAPN3088. Japanese language III (Part 1) (6 credits)

JAPN3099. Japanese language III (Part 2) (6 credits)

- **Interdisciplinary elective courses (24 credits):**

One course chosen from **List A** (English-medium electives) (6 credits)

One course chosen from **List B** (Japanese-medium electives) (6 credits)

Two elective courses, chosen from **List A**, **List B**, or **List C** (12 credits)

- **Capstone experience course (6 credits):**
 JAPN3082. Japanese Studies internship: Capstone experience (6 credits); OR
 JAPN4099. Japanese language IV (Part 2): Capstone experience (6 credits); OR
 JAPN4101. Japanese Studies research project: Capstone experience (6 credits)

Note: Students intending to complete the Major in Japanese Studies should aim to complete the three Prerequisite Courses **JAPN1011**, **JAPN1088**, and **JAPN1099** during their first year of study. These courses have a limited number of places. Year 1 students receive priority for enrolment, and students in Year 3 or above are NOT eligible to enroll in these courses.

Minor in Japanese Language (36 credits)

- **Prerequisite courses (12 credits):**
 JAPN1088. Japanese language I (Part 1) (6 credits)
 JAPN1099. Japanese language I (Part 2) (6 credits)
- **Core language courses (24 credits):**
 JAPN2088. Japanese language II (Part 1) (6 credits)
 JAPN2099. Japanese language II (Part 2) (6 credits)
 JAPN3088. Japanese language III (Part 1) (6 credits)
 JAPN3099. Japanese language III (Part 2) (6 credits)

Minor in Japanese Culture (36 credits)

- **Prerequisite course (6 credits):**
 JAPN1011. Introduction to Japanese Studies (6 credits)
- **Interdisciplinary elective courses (30 credits):**
Three courses chosen from **List A** (18 credits)
Two courses chosen from either **List A** or **List C** (12 credits)

Note: Students in Year 3 or above are NOT eligible to enroll in **JAPN1011**. Students in Year 3 or above wishing to declare a **Minor in Japanese Culture** who have not completed JAPN1011 must seek approval from the School of Modern Languages and Cultures to substitute an additional elective course from List A in place of JAPN1011.

Prerequisite Courses

JAPN1011. Introduction to Japanese Studies (6 credits)

Introduction to Japanese Studies is a survey course of Japan, examining various aspects of Japanese history, culture, literature, film, politics and contemporary society. Students will not only learn about Japan, but also learn how to analyse it critically. By the end of the course, students should have a broad understanding of Japan and the different approaches and questions posed by the diverse disciplines making up Japanese Studies.

This course is targeted primarily at those Faculty of Arts' students who have enrolled in Japanese language courses, but students from other faculties may take the course subject to availability. Students in Year 3 or above are NOT eligible to enroll in this course.

Assessment: 100% coursework (presentations, essay assignments, etc.)

JAPN1088. Japanese language I (Part 1) (6 credits)

This introductory course is designed for complete beginners in the study of the Japanese language. The fundamentals of the language will be presented through a carefully graded syllabus. While the emphasis is on a thorough understanding of basic Japanese grammar and vocabulary, it also aims to develop communicative competence in order to prepare students for smooth transition to the study of Japanese at a more advanced level. Students in Year 3 or above are NOT eligible to enroll in this course.

Assessment: 100% coursework (including tests, quizzes, assignments/class performance and final oral test)

N.B. Since Chinese characters are an integral part of this course and will be given no separate introduction by the course instructors, students with no prior knowledge of Chinese characters should ensure that they discuss this issue with their class teacher at the beginning of the semester.

JAPN1099. Japanese language I (Part 2) (6 credits)

This elementary Japanese course focuses on proficiency-based foreign language learning. While the emphasis is on a thorough understanding of basic Japanese grammar and vocabulary, it also aims to develop communicative competence in order to prepare students for a smooth transition to the study of Japanese at a more advanced level. Students in Year 3 or above are NOT eligible to enroll in this course.

Prerequisite: **JAPN1088. Japanese language I (Part 1)**

Assessment: 100% coursework (including tests, quizzes, assignments/class performance and final oral test)

N.B. Since Chinese characters are an integral part of this course and will be given no separate introduction by the course instructors, students with no prior knowledge of Chinese characters should ensure that they discuss this issue with their class teacher at the beginning of the semester.

Core Language Courses**JAPN2088. Japanese language II (Part 1) (6 credits)**

This course is a continuation of **JAPN1099. Japanese language I (Part 2)**. Students will learn elementary vocabularies, grammar patterns and linguistic knowledge in grammar classes, which provides the linguistic foundation for the acquisition of the four language skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing in Japanese. These four skills are to be consolidated and enhanced by various activities in class.

Prerequisite: Minimum grade of C+ in both **JAPN1088. Japanese language I (Part 1)** and **JAPN1099. Japanese language I (Part 2)**, or equivalent

Assessment: 100% coursework

N.B. This course is designed for students who have successfully passed the first-year language course JAPN1099, and are still at the elementary level. Students with an intermediate or upper level should check with the applicable teachers as to their suitability for the course before enrolling in it. Students may be required to take a placement test.

JAPN2099. Japanese language II (Part 2) (6 credits)

This course is a continuation of **JAPN2088. Japanese language II (Part 1)**. Students will learn most of the vocabularies and grammar of the elementary level, and develop the four language skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing by applying what they have learnt. Students will proceed gradually to the intermediate level.

Prerequisite: **JAPN2088. Japanese language II (Part 1)**

Assessment: 100% coursework

N.B. This course is designed for students who have successfully passed JAPN2088, and are still at the elementary level. Students with an intermediate or upper level should check with the applicable teachers as to their suitability for the course before enrolling in it. Students may be required to take a placement test.

JAPN3088. Japanese language III (Part 1) (6 credits)

This course is a continuation of **JAPN2099. Japanese language II (Part 2)**, and aims at developing a more integrated proficiency in the Japanese language by building on the foundation students have already acquired. Practical training will be given to further develop the four language skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing, using a wide range of materials and activities. Students who took part in a one-year exchange programme to Japan are not eligible to take this course.

Prerequisite: **JAPN2099. Japanese language II (Part 2)** or equivalent

Assessment: 100% coursework (test, quizzes, presentation and homework)

JAPN3099. Japanese language III (Part 2) (6 credits)

This course is a continuation of **JAPN3088. Japanese language III (Part 1)** and focuses on further developing integrated proficiency in the Japanese language, with an emphasis on increasing accuracy and fluency. The course aims at helping students acquire synthetic Japanese abilities. Students who have taken part in a one-year exchange programme to Japan are not eligible to take this course.

Prerequisite: **JAPN3088. Japanese language III (Part 1)**

Assessment: 100% coursework (test, quizzes, presentation and homework)

Capstone Experience Courses

JAPN3082. Japanese Studies internship: Capstone experience (6 credits)

This course offers students an internship learning experience by allowing them to take their classroom knowledge into the community. Students will have an opportunity for experiential learning, earn credits towards their degree, and engage in a rich experience by working in an organisation or company that has a real impact on society. The internship experience draws on coursework offered by the Department of Japanese Studies and allows students to work in Japanese companies, or in companies which have a strong connection to Japan and demonstrates the use of Japanese in the community.

Prerequisite: **JAPN2088. Japanese language II (Part 1)** or **JAPN3088. Japanese language III (Part 1)**

Assessment: 100% course work (graded on a distinction/pass/fail basis)

JAPN4099. Japanese language IV (Part 2): Capstone experience (6 credits)

Japanese language IV (Part 2) is for students who have completed JAPN4088 or have a similar level of proficiency in Japanese. Delivered through lecture and tutorial, the course advances integrated reading, writing, speaking, and listening with authentic materials, seminar-style discussion, and project-based tasks, while continuously applying skills from JAPN4088. As a capstone in the Japanese Language Programme, students synthesize their learning history and articulate post-graduation plans for work, further study, or civic engagement in Japan-related contexts. Students will learn to use AI tools to support brainstorming and idea development, and to plan and produce video-based presentations, with explicit guidance on ethical and responsible use. Typical components include domain-specific readings, professional writing in Japanese, mock interviews, a reflective portfolio, and a final video

presentation. When taken beyond core language credit requirements, it counts as a Japanese language elective. Credit transfer is not accepted.

Prerequisite: **JAPN4088. Japanese language IV (Part 1)** and/or the course instructors' approval
 Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN4101. Japanese Studies research project: Capstone experience (6 credits)

The Japanese Studies research project will allow students to pursue independent research under the supervision of a Japanese Studies teacher. The course is designed to provide students with the opportunity to explore in depth a topic related to Japanese Studies. They may choose to adopt a disciplinary approach (e.g. history, politics, literature, film, anthropology) or engage in a multi-disciplinary approach, depending on the nature of the question or issue of inquiry. This course will also cover how to ethically use AI tools for academic writing, research, and presentations. Specifically, students will learn how to explore and engage with existing scholarship on their research topics by guided use of prompts and discussions with AI to help formulate their bibliographies. They will also experiment with new methodologies and analytical frameworks related to AI in their research, while maintaining an active log of their AI usage for future reference and acknowledgment. By integrating foundational AI tools throughout all stages of their research, students will develop a thoughtful and comprehensive understanding of AI literacy. Students wishing to take this capstone course should consult with a teacher who is willing to supervise them before enrolling. Students must also complete a research proposal template and submit to their proposed supervisor before the beginning of semester.

Assessment: 100% coursework (presentations, essay assignments, etc.)

Interdisciplinary Elective Courses

{Note:

Not all courses are offered in a given semester; students should check with individual units on course availability; students should also check on course prerequisites and other enrollment restrictions.}

List A: English Medium Electives

JAPN2010. Japanese business: an anthropological introduction (6 credits)

Japanese economic growth has been one of the most remarkable success stories of the past century. Japanese management practices have emerged from Japan's particular path to modernization and its capitalist conditions. What are the characteristics of Japanese capitalism? In what ways do capitalist economies differ from one another in their social organization, institutional embeddedness, gendered relations, and modes of governance? What are the challenges of such differences for management and economic performance in a competitive global economy? How have Japanese corporations responded to the processes of globalization and neo-liberalization? In tackling these questions, we will analyze the issues of industrialization, globalization and neoliberalism as well as a broad range of topics, including those related to labor, industrial organization, management, the theory of the firm, gender, and economic reforms in Japanese society. Thus this course challenges the common views of "Japanese management" and "Japanese corporations." It introduces the complex development of Japanese capitalism from the early 19th century to the present and examines ongoing transformations within Japanese capitalism.

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN2011. Anthropology of Japan (6 credits)

This course explores the major institutions, ideas, and historical and contemporary issues that shape Japanese culture and society today. Using an anthropological perspective, this course focuses on the three major social institutions in Japan of home, school, and work in order to ground students in the primary sociocultural structures of life in Japan, and also to think about how these institutions are changing under new socioeconomic, demographic, and global transformations. In addition, the course will examine ethnographic case studies to show how anthropologists have examined a variety of social and cultural issues such as religion and ritual, ethnicity and immigration, youth and subculture, gender and sexuality, and globalization in Japan.

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN2045. Sex, gender, and technology in Japan (6 credits)

This course introduces the social scientific study of gender, sexuality, and family in Japan from the postwar to the contemporary period from a comparative perspective. For many people, Japan represents a sweeping stereotype of extreme gender norms vis-à-vis contemporary Euro-American gender norms and manifestations. Such stereotypes are employed not only by outsiders to critique the society ethnocentrically, but also by some natives as well. Both sides frequently comment on the ways gender and gendered expectations shape and even determine contemporary experiences of “being Japanese.” Furthermore, stereotypes about gender and sexuality in Japan frequently overlap with and draw from broader stereotypes about Japan vis-à-vis other Asian societies and Asian societies vis-à-vis Western societies. By identifying these stereotypes and also critically questioning what gender means and how it is being shaped in and shaping contemporary Japan, this course will offer an entry into theories of gender studies and sexuality, and also introduce tools to critically analyze cultural differences manifested in the issues of gender, sexuality, and family while at the same time learning more about Japanese society and your own society.

Assessment: 100% coursework (presentations, essay assignments, etc.)

JAPN2050. Creative industries in East Asia (Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea and Japan) (6 credits)

Previously, research in media or cultural studies has paid much attention to the consumption of cultural and media texts. This course, however, calls for their production to be examined, by focusing on the creative industries in East Asia including Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. While it is important to examine the inter-relation between production, circulation, consumption, regulation, and representation when we study the meaning of a cultural text, production remains a primary and vital moment in creating the meaning of a cultural text. Furthermore, while there are studies on the creative industries outside East Asia, the production of media and cultural texts within the region has been little studied. Given the fact that media and cultural texts in East Asia, such as Japanese comics, animation and pornography, Korean and Hong Kong movies, and the Taiwanese performing arts, have spread and had tremendous impact globally, an understanding of their production is increasingly important.

In this course, we shall explore how the recent trends in the political economies in East Asia have influenced the production of media and cultural texts in the region; several important sectors within the creative industries, including comics and animation, pornography, movie, popular music, and performing arts in East Asia; the production and marketing strategies of several major corporations in the region such as TVB in Hong Kong, Sony in Japan; and the manufacture of idols in the creative industries.

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN2058. Understanding popular culture in Japan (6 credits)

Why do people like (or dislike) particular kinds of popular culture? What is “special” about Japanese popular culture? How can we understand Japanese society and culture by studying Japanese popular culture? Japanese popular culture is popular not only in Japan, but it has also become recognized as a distinct and attractive form of consumption and fandom around the world—from the U.S. to Europe to Asia. In this class we learn about how to understand and analyze Japanese popular and mass culture from historical, sociological and anthropological perspectives. In other words, this is not a survey course of different kinds of popular culture in Japan, but rather this course requires us to theoretically engage in social scientific theories of popular/mass culture and to analyze the interpretations of meanings and forms of particular “popularly massified” socio-cultural phenomena in Japan, and what analyzing them can tell us about Japanese society more broadly. It further pushes us to examine how popular/mass culture is embedded in the socioeconomic conditions of Japan, and how they affect and are affected by global forces.

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN2060. Contemporary Sino-Japanese relations (6 credits)

Contemporary Sino-Japanese Relations is a course specializing in the study of one of the most intriguing sets of bilateral relations in East Asia: Sino-Japanese relations. The overall theoretical approach of the course is interdisciplinary in nature and draws heavily from the discipline of history and international relations. The course aims to provide the students with an understanding of how geopolitics and regional processes are complexly interlinked with the fate of these two nations since the industrial revolution brought to Western powers to East Asia. It examines the evolution and experimentation by Japan and China the philosophies and ideas that have underpinned the political and economic systems during the different eras. Departing from their feudal systems, Japan and China flirted with republicanism, liberal democracy, capitalism authoritarianism, imperialism, colonialism, militarism and nationalism before engaging each other in a protracted and disastrous conflict that lasted for several decades. The course then examines contemporary Sino-Japanese relations broadly conceived. Students are introduced to topics by means of two broad survey lectures, and are invited to examine in greater detail, the various controversial topics within this set of bilateral relations. It examines the following themes from the perspective of Sino-Japanese relations: legacy of history (e.g. textbook writing, disposal of chemical weapons, wartime apologies), nationalism and identity, the Pinnacles (Senkaku/Diaoyu) Islands dispute, the Taiwan issue, the Korean Peninsula crisis and the competition for energy sources between China and Japan.

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN2071. Introduction to modern Japanese literature (6 credits)

This course offers an introduction to modern Japanese literature, from the mid-nineteenth century to the contemporary moment. Providing a panoramic view of major authors and literary texts in English translation, the class explores important themes in modern literary representation and cultural experience while situating Japanese literature in global contexts of modernity and postmodernity. Readings mostly consist of primary literary texts, but relevant critical, historical, and visual references (including images and films) are also assigned.

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN2072. The History of Imperial Japan (6 credits)

This course will examine the major social, cultural, economic, and political developments which occurred during Japan's imperial period (1868-1945) as well as the post-war/de-colonial period which

immediately followed its collapse. In addition to exploring the creation of key national institutions including military conscription, tax, and education, it will examine Japan's emergence in East Asia as a colonial empire, as well as the role of figures ranging from the emperor to settlers, refugees, migrant workers, and fugitives.

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN2073. The ethnography of Japan (6 credits)

This course introduces the rich tradition of ethnography about Japan. By surveying ethnographic writings from the late 19th century to the present, this course explores the variety, complexity, and change in Japanese culture and society. In addition, this class also investigates methods and ethical concerns of the anthropological study and representation of Japan. Readings primarily consist of ethnographic writings by anthropologists and sociologists, but also include literary nonfiction and journalistic pieces.

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN2074. China in the Japanese Literary Imagination (6 credits)

This course offers an introduction to Japanese literary negotiations with “China,” the “Chinese” and “Chineseness,” ranging from celebration of shared cultural practices and aestheticization of China to nativist resistance to Chinese cultural hegemony. Readings mostly consist of primary literary texts in translation, but relevant critical, and historical references are also assigned. Some assignments will engage students in using AI tools to support literary analysis, research development, and interpretive work, helping them to critically apply digital methods in the study of literature.

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN2075. Introduction to postwar and contemporary Japanese literature (6 credits)

This course is an introduction to the literature from postwar and contemporary Japan between the late 1940s and the 2020s. Students will read a diverse range of literary texts by writers from different backgrounds. Through close readings of novellas and short stories, the class explores a variety of themes relevant to the narratives and their historical contexts. All readings will be provided in English translation. Some assignments will incorporate the use of AI for tasks to enhance students' understanding of digital approaches to literary study and how to integrate AI-assisted insights into their interpretations and research projects.

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN2081. Japanese literature (6 credits)

This course is a survey of Japanese literature. Material will be presented in a chronological and thematic fashion, with the aim of providing students with an overall view of literary trends. Content may include: selected classical poetry and literature (Noh drama, poetry, diaries, and epic histories of the early feudal and Warring States Period, scenarios of puppet drama and kabuki drama, novellas, feudal period poetry); post-Meiji literature, and post WWII literature. The class format will include lectures and discussion. Preparation for class (i.e. doing the reading) is an important part of your grade. All materials are in English translation; no knowledge of Japanese is required.

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN2082. Japanese film and society (6 credits)

This course traces the development of Japanese film, from silent movies to the present, including anime. In addition to covering the works of famous directors (Ozu, Mizoguchi, Kurosawa, Oshima, et al), the birth of the Pure Film movement, Japanese imperialism, the American Occupation, and the postwar “new wave” and the role of film criticisms may be examined in this course. This exploration of Japanese cinema will offer a perspective on the genre’s development in specific socio-cultural-historical contexts. No prior knowledge of Japanese history, language or film is presumed. All readings on the course are in English, and the films have English subtitles.

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN2083. Contemporary Japanese society and culture (6 credits)

This course is about contemporary Japanese society and culture. This course will provide students with an understanding of key aspects of contemporary Japanese society and culture. Major concepts necessary for the understanding of contemporary Japan will be introduced, and students will gain an understanding of key problems faced by contemporary Japan, and the structures, practices, and dynamics that inform these issues. Topics may include, but are not limited to: postwar politics, economics, international relations, social and cultural movements, popular culture, demographics, war and memory, gender and sexuality, minority issues.

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN2084. Studies in Japanese culture (6 credits)

This course offers an introduction to the culture, history, and society of Japan. The primary goal is to develop a broad understanding of Japanese cultural, political, and social identities. In addition to a variety of secondary sources, students will work with primary source materials (both non-fictional and fictional works, i.e. laws, memoirs, essays, fictional stories, films, art, theater, etc.).

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN2087. Introduction to Japanese literature: Beginnings to 1900 (6 credits)

This course offers a panoramic view of Japanese literature – of representative authors, works, genres and themes – from the beginnings in the 8th century through the early 19th century. In addition to introducing students to the major traditions of pre-twentieth century narrative, poetry and theater, the class also explores the rich cultural and social worlds of premodern and early modern Japan, such as the Heian period imperial court, medieval warrior society, or Edo-period urban commoner culture.

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN2089. Twentieth century Japan: History, state and society (6 credits)

This course offers a broad historical survey of Japan and its society from the 1850s to the beginning of Japan’s lost decades of deflation that began in the early 1990s. Students who complete this course will have a deeper understanding of the key social, political, economic, international, and demographic changes that have transformed Japan.

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN2091. Introduction to Premodern Japan (6 credits)

This course offers an introduction to the history of Japan up to the mid-nineteenth century. Topics to be covered include: archaeological findings concerning the earliest cultures of the Japanese islands, the influence of contacts with China and Korea, the development of writing and literary culture, varieties of religious thought and practice, and the structures of economic and political power. This course assumes no previous knowledge of Japanese language or history, and all required readings will be in English.

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN2092. Japan in the Tokugawa Period (1600-1868) (6 credits)

The establishment of the Tokugawa shogunate marked a turning point in Japanese history, bringing peace to a country that had experienced centuries of civil and international warfare. The Japanese economy flourished at first, but later periods were marked by successive crises and attempts at reform by samurai rulers who saw an increasing gap between their ideal vision of Japanese society and the emergent social realities around them. This course will examine the political, economic, social and cultural life of the Tokugawa period. We will consider the development of popular education, the structure and dynamics of the Tokugawa economy, and the ways gender and social status shaped the daily lives of individuals. All required readings will be in English, but there will also be opportunities for students with appropriate levels of linguistic ability to take advantage of available primary and secondary sources in Japanese and classical Chinese.

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN2095. Gender and sexuality in modern Japanese literature (6 credits)

This course examines representations and constructions of gender and sexuality in Japanese literary texts from the late 17th century to the contemporary moment, with a strong emphasis on 20th century Japan. While offering an introduction to major authors, works and developments in modern Japanese literature, the class also seeks to question and reevaluate critically theoretical concepts such as gender, sex, femininity, masculinity, feminism, homosociality, and desire.

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN2096. Young Leaders Tour of Japan Field Trip (6 credits)

In this course, students will be led by an experienced faculty member on a supervised one-week visit to Japan. Students will have the opportunity to use their Japanese language skills and apply their knowledge of Japanese history, culture and society, in a range of real-life business, corporate, educational and cultural settings. As future leaders, students will be encouraged to think about global problems such as recovering from natural disasters, reconstruction, and corporate social responsibility initiatives in society. Students will also have opportunities to meet Japanese business executives and gain insights in to corporate life in Japan.

Prerequisite: **JAPN2099. Japanese language II (Part 2)** or equivalent

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN2098. Of courtesans, samurai, and vengeful ghosts: Japanese literature of the early modern period (6 credits)

This course offers a panoramic view of the literature of the Edo period (1600–1868), one of the most vibrant and productive moments in Japanese literary and cultural history, often described as “early

modern.” In addition to introducing students to major authors and texts—covering poetry, narrative prose, theater, and important intellectual currents—the course will explore the various social worlds in which early modern cultural and literary production was rooted: the worlds of the samurai, urban commoners, or the courtesans in the "pleasure quarter."

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN2100. Transpacific Japan (6 credits)

This course investigates Japan's transpacific entanglements (including its "north-south" connections with Asia and its "east-west" connections with the Americas) from the mid-19th century until the present. In this context, students will read a variety of primary and secondary texts which discuss concepts such as nationalism, migration, citizenship, indigeneity and racialization. Focusing on texts produced by minoritized writers in Japan (/the Japanese Empire) as well as members of the Japanese diaspora overseas, students are encouraged to question the self-evidence of the terms "Japan" and the "Japanese."

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN2102. Japanese Visual and Material Cultures in the Long Twentieth Century (6 credits)

This course will explore Japanese visual and materials cultures from the long twentieth century through texts, photographs, objects, and moving images. Students will be introduced to a selection of Japanese art, crafts, design, and architecture, and develop skills of critically looking, reading, thinking, and writing.

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN2103. Artificial intelligence, androids, and automation in Japanese literature and popular culture (6 credits)

This course explores representations of artificial intelligence, androids, and automation in modern and contemporary Japanese literature and popular culture. Spanning from the Meiji period to the present, it examines how Japan's encounters with technology, industry, and posthuman thought have shaped cultural imaginaries of the machine, the cyborg, and the algorithmic self. Readings and media include fiction, film, manga, and anime that engage questions of consciousness, labor, embodiment, ethics, and creativity in an automated society. Students will also participate in guided workshops using generative AI tools to critically and creatively reflect on their use in storytelling and cultural production. All texts and media are provided in English translation or with subtitles.

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN2104. Narrating the environment in Japanese literature, film, and popular culture (6 credits)

This course examines narratives of nature, environment, and ecological consciousness in postwar and contemporary Japanese literature and media from the 1950s to the present. Students will engage with novels, essays, poetry, and selected films or anime that depict human and nonhuman entanglements, environmental crises, and shifting conceptions of the natural world. Through close readings and media analysis, the course investigates how environmental thought intersects with industrialization, urbanization, post-disaster narratives, and traditional cosmologies. All materials will be provided in English translation or with subtitles.

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN2105. The culture of work: Japanese stories of labor, precarity, and everyday life (6 credits)

This course examines how contemporary Japanese literature, film, and popular culture from the 1970s to the 2020s represent the changing world of work. As Japan moved from postindustrial prosperity through economic stagnation to the present era of precarity and automation, narratives of labor have become central to debates about exhaustion, overwork, burnout, and social inequality. Through readings of fiction, film, manga, and digital media, students explore how writers and creators depict the pressures of late-capitalist work culture, the erosion of stable employment, and the search for autonomy and meaning in a system defined by stress, replacement, and low pay. The course also considers speculative and alternative imaginaries like postwork, care-based, or communal models of labor that challenge conventional notions of productivity and success. All materials are provided in English translation or with subtitles.

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN2106. Japanese foodways: Sites and cultures of food and drink in Japanese (6 credits)

This course explores Japanese foodways by examining their historical development, cultural significance, and social and spatial practices surrounding food and drink from the Tokugawa period to the present. Using an interdisciplinary approach that includes history, anthropology, and food studies, students will analyze how Japanese foodways reflect, shape, and challenge regional identities, social hierarchies, gender norms, spiritual practices, and processes of globalization across different times, places, and occasions. By emphasizing both historical contexts and contemporary cultural expressions, this course aims to deepen understanding of the complex relationship between Japanese society and its culinary heritage. This course will also enable students to reflect on how AI may impact how we understand and interpret Japanese foodways.

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN3007. Translation (Japanese–English): Reading and translating modern Japanese literature (6 credits)

In this course students will learn how to read and translate modern and contemporary Japanese fictional texts, from Yoshimoto Banana to Natsume Sōseki. The first half of the course concentrates on postwar and contemporary writers and the second half on pre-war writers. Objectives of the course are reading for speed and accuracy, understanding grammatical structure, learning the fundamental techniques of translation, and acquiring significant exposure to modern Japanese literature. We will not only pay close attention to the grammatically and syntactically correct reading and understanding of the Japanese texts but also in particular to problems pertaining to linguistic choice and idiomatic accuracy in English. The final project will aim at an impeccable translation of potentially publishable quality in English.

Co-requisite: “JAPN3088. Japanese language III (Part 1) and JAPN3099. Japanese language III (Part 2)”, or “JAPN4088. Japanese language IV (Part 1) and JAPN4099. Japanese language IV (Part 2): Capstone experience”

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN3029. Readings in Japanese Studies (6 credits)

This course is designed to provide students with a platform to extend their reading and analytical skills in Japanese. Students will negotiate appropriate specific lists of readings relevant to their degree composition and academic interests in consultation with their lecturers. Students wishing to take this course should consult with a teacher who is willing to supervise the reading project before enrolling.

Prerequisite: **JAPN1011. Introduction to Japanese Studies**
 Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN3034. Introduction to classical Japanese (*bungo*) (6 credits)

This course provides a systematic introduction to the grammar of classical Japanese (*bungo*), which was used up until World War II in much of Japanese writing. In addition to honing our understanding of the classical Japanese language, we will also be reading and translating from original Japanese texts, covering diverse historical periods (up to the modern period) and a broad range of genres (poetry, narrative texts, essays, historical documents, etc.).

Prerequisite: **JAPN2099. Japanese language II (Part 2)** or equivalent
 Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN3038. Topics in Japanese popular culture (6 credits)

This course introduces students to a variety of materials taken from contemporary Japanese popular culture and provides students with an opportunity to analyze these materials in the original Japanese language. In addition, we will read scholarship on Japanese popular culture to equip students with various frameworks and methodologies to study the cultural production of Japan from a global perspective.

Prerequisite: **JAPN2099. Japanese language II (Part 2)** or equivalent
 Assessment: 100% coursework

List B: Japanese-medium electives

JAPN3007. Translation (Japanese–English): Reading and translating modern Japanese literature (6 credits)

In this course students will learn how to read and translate modern and contemporary Japanese fictional texts, from Yoshimoto Banana to Natsume Sōseki. The first half of the course concentrates on postwar and contemporary writers and the second half on pre-war writers. Objectives of the course are reading for speed and accuracy, understanding grammatical structure, learning the fundamental techniques of translation, and acquiring significant exposure to modern Japanese literature. We will not only pay close attention to the grammatically and syntactically correct reading and understanding of the Japanese texts but also in particular to problems pertaining to linguistic choice and idiomatic accuracy in English. The final project will aim at an impeccable translation of potentially publishable quality in English.

Co-requisite: “**JAPN3088. Japanese language III (Part 1)** and **JAPN3099. Japanese language III (Part 2)**”, or “**JAPN4088. Japanese language IV (Part 1)** and **JAPN4099. Japanese language IV (Part 2): Capstone experience**”
 Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN3017. Business Japanese (6 credits)

This is a *language elective* course for third-year Japanese language students. The course will concentrate on basic concepts of ‘positive face’ and ‘negative face’ as proposed under the ‘Politeness theory’ and will enable students to understand the underlying reasons why some behaviours are acceptable in Japanese society and others are not. Emphasis will be placed on the differences between Japanese and Hong Kong behaviours and practices. Students will also acquire basic spoken and written business Japanese skills and the behaviours appropriate to a Japanese business context with a focus on the language styles, vocabulary and phraseology needed to deal with a variety of business situations. By

the end of the course, students are expected to effectively employ the basic concepts in Politeness theory and basic business language, as well as other knowledge acquired throughout the course, in the presentation of a short skit. Students are strongly recommended to take **JAPN3067. Japanese pragmatics: Understanding the hidden meaning** in the first semester.

Students enrolled in **JAPN4088. Japanese language IV (Part 1)** or **JAPN4099. Japanese language IV (Part 2): Capstone experience** are not eligible to take this course.

Prerequisite: **JAPN3099. Japanese language III (Part 2)**

Co-requisite: **JAPN3099. Japanese language III (Part 2)**

Assessment: 100% coursework (assignments, quizzes and oral interview test)

JAPN3027. Comparative study of phonetics in Japanese and Cantonese (6 credits)

The course aims at a detailed description of the phonological systems of the two languages, both Japanese and Cantonese. It will start with an introduction to the phonological inventories and phonetic variants on both segmental make-up as well as prosodic structure. Students will be trained to transcribe the two languages in both International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and the most common sets of transcription used in foreign language textbooks. The psychotypological differences between the two languages and English and/or Mandarin will also be introduced.

Students enrolled in **JAPN4088. Japanese language IV (Part 1)** or **JAPN4099. Japanese language IV (Part 2): Capstone experience** are not eligible to take this course.

Prerequisite: **JAPN3088. Japanese language III (Part 1)**

Co-requisite: **JAPN3099. Japanese language III (Part 2)**

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN3028. Contrastive linguistics: Discourse analysis of Japanese and Cantonese (6 credits)

This *Japanese-medium content* course explores the structure and function of speech acts of the two languages. Examples will be drawn from everyday conversations that include request, acceptance, refusal, apology, etc. to investigate how people carry out conversations in order to accomplish their goals in speech acts. Research methods will be introduced through analysis of sample speech acts in Japanese. Students are required to collect conversation data in Japanese and Cantonese and analyze structures, expressions, and intensions of the discourse, based on major theories in pragmatics and present a comparative study on Japanese and Cantonese in the forms of written and oral report.

Prerequisite: **JAPN3067. Japanese pragmatics: Understanding the hidden meaning**

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN3041. Creative writing and speaking skills in Japanese (6 credits)

This course aims to enhance writing/speaking skills through various activities such as producing poetry (Haiku and Tanka)/short stories and presenting them orally in Japanese. Students are expected to create their own pieces independently and also collaboratively with others. The knowledge of storytelling types/schema/structure will be introduced. Before oral presentation, students will be given instruction on Japanese phonetics such as rhythm and intonation in order to deliver effectively and creatively. Students who have completed **JAPN2061** are not eligible to take this course.

Co-requisite: **JAPN3088. Japanese language III (Part 1)** or **JAPN3099. Japanese language III (Part 2)**

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN3062. Japanese through *manga* (6 credits)

This is a *language elective* course designed for students who have received approximately 230 hours of formal instruction. It aims to help students further develop their basic levels of Japanese skills, using Manga as the primary learning material. The items that are introduced in the Manga will be expanded into various task-based activities such as story-telling and oral presentations. Through the course materials, students will also learn about some aspects of Japanese society and everyday lives of Japanese people.

Co-requisite: **JAPN3088. Japanese language III (Part 1)**

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN3063. Selected readings in Japanese (6 credits)

This tutorial-based language elective course provides students with an opportunity to read and discuss Japanese-language texts related to specific aspects of Japanese language. The course aims to enhance students' knowledge of the Japanese language and culture as well as their reading skills through the examination of works by various authors. The focus will be on the Japanese way of thinking and how it affects and forms the Japanese language.

Co-requisite: **JAPN3099. Japanese language III (Part 2)** or approval from the instructor

Assessment: 100% coursework (short quizzes, presentation(s) and essay assignment)

JAPN3064. *The Tale of Genji* (6 credits)

This *Japanese-medium content* course explores *The Tale of Genji*, the world-famous Japanese classic written by Lady Murasaki. The novel consists of fifty-four chapters describing Genji's romantic involvement with a number of noble ladies who resided in the veiled imperial court in the 11th century Heian era. It has been widely read as a story of love and hatred that vividly epitomizes human nature that can be still observed in contemporary society. While focusing on the personalities and portraits of major female characters who were tossed about by fate, the course also provides students with an opportunity to study the background of *The Tale of Genji*, including fashion, aesthetics, traditional events, and history. A range of familiar sources to students such as translations into modern Japanese, comics, and dramas is mainly used for analyses.

Students who enrolled in or completed **JAPN4088. Japanese language IV (Part 1)** or **JAPN4099. Japanese language IV (Part 2): Capstone experience** cannot take this course.

Prerequisite: **JAPN3088. Japanese language III (Part 1)** or **JAPN3099. Japanese language III (Part 2)**; OR

Co-requisite: **JAPN3088. Japanese language III (Part 1)** or **JAPN3099. Japanese language III (Part 2)**

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN3067. Japanese pragmatics: Understanding the hidden meaning (6 credits)

This *Japanese-medium content* course aims to help students acquire a basic understanding of Japanese Pragmatics through analysis of a native Japanese speakers' language usage in contrast with their own. Native Japanese speakers use implicatures in communication to express their true feelings and intentions (that only an informed listener can understand). For instance, one may choose to add or withhold information to exaggerate or soften the message. Through the pragmatic approach, students will have the opportunity to contrast Japanese with their own language in order to analyze the appropriate use of greetings. With Politeness theory, students will analyze why expressions in their own language may be found to be impolite in the Japanese context.

Students who enrolled in or completed **JAPN4088. Japanese language IV (Part 1)** or **JAPN4099. Japanese language IV (Part 2): Capstone experience** cannot take this course.

Prerequisite: **JAPN3088. Japanese language III (Part 1)** or **JAPN3099. Japanese language III (Part 2)**; OR

Co-requisite: **JAPN3088. Japanese language III (Part 1)** or **JAPN3099. Japanese language III (Part 2)**

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN3079. Japanese to Chinese translation (6 credits)

This course develops advanced skills in translating authentic Japanese materials into fluent Chinese. Students will practice with real-world texts (e.g., interviews, advertisements, magazine articles) to accurately decipher meaning and avoid cultural misunderstandings. A key focus is on critically engaging with machine translation: students will learn to leverage AI tools while identifying and correcting their limitations in handling contextual nuances, honorifics, and culture-specific concepts. The course aims to produce culturally insightful translators who can outperform AI-generated results.

☆Students who are enrolled in or have completed **JAPN4088. Japanese language IV (Part 1)** or **JAPN4099. Japanese language IV (Part 2): Capstone experience** are NOT eligible to take this course.

Co-requisite: **JAPN3099. Japanese language III (Part 2)**

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN3089. Basic translation (Chinese↔Japanese) (6 credits)

This elective language course aims to provide students with the basic skills required for translating Chinese texts into Japanese and vice versa. Students will translate short, simple texts, chosen to illustrate a range of sentence patterns in both Chinese and Japanese. Texts with more complex structures will also be introduced to build up students' translation skills.

☆The following students are NOT eligible to take this course. 1) Students who have taken **JAPN3079. Japanese to Chinese translation**; 2) Students who are enrolled in or have completed **JAPN4088. Japanese language IV (Part 1)** or **JAPN4099. Japanese language IV (Part 2): Capstone experience**; 3) Students who have taken **JAPN2069**.

Co-requisite: **JAPN3088. Japanese language III (Part 1)**

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN4016. Advanced business Japanese (6 credits)

This is an *advanced language elective* course for students who are enrolled in **JAPN4088. Japanese language IV (Part 1)** or **JAPN4099. Japanese language IV (Part 2): Capstone experience**. The course focuses on written and spoken business communications in Japanese. The course provides business simulation and allows students to play roles of company representatives.

Prerequisite: **JAPN3099. Japanese language III (Part 2)**

Assessment: 100% coursework (assignments, written/ oral quizzes, discussions and presentations)

JAPN4021. Communication and society (6 credits)

This *Japanese-medium content* course explores the social behaviour of speakers of Japanese that is embedded in their language use. Sociolinguistic approaches to Japanese culture are promoted through students' active participation in the empirical analyses of language variations in modern Japanese. Coursework also includes reference to other languages such as English and Cantonese.

Prerequisite: **JAPN3099. Japanese language III (Part 2)**

Assessment: 100% coursework (project, presentations, journal writing and essays)

JAPN4022. Introduction to teaching Japanese as a foreign language (6 credits)

This Japanese-medium course introduces principles and practices of teaching Japanese as a foreign language. It develops foundational knowledge in applied linguistics, second language acquisition, course design, and classroom methodology. Through lectures, discussions, and active participation, students learn to set clear instructional objectives, analyze key issues in language education, and evaluate current Japanese language teaching practices. Practical components include at least two hours of classroom observation, preparation of a detailed lesson plan, and a mock lesson with peer and instructor feedback. The course integrates digital and AI-supported tools for materials design, learner engagement, and lesson planning, with guidance on ethical and privacy-aware use. Students practice creating short lecture videos for flipped learning, using quick game-based quizzes, and refining classroom techniques. The course addresses gender, sexuality, and language diversity, and promotes inclusive teaching and reflective practice. Skills developed are transferable to other subjects and professional contexts, including communication, collaboration, project management, evaluation, and digital content creation. By the end of the course, students can explain key theories, assess methods critically, teach from self-prepared plans, and communicate effectively with diverse audiences in Japanese, strengthening readiness for careers in education and related fields. Prerequisite: **JAPN3099.**

Japanese language III (Part 2)

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN4023. “Nihonjinron”: The question of Japanese uniqueness (6 credits)

This *Japanese-medium content* course looks at major influential “Nihonjinron” texts written in the post-war era. The term “Nihonjinron” refers to a genre of texts which discuss unique features of Japanese society and people and have been written by authors of various fields. Students will be expected to read a selection of key texts in their Japanese-language version in depth and examine them critically. The historical background of each text will be discussed thoroughly to provide students with critical perspectives on these texts.

Prerequisite: **JAPN3099. Japanese language III (Part 2)**

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN4026. Collaborative community of inquiry: Hong Kong and Japan (6 credits)

Participants from HKU will be teamed up with students from a partner university (Hokkaido University, Japan) and work collaboratively on the examination of current problems that the international community faces. Each team will select a topic, conduct research, and recommend solutions that are likely to improve situations. The inter-university communication will be done online, using telecommunication systems. Online discussions and debates help the teams to prepare for poster presentations and the individual participant to compose an essay, along with the information and opinions resulting from the research.

Prerequisite: **JAPN3099. Japanese language III (Part 2)**

Assessment: 100% coursework

JAPN4088. Japanese language IV (Part 1) (6 credits)

This *advanced* course is for students who have taken part in a one-year exchange programme to Japan or who have a similar level of proficiency in Japanese. The course consists of various learning units to

improve reading, writing, and oral/aural skills. Credit transfer for this course is not accepted. This course is a prerequisite for **JAPN4099: Japanese language IV (Part 2): Capstone experience**.

Prerequisite: Course instructors' approval

Assessment: 100% coursework

List C: Elective courses offered by other Programmes

Faculty of Arts

School of Modern Languages and Cultures

- GLAS2114. China in Northeast Asia (6 credits)
- SINO2008. World heritage in Asia (6 credits)
- SINO2010. China regional studies – Northeast (6 credits)
- SINO2011. Taiwan Studies (6 credits)
- KORE2028. Society, culture, and politics of North Korea (DPRK) (6 credits)

School of Chinese

- CHIN2154. Taiwan literature from the Japanese colonial period to the 1990s (6 credits)

School of Humanities

- ARTH2048. Arts of premodern Japan (6 credits)
- ARTH2067. Architecture of East Asia (6 credits)
- ARTH3022. Japanese Art in the Long Nineteenth Century (6 credits)
- GEND2012. Queer Feminisms and Japan: Approaches to Stories, Politics, and Imagination (6 credits)
- HIST2105. The rise of modern Japan, 1830s to 1950s (6 credits)
- HIST2106. Imperial Japan: Its modern wars and colonial empire (6 credits)
- HIST2107. The Second World War in Asia and the Pacific, 1931-1952 (6 credits)
- HIST2123. Meiji Japan, challenges and transformations, 1853-1912 (6 credits)
- HIST2124. Taishō and Shōwa Japan: Perfecting state, society and nation, 1912 to 1989 (6 credits)

Center of Buddhist Studies

- BSTC2003. The Influence of Zen Buddhism on Japanese Aesthetics (6 credits)
- BSTC2009. Japanese Culture and Thought: The Buddhist Impact (6 credits)

Global Creative Industries

- GCIN2013. Understanding Japanese video game industry (6 credits)

Faculty of Social Sciences

- POLI3052. International Relations of East Asia (6 credits)
- POLI3126. Politics of contemporary Japan (6 credits)
- SOCI2017. Japanese economic institutions (6 credits)
- SOCI2090. World city Tokyo (6 credits)