Aspects of the Japanese Language
Japanese 1023/Linguistics 1023
Fall 2025

Gen Ed Requirements:
This course fulfills the **Specific Geographic Region** Gen Ed requirement

Prerequisite:
JPNSE 0002 or equivalent proficiency

Course Syllabus (subject to change**)**

Instructor Information / Class Location and Time:
    Stephen Luft   412-648-0848; luft@pitt.edu
                         Office Hours: TBA

Course Text / Materials:
- Tsujimura, N. (2013). *An Introduction to Japanese Linguistics: Third Edition.* Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Other materials will be provided on Canvas, including excerpts from the following:
   - Fromkin, V.; Rodman, F.; and Hyams, N. (2018). *An Introduction to Language: Sixth Edition.* Boston, MA: Cengage.
   - Hasegawa, Y. (2014). *Japanese: A Linguistic Introduction.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
   - Shibatani,M. (1990). *The Languages of Japan.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Course Outcomes:
This course is intended to introduce students to the field of Japanese pragmatics by achieving the course outcomes listed below:
1. Students will have extensive understanding of how Japanese is structured, including aspects such as phonology, vocabulary, semantics, morphology, syntax, orthography, variation, etc.
2. Students will learn basic linguistic concepts.
3. Students will learn how Japanese is structurally distinct from Indo-European languages, particularly English.

These outcomes will be accomplished through (a) completion of assigned readings outside of class; and (b) participation in-class lectures, discussions, and activities.

Grading and Course Policies:
Your final grade for this course will be based on the following:

-	Observation Assignments	10%
-	Independent Learning Assignments	10%
-	Project & Paper	40%
-	Mid-term and Final Exam	60%

It is estimated that 2-3 hours of preparation will be required for each class period.

Assignments may be submitted after the due date. 10% will be deducted from the final score for each day that the assignment is late, including weekends. Summaries are to be submitted as a text entry in Canvas. Other written assignments must be submitted as a **Microsoft Word document**.

Use of AI to complete class assignments or assessments is not permitted.

Independent Learning Assignments:
Independent learning assignments are intended to encourage students to take advantage of language learning opportunities while in Japan, to think critically about their own language learning process, and to be life-long learners. Every few weeks, students will choose a source of linguistic input: (a) music, (b) literature (novels, manga, websites, social media, research articles, etc.), (c) theater (movies, TV shows, anime, actual theater, etc.), or (d) interpersonal (i.e., people you talk to). Students will then create their own mini-textbook of what they are learning from their chosen source, for their own use. The textbook will include (a) their source material (e.g., a song title, a friend's name (pseudonyms are encouraged), etc.); (b) a vocabulary list, based on what they want to learn from the source material; and (c) focal lines and phrases from the source material. Students are welcome to add additional headings and information as they like. Each textbook entry is required to be at least roughly one page in length.

In conjunction with the independent learning assignments, students will meet during class weekly with other students that are learning from the same source type to share what they are learning.

Students are welcome to use source material from their independent learning assignments for observation assignments.

Observation Assignments:
Observation assignments are intended to encourage students to apply the content that is studied in class to their own experience living and interacting with Japanese native speakers in Japan. Once per week, students will submit a description of a particular aspect of the Japanese language that they have observed outside of class in Japan, in interactions with native speakers or in other natural situations. The aspect to be observed will be based on the content covered in class the previous week. The quality of observation assignments will be judged using roughly the same rubric as the final paper (see below).

Project & Paper:
Students will complete a project related to Japanese linguistics, of their choice. They will present their project to the class, and will submit a paper describing their project, the findings, and how the project relates to other research in Japanese linguistics. Students may refer to the document "Project Topics" for interesting and doable project ideas.

The presentation is to be 7 minutes maximum, and will be followed by a brief Q&A session. Use of visual aids is required. The presentation will be graded on completion.

The paper is to be a minimum of 5 pages, typed, double spaced, and 12-point font, excluding the title page and reference pages. The paper should conform to APA style and should be submitted as a Microsoft Word document (.doc, .docx). At least 4 non-trivial sources must be included in the references.

The paper will be graded using the following rubric:

A: Information is accurate. Thesis is well reasoned. The evidence presented supports the thesis. Counter evidence and other perspectives have been addressed. Discussion of cross-cultural miscommunication is adequate. Organization is clear and logical, including effective synthesis of sources. Information is clearly conveyed. Experimental design is thorough and implementable. Paper conforms to APA style, conventions of academic English, and other guidelines stated in the syllabus.

B: Information is mostly accurate. Thesis is partially supported by evidence, but some evidence fails to support the thesis or some supportive evidence is missing. Discussion of cross-cultural miscommunication is minimal. Counter evidence and other perspectives are only partially addressed. Organization is mostly logical, but lacks synthesis. Information is somewhat clearly conveyed. Experimental design would lead to misinformation, or is not complete enough to actually implement. Paper mostly conforms to APA style, conventions of academic English, and other guidelines stated in the syllabus.

C: Some information is inaccurate. Thesis is not well supported. Thesis may not be reasonable considering the evidence. Discussion of cross-cultural miscommunication is absent. Counter evidence and other perspectives are not addressed. Organization is confusing. The meanings of statements are occasionally unclear. Paper fails to conform to APA style, conventions of academic English, and other guidelines stated in the syllabus.

D: Information is incomplete and/or mostly inaccurate. Thesis is unclear or non-existent. Counter evidence and other perspectives are not addressed. Discussion of cross-cultural miscommunication is absent. Organization is confusing. The meanings of statements are often unclear. Paper fails to conform to APA style, conventions of academic English, and other guidelines stated in the syllabus.

Mid-term and final exams

Mid-term and final exams are open book exams that cover the content of lectures and readings. Any material that was covered in either lectures or readings may appear on the exams. The exams will contain multiple choice questions, as well as short answer questions.

Final Grading Scale:

93-100	A	80-82	B-	67-69	D+
90-92	A-	77-79	C+	63-66	D
87-89	B+	73-76	C	60-62	D-
83-86	B	70-72	C-	Below 60	E

Notes

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and the Office of Disability Resources and Services, 140 William Pitt Union, 412-648-7890/412-383-3346 (Fax), as early as possible in the term. Disability Resources and Services will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

Cheating/plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students suspected of violating the University of Pittsburgh Policy on Academic Integrity, noted below, will be required to participate in the outlined procedural process as initiated by the instructor. A minimum sanction of a zero score for the quiz, exam or paper will be imposed. (For the full Academic Integrity policy, go to www.provost.pitt.edu/info/ai1.html.)

*Each student is issued a University e-mail address (username@pitt.edu) upon admittance. This e-mail address may be used by the University for official communication with students. Students are expected to read e-mail sent to this account on a regular basis. Failure to read and react to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications. The University provides an e-mail forwarding service that allows students to read their e-mail via other service providers (e.g., Hotmail, AOL, Yahoo). Students that choose to forward their e-mail from their pitt.edu address to another address do so at their own risk. If e-mail is lost as a result of forwarding, it does not absolve the student from responding to official communications sent to their University e-mail address. To forward e-mail sent to your University account, go to http://accounts.pitt.edu, log into your account, click on **Edit Forwarding Addresses**, and follow the instructions on the page. Be sure to log out of your account when you have finished. (For the full E-mail Communication Policy, go to www.bc.pitt.edu/policies/policy/09/09-10-01.html.)*

The integrity of the academic process requires fair and impartial evaluation on the part of faculty and honest academic conduct on the part of students. To this end, students are expected to conduct themselves at a high level of responsibility in the fulfillment of the course of their study. It is the corresponding responsibility of faculty to make clear to students those standards by which students will be evaluated, and the resources permissible for use by students during the course of their study and evaluation. The educational process is perceived as a joint faculty-student enterprise which will perforce involve professional judgment by faculty and may involve – without penalty- reasoned exception by students to the data or views offered by faculty. Language is gender-inclusive and non-sexist when we use words that affirm and respect how people describe, express, and experience their gender. Gender-inclusive/non-sexist language acknowledges people of any gender (e.g. first-year versus freshman, chair versus chairman, humankind versus mankind). It also affirms non-binary gender identifications and recognizes the difference between biological sex and gender expression. Students may share their preferred pronouns and names, and these gender identities and gender expressions should be honored. These guidelines fulfill the best intentions of the University of Pittsburgh's Non-Discrimination Policy: https://www.cfo.pitt.edu/policies/policy/07/07-01-03.html.

Observers may visit class periodically. The class may be videotaped on occasion.

Aspects of the Japanese Language
Fall 2025
Course Schedule (subject to change)

Date	Topic	Assigned Reading	Other Assignments
TBA	Unit 1: Introduction		
	Course introduction and orientation Introduction to Linguistics		
	Introduction to Linguistics (contd.) Language and Thought Origins of the Japanese Language	Tsujimura Chapter 1 (pp. 1-4)	
	Unit 2: Gesture and Phonetics		
	Independent Learning Groups Gesture The phonetic inventory of Japanese	Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams Chapter 6 (pp. 221-226)	**Observation #1 due**
	The phonetic inventory of Japanese (continued)	Tsujimura Chapter 2 (pp. 5-21)	
	Unit 3: Phonology		
	Independent Learning Groups Phonological rules	Tsujimura Chapter 3 (pp. 22-66)	**Observation #2 due**
	Mora, accentuation, mimetics, and loanwords	Tsujimura Chapter 3 (pp. 66-113)	**My Textbook #1 due**
	Unit 4: Morphology and Lexicon		
	Independent Learning Groups Word formation	Tsujimura Chapter 4 (pp. 114-142)	**Observation #3 due**
	Issues in morphology, loanwords	Tsujimura Chapter 4 (pp. 143-205)	
	Unit 5: Syntax		
	Independent Learning Groups Word order and scrambling Sentence and phrase particles Topic-comment constructions	Tsujimura Chapter 5 (pp. 206-254)	**Observation #4 due**

	Passives, causatives, reflexives, and relative clauses	Tsujimura Chapter 5 (pp. 254-339)	
	Unit 6: Semantics		
	Independent Learning Groups Modality and eventuality Deixis Mimetics	Tsujimura Chapter 6 (pp. 340-363)	**Observation #5 due** **Project proposal due**
	Tense and aspect	Tsujimura Chapter 6 (pp. 364-403)	**My Textbook #2 due**
	Unit 7: Language Variation: Dialects		
	Independent Learning Groups Ryukyuan	Shibatani Chapter 9 (pp. 185-214)	**Mid-term exam due by midnight tonight**
	Tokyo dialect, Kansai dialect, prestige vs. non-prestige dialects	Tsujimura Chapter 7 (pp. 422-428)	
	Unit 8: Language Variation: Social Variation		
	Independent Learning Groups Casual vs. course Gentle vs. blunt Gendered speech Slang	Tsujimura Chapter 7 (pp. 428-443)	**Observation #6 due**
	Honorific language	Hasegawa Chapter 21 (pp. 269-281)	
	Week 9: Spring Break		
	No class		
	No class		
	Unit 10: Pragmatics and Speech Acts		
	Independent Learning Groups Introduction to pragmatics Implicature	Tsujimura Chapter 6 (pp. 404-421)	**Observation #7 due**
	Speech acts		
	Unit 11: The Development of the Japanese Writing System		
	Independent Learning Groups Chinese and logographic writing systems	Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams Chapter 12 (pp. 505-526)	**Observation #8 due**

Kanbun, manyogana, hiragana, katakana, kanji reform,	Shibatani Chapter 6 (pp. 119-139)	**My Textbook #3 due**
Unit 12: The Modern Japanese Writing System		
Independent Learning Groups Loanwords, *ateji,* innovative furigana		**Observation #9 due**
Japanese writing policies, current topics		
Unit 13: Japanese L1 Acquisition		
Independent Learning Groups Regularity in Japanese L1 acquisition	Tsujimura Chapter 8 (pp. 444-454)	**Observation #10 due**
Children's errors Pragmatic acquisition	Tsujimura Chapter 8 (pp. 454-476)	
Unit 14: Ainu Language		
History of Ainu	Shibatani Chapter 1 (pp. 1-10)	
Basics of Ainu	Shibatani Chapter 1 (pp. 11-24)	**My Textbook #4 due**
Week 15: Presentations		
Student project presentations		
Student project presentations		
		Final paper due by midnight
		Final exam due by midnight

Look into the Corpus of Everyday Japanese Conversation (Jin & Takagi, 2021; Yokomori & Endo, 2022) and consider assigning a corpus analysis assignment for the mid-term.

Make sure that there is a group activity 30-60 minutes in every time.

Use the checklist when grading final papers

Good TBA Topics:
Forms: (See the forms section of lessons)
Miller (2010) is great: Give students the text and see if they can read it/ but maybe do as part of written language lesson
Chotto is good, and supplemental lesson is ready.
Hai, ee, un is good, and supplemental lesson is ready.
Yoroshiku is good, and supplemental lesson is ready.
Te ageru is interesting too, I think. Not ready.
Ano has a couple papers, so goes a little deeper. Not ready.

Functions:
Politeness
Hedging
Requests

Others to consider:
Articles from "Hidden and Open Conflict in Japanese Conversational Interaction"

Writing
Gottlieb, 2010; Matsuda, 2001; Nishimura, 2006, 2015 (might be not Japanese-specific): Using script to construct identity/written language
Miyake 2007: Written language: Mobile phone messages & Kaomoji
Kavanagh 2016: Blogs & emoticons
Oberwinkler 2019: Facebook messages

Gender
Smith, Janet S. "Women in Charge: Politeness and Directives in the Speech of Japanese Women." Language in Society, vol. 21, no. 1, Mar. 1992, pp. 59-82.

Sunaoshi, Yukako. "Farm Women's Professional Discourse in Ibaraki." Japanese Language, Gender, and Ideology, edited by Shigeko Okamoto and Janet S Shibamoto Smith, Oxford University Press, New York, NY, 2004, pp. 187-204.
Takano, Shoji. "Re-Examining Linguistic Power: Strategic Uses of Directives by Professional Japanese Women in Positions of Authority and Leadership." Journal of Pragmatics, vol. 37, no. 5, May 2005, pp. 633-66.
Okamoto 1996: Indexical meaning, linguistic ideology, and Japanese women's speech (I haven't read it yet)

Forms
Kaneyasu 2024: Final tteyuu
Kariyado 2014: watashi (cited in Jin & Takagi, 2021)
Arita 2021: maa
Nakayama & Horiuchi 2021: wa in sentence initial position
Yonezawa 2008: Overt expression of first and second pronoun in Japanese
Long 2023: Words for love

Humor
Mizushima & Stapleton 2006: Humor (Maemura is critical of their findings, a little)
Nomura & Barnlund 1983: Patterns of interpersonal criticism
Yoshida 2001: Humor / Gender (cited in Maemura 2014)
Matsumoto 2009: Humor (cited in Maemura 2014)
Murata, Kazuyo. 2009. Laughter for defusing tension: Examples from business meetings in Japanese and in English (cited in Maemura 2014)

Functions
Honda 2002: Conflict management in talk shows
Melansyah, R. R., & Haristiani, N. (2020). Analysis of Japanese refusal speech acts to an invitation as a Tatemae.
Satoh 2014: Compliments

Other
Fryer 2014: Pragmatics of the Last Samurai (Maybe for a last paper of very general topic)

The Wang article is missing 2 pages (186, 187)

Baldwin's final paper (2023) has some good articles on onomatopoeia, but I'm not sure onomatopoeia counts as pragmatics (e.g., Baba 2003)

Others not to consider:
Szatrowski (1993; requests: in Ebsworth & Kodama, 2011): it's in Japanese
Fitzgerald (2013; on irony): it's too long, possibly a dissertation
Shiraishi (1997; on –te kudasai): senior thesis from ICU.
Smith (1983) use of desu/masu in husband/wife relationships (cited in LoCastro 2002): It's a book
Iwasaki et al (2007; on onomatopoea): It's interesting, but not so relevant to pragmatics.
Kanero et al (2014; on mimetic words): Not much on pragmatics
Matsui et al. (2013; tte and to): Focuses on 1st language acquisition
Miyata & Nishisawa (2007; backchanneling): Focuses on 1st language acquisition
Schmidt-Fajlik (2007; non-verbal communication): Focuses on Japanese learners of English
Hasegawa (2014): It's a book