

THE JAPANESE LANGUAGE PROGRAM

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Currently, the Japanese Language Program offers the following courses (numbers within parentheses indicate unit values):

J1A-B (5-5)	Elementary Japanese
J1AS-BS (1-1)	Supplementary Work in Kanji
J10A-B (5-5)	Intermediate Japanese
J10AS-BS (1-1)	Supplementary Work in Kanji — Intermediate
J100A-B (5-5)	Advanced Japanese
J101-J102 (4-4)	Fourth-Year Japanese
J111-J112 (4-4)	Fifth-Year Japanese

With 7 full-time and 2-3 part-time Lecturers, 2-3 GSIs, and 1 Coordinator, the Program has been providing instruction for approximately 400-500 undergraduate and graduate students from a wide variety of disciplines per semester. Brief descriptions of these courses follow:

First Level: J1A-B

All basic grammatical constructions are taught as early as possible to enable the students to use the language in real situations. This methodology helps students understand the structural organization of the language: they can see the similarities and differences among various grammatical constructions. The classroom instruction is exclusively in Japanese from the very beginning. By the end of this course, students have acquired the skills adequate to perform the following tasks:

- Describe themselves, their family, and friends.
- Talk about daily events, using basic vocabulary and grammatical constructions.
- Understand conversations on those topics and all classroom instructions.
- Read and write all *hiragana* and *katakana* and approximately 300 *kanji*.
- Read and write short, simple compositions.

Second Level: J10A-B

The second-year level aims at the integration of the basic vocabulary and constructions learned at the first level from a communication viewpoint. The textbook is organized according to communicative functions, which dovetails nicely with the structurally-organized first-year

textbook. Second-year level also introduces more advanced linguistic elements, e.g. additional clause linking devices, collocations, and idiomatic expressions. Vocabulary is expanded to express and comprehend complex thoughts in a manner appropriate for many social situations; an increasing amount of reading and writing is included. Students begin using *kanji* dictionaries and Japanese word processing software, and they do projects using information obtained through the Internet. By the end of this course, students are able to:

- Perform and understand essential communicative functions, e.g. describing, defining, inquiring, answering, requesting, apologizing, complimenting, condoling, etc.
- Express and comprehend a wider range of ideas and more complex thoughts than those of the first-year level.
- Read and write approximately 400 new *kanji* and their compounds.
- Read and write longer, more structured compositions, including authentic documents.
- Write essays using a Japanese word processor and retrieve information written in Japanese on the Internet.

Third Level: J100A-B

Third level aims to develop further communicative skills in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in a manner appropriate to the various contexts, enabling the students to use acquired grammar and vocabulary with greater confidence. Course materials include textbooks for reading newspapers and understanding radio news, supplemented by short stories to provide insight into Japanese culture and society. Projects and oral presentations are incorporated to enable interaction via e-mail and Web-based information retrieval activities with students at Japanese universities. Students acquire adequate skills to:

- Perform and understand essential communicative functions in different registers (casual, semi-formal, formal).
- Express and comprehend a wider range of ideas and more complex thoughts than the second level.
- Read and write approximately 400 new *kanji* and their compounds, bringing their command to an approximate total of 1100.
- Read newspapers and other authentic materials.
- Write expository prose.
- Communicate via e-mail in Japanese.

Fourth Level: J101-102

Fourth level aims to develop further linguistic skills so that students can utilize Japanese newspapers, magazines, and other media to gather information and write short research papers. Although much class time is devoted to reading-oriented activities, students also participate in listening exercises and related discussions. Audio-visual materials are used to enhance the understanding of their readings. Students will be able to perform the following:

Discuss and debate complex issues; comprehend college-level lecture styles.
Read and write approximately 300 new *kanji* and their compounds.
Read, analyze, and translate authentic materials.
Take notes during mock lectures.
Write a short research paper.
Use databases, online dictionaries, and search engines on the Internet.

Fifth Level: J111-112

This level aims to develop skills that will enable students to utilize Japanese materials for research and job-related purposes, to present orally the results of their researches, and/or to pursue college-level courses taught in Japanese. With the instructor's guidance, students conduct their own research projects based on in-depth reading of materials drawn from their own areas of specialization and present the results in class. As an option, students can select the preparatory track leading to taking Level 1 of the *Japanese-Language Proficiency Test* (see below).

ASSESSMENT

In order to assess the effectiveness of our curriculum and instruction, in addition to the achievement testing of each course, we have utilized the *Japanese-Language Proficiency Test* since 1995. It is considered the most authoritative standardized test of ability to use the Japanese language, administrated jointly by the Japan Foundation and the Association of International Education, Japan. Consisting of 4 levels, the *Test* measures proficiencies in (1) *kanji*/vocabulary, (2) listening comprehension, and (3) grammar/reading comprehension. Level 4 requires 150 hours of study, Level 3 300 hours, Level 2 600 hours, and Level 1 900 hours. Passing the *Test* requires the examinee to provide at least 60% of the answers correctly. Persons who wish to enter a graduate school at one of the national universities of Japan must pass Level 1.

The 1992 version of the *Test* has been used consistently because detailed statistics are available for the test results. Our first-year students (about to complete 150 hours of study) have taken Level 4; second-year students (300 hours) have taken Level 3, and third-year students (450 hours) have taken Level 2. The UCB mean scores are compared with the means of the total examinees who actually took the *Test* in 1992 and the subset of the examinees who took the same *Test* in Japan. The latter subgroup had presumably studied Japanese in Japan for some period of time.

LEVEL 4: J1A-B

	<i>Kanji/Vocabulary</i>	Listening	Grammar/Reading	Total	Passing Rate
10,873 examinees who took the Test in 1992	67.3%	60.2%	61.3%	62.5%	56.4%
731 examinees who took the Test in Japan	74.8%	80.3%	71.9%	74.8%	83.0%
UCB Students	79.3%	73.7%	71.3%	73.5%	84.6%

In general, our first-year students are strong in all three areas. Our average passing rate (84.67%) is higher than the total passing rate (56.4%) and the passing rate of those who took the test in Japan (83.0%). This is a good piece of evidence that the efficiency of our first level is higher than the average overseas training. The UCB students' high mean score of the *kanji/vocabulary* section (79.3%) reflects our strong *kanji* training. Our students' listening average (73.7%) is also notable. Those who live in Japan are naturally exposed to Japanese constantly and therefore have tremendous advantages in listening comprehension. Although our listening mean does not match the mean of the examinees in Japan (80.3%), it is impressively higher than the overall average (60.2%). We believe this is due to our constant and exclusive use of Japanese in classroom instruction.

LEVEL 3: J10A-B

	<i>Kanji/Vocabulary</i>	Listening	Grammar/Reading	Total	Passing Rate
12,194 examinees who took the Test in 1992	70.3%	59.2%	71.3%	68.0%	69.3%
2,244 examinees who took the Test in Japan	74.8%	79.4%	76.6%	76.8%	88.2%
UCB Students	77.9%	70.4%	73.7%	73.1%	86.2%

Our mean passing rate of level 3 is 86.2%, whereas the total passing rate is 69.3% and the passing rate of the examinees in Japan is 88.2%. The UCB students have performed very well at this level in *kanji/vocabulary* and listening.

LEVEL 2: J100A-B

This test requires 600 hours of study; it is used for our third-year students, who have completed only 450 (=150x3) hours if they have not studied Japanese elsewhere.

	<i>Kanji/</i> Vocabulary	Listening	Grammar/ Reading	Total	Passing Rate
13,750 examinees who took the Test in 1992	64.8%	59.7%	62.4%	62.3%	56.4%
4,479 examinees who took the Test in Japan in 1992	63.5%	69.5%	59.1%	62.8%	58.8%
UCB Students	66.9%	72.6%	64.6%	68.7%	70.5%

The results at this level are interesting. For Levels 4 and 3, those who studied Japanese in Japan had higher mean scores in all three areas than overseas examinees, but at Level 2, this was not the case: the examinees in Japan had higher scores only in listening. This fact can be interpreted to indicate that, while living and studying in Japan makes a significant difference in listening, it does not guarantee improvement in reading. Although we have not used the highest level, Level 1, with our students, and the results of Level 1 are not included here, the data indicate that Level 1 also displays the same characteristic. That is, the acquisition of the high-intermediate to advanced level of reading competence can be accomplished equally well anywhere. UCB students are strong in all areas; it can be said that the overall competence of our third-level students matches those who have studied Japanese elsewhere for 4 years.