



JPN 461

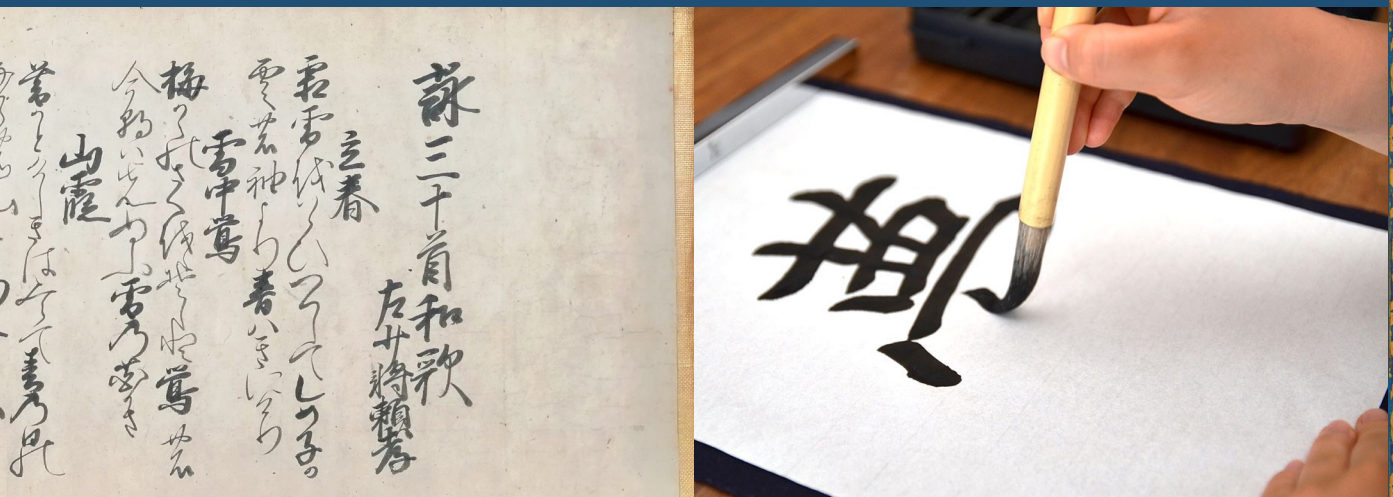
# Introduction to Classical Japanese

## Course Description

If you are preparing for the Japanese-Language Proficiency Test or you are struggling to read some rather formal paper in Japanese—and if not yet, sooner or later you will!—you have probably noticed some rather obscure expressions, sometimes marked on the dictionary with the discouraging label “archaic.” In most cases, such bookish expressions happen to come from classical forms. In fact, virtually **all writings from the seventh century through WWII are based on the rules and conventions of classical phraseology**. Even more, one can arguably trace the influence of classical language up to the most recent aspects of Japanese culture and expressivity, such as in proverbs, haiku, manga, theater, video games, and tv drama. Therefore, despite the existing gap between premodern and contemporary Japanese, working knowledge of the former does help in achieving a higher competence and consciousness of the latter. Likewise, **a solid grounding in classical Japanese remains a crucial prerequisite to a serious study of Japanese literature, art, history, and religion**. You will find it useful even if you are interested in more theoretical issues, such as postcolonial studies, gender studies, performative studies, comparative studies, philosophy, and so forth.

JPN 461 offers a **systematic introduction to premodern grammar** and orthography, covering verb forms, adjectival forms, auxiliary verbs, *keigo*, and particle usage. All points will be illustrated with examples from original texts of different periods. You will learn how to use classical dictionaries, which contain much information beyond just definitions of words. Since another goal of this course is to begin **developing reading proficiency**, we will spend a considerable amount of time reading, analyzing, and translating longer passages from a selection of classical works, some of which may be negotiated with students according to their interests. The course will also include some instruction in reading cursive Japanese, primarily variant *kana*, using **original materials from the Honolulu Museum of Art (HoMA) and the Hamilton Library** to provide a **hands-on experience about premodern Japanese bibliography, material culture, and curatorial practices**. Pandemic-related developments permitting, we will visit both institutions as they represent the most important Hawaiian collections of Japanese books and prints. You will even have a chance to **train in the basics of *shodō*, the art of traditional calligraphy**.

After taking this course, not only will you be able to impress your friends with erudite quotations from Japanese classics, but—most importantly—you will also **increase your cultural awareness and language savvy**. Moreover, the practice-oriented nature of this course will equip you with the key skills to **access the treasure-house of Japanese antiquity**, without relying on translations only and thus enabling for wider explorations and the possibility to embark on original research projects.



Poetry scroll, early 16<sup>th</sup> c. (©Hamilton Library, UHM)



## ◇ Why take this course?

**Deepen** your knowledge about Japanese language, literature, and cultural history.

**Learn** useful strategies to understand, analyze, and translate texts written before 1945.

**Develop** skills such as bibliographical search techniques, note-taking, and teamwork.

**Dive** into the world of Japanese calligraphy.

**Gain** hands-on experience of Japanese book culture by engaging with primary sources from the most important collections in Hawaii.

**Produce** public-facing scholarship by giving your tangible contribution to the cataloging of those collections.



Woodblock print, early 19<sup>th</sup> c. (©HoMA)

## ◇ Who can take this course?

JPN 302 is the official prerequisite for this course, but **I will be happy to grant overrides to motivated students of intermediate level of proficiency**. Participants will need a basic knowledge of Japanese language in order to look up dictionary entries and understand short paraphrases of classical texts. If you wonder whether you are prepared enough, please consult with the instructor.

## ◇ What to buy

One of the following Classical Japanese dictionaries, either in paper or electronic form:

- ◆ Ōbunsha *Zen'yaku kogo jiten* 旺文社全訳古語辞典
- ◆ Sanseidō *Reikai kogo jiten* 三省堂例解古語辞典
- ◆ Iwanami *Kogo jiten* 岩波古語辞典

Instructor: **Dr. Pier-Carlo Tommasi** (he/him)

E-mail: [tommasi@hawaii.edu](mailto:tommasi@hawaii.edu)

Class Time: **MWF 12:30-13:20 pm**

Room: **Sakamaki Hall Room C103**

Office Hours: **WF 11:00-12:00, Moore 387**  
(on Zoom by appointment)

## ◇ Evaluation

20% **Attendance and Participation**

30% **Short assignments** (x3)

20% **Periodical quizzes** (x5)

30% **“Archive” Project** (a mini research project, either individual or in group, on a premodern Japanese source from the [HoMA Digital Collection](#). Your efforts will contribute to the cataloging process!

## ◇ Grading Criteria

### - Attendance and Participation (20%)

Daily attendance will be taken by the instructor. Students are expected to attend all class meetings, arrive on time, and actively participate in class discussion. **Coming to class well-prepared** is crucial for a successful class session.

As a matter of courtesy, please **turn off cell phones** and other communication and entertainment devices prior to the beginning of class. Notify me in advance if you are monitoring an emergency. Computers and tablets are welcome to take notes. In the event that you are unable to attend class (illness, family emergency, or otherwise), please **give a notice of absence prior to class** or as soon as possible.

### - Short Assignments (30%)

This includes regular completion of homework, performance in group discussions, and **three assignments**: 1. Write a reflection paper after our visit to HoMA and/or the Hamilton Library (500-1000 words); 2. Explain a Japanese proverb to the class; 3. Write a thank-you note to Ogasawara-sensei and Prof. Huey after their guest lectures (you may write in the form of a reflection paper, ca. 500 words x 2). Each assignment is worth 10% of the total.

Submit via **“Google Assignment”** on our Laulima page. As a general rule, **I will grade late assignments at ½ their value.** I will otherwise aim to be flexible with you and your needs provided that you are communicative.

### - Quizzes (20%)

There will be periodical short quizzes to make sure you are keeping up with the coursework. Check the schedule below for further information.

### - “Archive” Project and Final Presentation (30%)

Details about the project, including a grading rubric and a list of instructions, will be provided in a separate handout. Remember that **you are always welcome to come by my office hours (either in person or on Zoom) to discuss your ideas, interests, bibliography, and presentation projects with me.**



Note: According to UH General Catalog, letter grades indicate the following:

A=excellent achievement; B=above average; C=average; D=minimal passing; F=failure



## ◇ Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

1. Familiarize with premodern orthography, grammar, and lexicon by practicing reading out loud, parse, and roughly translate short prose passages and poems written in classical Japanese.
2. Work in teams to reinforce understanding of key concepts in classical Japanese, finding multiple plausible solutions to the hermeneutical problems posed by premodern texts.
3. Learn how to use Japanese language dictionaries and databases, especially classical ones, thereby acquiring basic tools for philological research.
4. Understand the genetic relationship between “Classical” (*kogo*) and “Literary” (*bungo*) language, putting Japanese into historical perspective.
5. Enhance one’s sensitivity to the subtleties of premodern—as well as modern—Japanese language towards a more nuanced appreciation of its craft and imagery.
6. Explore some of the socio-linguistic and material aspects of premodern Japanese language and books.



“Young Man With Two Swords”  
Particular of a woodblock print, late 17<sup>th</sup> c.  
(©HoMA)

In addition, the following EALL departmental SLOs and university-wide ILOs (Institutional Learning Objectives) apply, at least in part, to this course:

1. [SLO7: LITERATURE] Identify and describe major authors, works, features, forms, and styles of Japanese literature, both premodern and modern.
2. [SLO8: LITERATURE] Analyze and interpret works of Japanese poetry, prose, and drama, read both in translation and in the original Japanese, using terms appropriate to each genre.
3. [SLO9: LITERATURE] Situate and evaluate Japanese literature in its social, historical, intellectual, and religious contexts.
4. [ILO1 – Know - Breadth and Depth of Knowledge, 1.a] “General education knowledge (arts and humanities)”
5. [ILO2 – Do - Intellectual and Practical Skills, 2.d] “Think critically and creatively”
6. [ILO3 – Value - Personal and Social responsibility, 3.h] “Respect for people and cultures”

## ◇ Office of Title IX

Title IX is a landmark federal civil right that prohibits sex discrimination in education. The University of Hawaii is committed to providing a learning, working and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect and is free of all forms of sex discrimination and gender-based violence, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you or someone you know is experiencing any of these, the University has staff and resources on your campus to support and assist you. Staff can also direct you to resources that are in the community. As a member of the University faculty, I am required to immediately report any incident of sex discrimination or gender-based violence to the campus Title IX Coordinator. Although the Title IX Coordinator and I cannot guarantee confidentiality, you will still have options about how your case will be handled. My goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources and support you need. For more information regarding sex discrimination and gender-based violence, the University's Title IX resources and the University's Policy, Interim EP 1.204, go to: <http://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/titleix/>.

## ◇ KOKUA Program

Students who have a disability with related academic access needs are warmly encouraged to contact the KOKUA Program, Student Services Center, Room 013, (V/T) 956-7511. It serves undergraduate, graduate and professional students with learning, physical, psychiatric and other documented disabilities. In the spirit of “aloha” and respect, it works together – students, faculty, staff and KOKUA – to facilitate equal access for students with disabilities to the Mānoa experience. KOKUA provides disability access services to individuals on a case-by-case basis, and students are not charged for these services. A student's disability status is considered confidential information and is only disclosed to faculty with the student's permission. KOKUA has served thousands of students with disabilities since our inception in 1966 and will continue to be here to serve the needs of students with disabilities. For further information, see: <http://www.hawaii.edu/kokua/>.

## ◇ Other Information and Services

- Students who enroll in this course are required to abide by the [Student Conduct Code](#).
- Per the Systemwide communication from August 3, 2022, **masks are required in classrooms**. Please refer to the [August 3 announcement](#) and [UH COVID-19 Guidelines](#) for more details. **If you test positive for COVID-19 or if you had close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19, you should immediately contact the University Health Services Mānoa (UHSM) COVID-19 Resource Team at (808) 956-8965 or [uhsm.covid@hawaii.edu](mailto:uhsm.covid@hawaii.edu)**. For further information on UHM Safety Practices, see <https://manoa.hawaii.edu/covid19/guidelines/safety-practices-reporting/>
- Taking care of yourself physically and mentally is a fundamental part of your learning experience. In these stressful times, **counseling services** may be very useful: [https://manoa.hawaii.edu/counseling/our\\_services/](https://manoa.hawaii.edu/counseling/our_services/)
- Basic needs include food and housing, childcare, mental health, financial resources and transportation, among others. **Student basic needs security** is critical for ensuring strong academic performance, persistence and graduation, and overall student well-being. If you or someone you know are experiencing basic needs insecurity, please check this link: <https://www.hawaii.edu/student-basic-needs/>
- Office of **Veteran Student Services**: <https://manoa.hawaii.edu/veterans/>



# Class Schedule

- ◇ The following is a tentative schedule. I will let you know at the end of each class period what I expect you to do before the next class meeting.
- ◇ **Assignments and exercises are listed on the day we will discuss them. Have them done before the class begins.**
- ◇ Some readings will be longer than others. Check the page numbers in advance and plan ahead to give yourself enough time to read them thoroughly by the deadline.
- ◇ All materials can be found in the “Library” section of Perusall (accessible via Laulima).

## WEEK 1

M 8/22 Orientation

W 8/24 What is “Classical” Japanese?

**Read:** Basic Grammatical Terms

F 8/26 Modern vs Historical *kanazukai* 仮名遣い

**Read:** Orthography and Pronunciation

**Complete: Exercise 1**

## WEEK 2

M 8/29 Verb types and bases

**Read:** Verbs

W 8/31 Irregular conjugation patterns

**Read:** Irregular Verbs

**Complete: Exercise 2**

F 9/2 How to consult a classical dictionary (don't forget to bring your own!)

Analyze: *Hōjōki*

## WEEK 3

M 9/5 Holiday: **Labor Day**

W 9/7 Adjectives

**Read:** Adjectives and Adjectival Verbs

**Complete: Exercise 3**

**Quiz 1** (based on the contents of WEEKS 1 & 2) N.B. The quiz will be given at the beginning of class. Make sure to arrive on time!

F 9/9 *Jodōshi*: ず

**Read:** Negative Auxiliary Verbs

**Complete: Exercise 4**

## WEEK 4

M 9/12 *Jodōshi*: き・けり

**Read:** Recollective Auxiliary Verbs

**Complete: Exercise 5**

W 9/14 Basics of cursive script (*kuzushiji*)

Analyze: *Hōjōki*

F 9/16 **Visit to the Hamilton Library**

**Guest lecture:** Sachiyo Kawaiaea, UHM Library Staff

## WEEK 5

M 9/19 *Jodōshi*: ぬ・つ

**Read:** Perfective Auxiliary Verbs

**Complete: Exercise 6**

**Quiz 2** (based on the contents of WEEKS 3 & 4) "

W 9/21 *Jodōshi*: たり・り

**Read:** Resultative-Continuative Auxiliary Verbs

**Complete:** Exercise 7

F 9/23 Reading and translation activity

Analyze: *Makura no sōshi*

## WEEK 6

M 9/26 *Kuzushiji* training

**Quiz 3** (based on the contents of WEEK 5)

**Memorize the *iroha* poem**

W 9/28 *Jodōshi*: む (ず) ・けむ・らむ

**Read:** Auxiliary Verbs of Speculation (1)

**Complete:** Exercise 8

Analyze: *Uji shūi monogatari*

F 9/30 *Jodōshi*: らし・まし・めり・なり

**Read:** Auxiliary Verbs of Speculation (2)

**Complete:** Exercise 9

Analyze: *Uji shūi monogatari*

## WEEK 7

M 10/3 *Jodōshi*: べし

**Read:** Auxiliary Verbs of Speculation (3)

**Complete:** Exercise 10

W 10/5 Visit to the Honolulu Museum of Art (TBD)



F 10/7 **Guest Lecture:** Kiyoe Minami, HoMA Research Associate

### WEEK 8

M 10/10 Class discussion and guidance for final project

**Submit: HoMA Reflection Paper**

W 10/12 *Jodōshi:* じ・まじ・たし・まほし

**Read:** Negative Speculative and Desiderative Auxiliary Verbs

**Complete: Exercise 11**

F 10/14 **Presentations on Japanese proverbs** (approx. 3 students x class)

Analyze: *Ise monogatari*

### WEEK 9

M 10/17 "

**Quiz 4** (on the auxiliary verbs of speculation and desire – WEEKS 6, 7, 8)

Analyze: *Ise monogatari*

W 10/19 *Jodōshi:* る・らる

**Read:** Passive Auxiliary Verbs

Analyze: *Ise monogatari*

F 10/21 *Jodōshi:* す・さす・しむ

**Read:** Causative Auxiliary Verbs

**Complete: Exercise 12**

### WEEK 10

M 10/24 *Kuzushiji* training

**Quiz 4** (on the contents of WEEK 9)

W 10/26 *Kuzushiji* training

F 10/28 Nippon Culture Day

### WEEK 11

M 10/31 *Shōdo* practicum with Ogasawara-sensei

△ Classroom: Moore Hall 351

Bring your own *inkan* (if you don't have one, you can carve an eraser stamp)

W 11/2 **Guest lecture:** Robert Huey, Retired UHM Professor

F 11/4 Discussion and in-class workshopping for final project

**Submit: Thank-you note for Ogasawara-sensei and Prof. Huey**

### WEEK 12

M 11/7 Summary of Auxiliary Verbs

**Read:** Auxiliary Verb Combinations

**Complete: Exercise 13**

**Submit: Final project proposal**

W 11/9 Honorific, humble, and polite expressions (*keigo*)

Read: Honorifics

F 11/11 Holiday observed: **Veterans' Day**

### WEEK 13

M 11/14 Translation activity

Analyze: TBD (students' choice)

W 11/16 Translation activity

Analyze: TBD (students' choice)



F 11/18 Translation activity

Analyze: TBD (students' choice)

### WEEK 14

M 11/21 Translation activity

Analyze: TBD (students' choice)

W 11/23 Discussion

Quiz 5 (on the contents of WEEKS 12, 13, 14)

F 11/25 Holiday: **Thanksgiving**

### WEEK 15 & 16

M 11/28 **Project presentations**

W 11/30 "

F 12/2 "

M 12/5 "

W 12/7 Wrap-up



Particular from the Tanroku-bon *Gikeiki* (The Chronicle of Yoshitsune), 17<sup>th</sup> c.

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