



2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT AY 2008-2009

Report Date: June 1, 2009

School/College: Arts and Sciences

Department/Program: Modern and Classical Languages, Japanese Studies Program

Person completing the Report: Noriko Nagata

1. Overview Statement: Briefly summarize the assessment activities that were undertaken this academic year, indicating:

a. which program learning outcomes were assessed this year.

In Spring 2009, we assessed learning outcomes (1a), (1b), (1c), (1d), and (1e) with four Japanese Studies majors in JAPN 302 (Advanced Japanese), learning outcomes (2a), (2c), (2d), and (2e) with eleven Japanese Studies majors in JAPN 350 (Japanese Culture), and learning outcomes (2b) and (2e) with seven Japanese Studies majors in HIST/JAPN 383 (Modern Japan since Perry).

Learning outcomes	
<p>1. Students will acquire basic proficiency in Japanese.</p> <p>Defined: Students will be able to speak, to write, to read, and to listen, in Japanese on basic topics, allowing for some grammatical and usage errors.</p>	<p>(1a) For speaking, students will exhibit the ability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● to speak Japanese with sufficient proficiency to travel in Japan (reserving accommodations, purchasing train tickets, asking directions, shopping, ordering food in a restaurant, etc.) ● to speak Japanese with sufficient proficiency to perform daily conversations and to converse about general-interest topics and basic Japanese customs. ● to deliver a speech in Japanese on Japanese culture. <p>(1b) For writing, students will exhibit the ability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● to write hiragana and katakana by the end of First Semester Japanese, 300 kanji characters by the end of Fourth Semester, and an additional 100 kanji characters by the end of Advanced Japanese. ● to write about general-interest topics and basic Japanese customs in a short paragraph. ● to write an essay in Japanese on Japanese culture. <p>(1c) For reading, students will exhibit the ability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● to read hiragana and katakana by the end of First Semester Japanese, 300 kanji characters by the end of Fourth Semester, and an additional 300 kanji characters by the end of Advanced Japanese. ● to comprehend dialogues and reading materials provided by a standard Japanese textbook.



2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● to read basic authentic texts like Japanese news clips, short essays, and internet information and to translate them with the aid of a dictionary.
	<p>(1d) For listening, students will exhibit the ability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● to comprehend oral instruction or information in Japanese provided in the classroom. ● to grasp the main ideas uttered in speeches in Japanese.
	<p>(1e) Students will exhibit the ability to produce well-formed Japanese sentences using basic grammatical patterns taught in the required language courses.</p>
<p>2. Students will acquire some basic knowledge of Japanese culture.</p> <p>Defined: Students will be able to identify the central characteristics of Japanese traditional and contemporary culture, including Japanese society, arts, religions, and history, for the relevant periods.</p>	<p>(2a) Students will exhibit the ability to explain characteristics of traditional Japanese culture originating in the Edo period (1600-1868) or before, including Japanese society, arts, religion, or history.</p>
	<p>(2b) Students will exhibit the ability to explain characteristics of contemporary Japanese culture after the Meiji restoration (1868), including society, arts, religions, or history.</p>
	<p>(2c) Students will exhibit the ability to explain the connections and historical continuity between contemporary and traditional cultural practices and forms in Japanese society.</p>
	<p>(2d) Students will exhibit the ability to explain major themes of Japanese culture, including styles and forms of aesthetic expression, and the sociopolitical and historical factors affecting it, as taught in classes.</p>
	<p>(2e) Students will exhibit the ability to demonstrate competence in conducting research on a cultural topic of their choosing, synthesizing their findings, and conveying the results in clearly written and well-organized prose in English.</p>

b. who in your department/program was involved in the assessment of the above learning outcomes

Noriko Nagata, Steve Roddy, Uldis Kruze

2. Please Answers the Following Questions for Each of the Student Outcomes Assessed:

a. **What did you do?**

Describe clearly and concisely how you assessed the learning outcomes that were evaluated this year (e.g., measures, research methods, etc.).

JAPN 302: Advanced Japanese assessed by Noriko Nagata

(1a) For speaking, students will exhibit the ability

- to speak Japanese with sufficient proficiency to travel in Japan (reserving accommodations,



2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

- purchasing train tickets, asking directions, shopping, ordering food in a restaurant, etc.)
- to speak Japanese with sufficient proficiency to perform daily conversations and to converse about general-interest topics and basic Japanese customs.
- to deliver a speech in Japanese on Japanese culture.

- ❖ In the oral final exam, the students were asked to conduct conversations simulating travel in Japan, including reserving accommodations, purchasing train tickets, and ordering food. All four majors performed very well (above 90%).
- ❖ In the oral final exam, the students were asked to conduct conversations about general-interest topics, including their essay topics, cities in Japan, Japanese gift-giving customs, and the Japanese concepts of *hone* (true mind) and *tatemaie* (surface mind). All four majors performed very well (above 90%).
- ❖ The students made oral presentations of their essays in class using PowerPoint slides. The presentations were graded by clarity and accuracy of reading (the students were not required to memorize the essays) and the content of the PowerPoint slides. Although there were some pronunciation errors, all four majors presented their essays well (between 80% and 90%).

(1b) For writing, students will exhibit the ability

- to write hiragana and katakana by the end of First Semester Japanese, 300 kanji characters by the end of Fourth Semester, and an additional 100 kanji characters by the end of Advanced Japanese.
- to write about general-interest topics and basic Japanese customs in a short paragraph.
- to write an essay in Japanese on Japanese culture.

- ❖ The students were tested to write about 150 kanji characters in kanji quizzes and the mid-term and final exams, and all four majors wrote them very well (above 90%).
- ❖ In the mid-term examination, the students were asked to write about the following Japanese customs in a short paragraph (with at least six sentences) respectively: *ochugen* (mid-summer gift giving) and *osebo* (year-ending gift giving), *omiyage* (souvenirs), differences between American and Japanese wedding gifts, and Valentine's Day and White Day in Japan. In the final exam, the students were asked to write about the following general-interest topics for several sentences each: what you must not do at home stay in Japan, mistaken/funny/troublesome/happy experiences using the Japanese language, the most difficult parts in learning Japanese, the easiest parts in learning Japanese, and any two famous foreigners in Japan. One major scored above 90% and three majors between 80% and 90%.
- ❖ The students were assigned to write a 4-page essay on Japanese culture, including at least three references. Four majors wrote their essays on the following topics respectively.



2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

- *Problems driven by changes in Japanese food habits*
 - *The role of sake in Japan*
 - *Japanese otaku vs. American otaku*
 - *The night life of young people in Japan*
- ❖ The essays were graded for vocabulary, grammar, content, and organization. Three students performed very well (above 90%), but one student's grade was merely adequate (70%) due to brevity and lack of sufficient content.

(1c) For reading, students will exhibit the ability

- to read hiragana and katakana by the end of First Semester Japanese, 300 kanji characters by the end of Fourth Semester, and an additional 300 kanji characters by the end of Advanced Japanese.
- to comprehend dialogues and reading materials provided by a standard Japanese textbook.
- to read basic authentic texts like Japanese news clips, short essays, and internet information and to translate them with the aid of a dictionary.

- ❖ The students were tested in Kanji quizzes and the mid-term and final exams to read and to comprehend on about 260 kanji characters. All four students did it very well (above 90%).
- ❖ In the mid-term and final exams, the students were asked to answer true-or-false questions on three reading materials provided by the required textbook. Two students scored 94% and two students 88%.
- ❖ The students read a number of authentic texts throughout the semester. Their classroom performance in reading internet information with the aid of a dictionary was very good. In both mid-term and final exams, the students were asked to translate one of the Asahi Newspaper articles published on the web with the aid of a dictionary (the students chose their own articles.) Three majors translated them very well (above 90%) and one major 82 %.

(1d) For listening, students will exhibit the ability

- to comprehend oral instruction or information in Japanese provided in the classroom.
- to grasp the main ideas uttered in speeches in Japanese.

- ❖ Four majors comprehended the oral instruction or information in Japanese provided in the classroom with 80% accuracy or above.
- ❖ In order to test student comprehension of the main ideas uttered in speeches, the students were asked to answer true-or-false questions about each of seven students' essays presented orally in class. Three majors attended all seven speeches and scored above 90% in the true-or-false questions, and one major attended only three speeches and scored 89% in the related true-or-false questions.



2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

(1e) Students will exhibit the ability to produce well-formed Japanese sentences using basic grammatical patterns taught in the required language courses.

- ❖ In the mid-term and final exams, the students were asked to produce 40 short conversations: each conversation consisted of a few sentences in which a required grammatical pattern had to be used. Three students scored above 90% and one student 86%.

JAPN 350: Japanese Culture assessed by Steve Roddy

- Two major tests were used to assess the students' learning at the end of the 6th and 12th week, respectively. Each test consisted of two parts: a choice of three out of five essay questions; and, four identification questions. The essay questions assessed the students' ability to broadly interpret the connections and historical continuity between contemporary and traditional cultural practices, and to explain the major themes and ideas behind cultural practices such as the tea ceremony and the martial arts, and the historical evolution of native clothing, cuisine, and tattooing, and other topics covered. The identification questions tested their ability to identify major styles or features of aesthetic expression such as household crests, musical performance genres and instruments, and tattooing motifs.
- Specifically, the following questions on Examination #2 (given on April 23) were utilized to assess learning outcomes 2a, 2c, and 2d:

(2a) Students will exhibit the ability to explain characteristics of traditional Japanese culture originating in the Edo period (1600-1868) or before, including Japanese society, arts, religion, or history.

- ❖ Essay question: *Why is the selection of the tea utensils and the objects placed in the alcove, as well as the arrangement or handling of these objects, deemed crucial to a successful performance of chanoyu? What skills are manifested in these acts?*
- ❖ Six students in the Japanese Studies major answered this question very well (90% or above); four answered it well (80% or above); one answered it adequately (70% or above)

(2c) Students will exhibit the ability to explain the connections and historical continuity between contemporary and traditional cultural practices and forms in Japanese society.

- ❖ Essay question: *How have the ideals of purity, restraint, and minimalism in preparation and presentation been manifested in the aesthetics, whether of taste or of appearance, of Japanese food? Moreover, how do these ideals largely govern the incorporation of new, foreign-derived foods into Japanese cuisine?*



2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

- ❖ Seven students in the Japanese Studies major answered this question very well (90% or above); two answered it well (80% or above); two answered it adequately (70% or above)

(2d) Students will exhibit the ability to explain major themes of Japanese culture, including styles and forms of aesthetic expression, and the sociopolitical and historical factors affecting it, as taught in classes.

- ❖ Essay question: *Discuss the style and content of the musical genre known as joryû gidayû, and explain what social factors gave rise to it in the late-Tokugawa period.*
- ❖ Two students in the Japanese Studies major answered this question very well (90% or above); two answered it well (80% or above); three students answered it adequately (70% or above); and four students answered it inadequately or poorly (below 70%)

- In addition, a research paper was used to assess Learning Outcome 2e. The paper assignment required students to conduct research and write about a topic relevant to the study of Japanese culture, and to apply their knowledge of principles of Japanese social organization, aesthetic expression, or other topics covered during the course to the analysis of their chosen topic. They were evaluated based on the following criteria: coherence of both the written and oral presentations of the topic, the identification and assimilation of significant scholarly writings on the topic, the ability to synthesize the results of their research, and the ability to articulate major themes and features of Japanese culture in the context of their chosen topic. The students in the Japanese Studies major submitted papers on the following topics (grades in parentheses):

(2e) Students will exhibit the ability to demonstrate competence in conducting research on a cultural topic of their choosing, synthesizing their findings, and conveying the results in clearly written and well-organized prose in English.

- ❖ *"Hair": Historical tradition and Progressive tradition in Japan (95%)*
- ❖ *Yaoi, Boys Love, Men, and Women: A Look into Homosexuals and Homosexual Comics (89%)*
- ❖ *The Evolution of Western Food in Japan (76%)*
- ❖ *The Karashishi and Peony vs the Skull and Rose: A Comparison of Japanese and American Tattooing (92%)*
- ❖ *Terunobu Fujimori, Contemporary Japanese Architect (94%)*
- ❖ *The Evolution of Pornography in Japan (86%)*
- ❖ *Japan's Success in the Automotive Industry and Contemporary Japanese Auto Sports (82%)*
- ❖ *Society-Relational Concepts in Japanese Culture (93%)*
- ❖ *The Influences of Western and Japanese Cultures on Visual Kei (94%)*
- ❖ *Manga Then and Now (90%)*



2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

- ❖ To summarize, six students in the Japanese Studies major submitted papers that met the criteria with a score of 90% or above; five students met the criteria with a score of 80% or above; one student met the criteria with a score of 70% or above.

HIST/JAPN 383: Modern Japan since Perry assessed by Uldis Kruze

(2b) Students will exhibit the ability to explain characteristics of contemporary Japanese culture after the Meiji restoration (1868), including society, arts, religions, or history.

- The final exam (or Exam #3) held on May 18, 2009 tested students ability to explain and analyze in an essay format two major themes in post-Meiji (post-World War II) history: the conflict and clash between militarism and pacifism, and its possible outcome in the next twenty years.
 - ❖ The question was specifically as follows:
Your essay will be evaluated on the basis of its comprehensiveness, its analytical and critical elements, and its use of appropriate examples (100 points.) One of the major themes of postwar Japanese history has been the clash between pacifism and militarism. Write an essay exploring, analyzing, and recounting the major issues, turning points, and causal factors that have been embedded in this relationship (80 points.) For the last 20 points, I would like you to assess where you feel this relationship will be headed in the next 20 years, i.e. whether the forces of pacifism or the forces of militarism will gain the upper hand, and what the causal factors behind that development will be.
 - ❖ To explain characteristics of contemporary Japanese culture after the Meiji restoration (1868), including society, arts, religions, or history, five students did an excellent job (90% correct or above), one student did a good job (80% correct or above), and one student did a below average or poor job (60% correct or above).

(2e) Students will exhibit the ability to demonstrate competence in conducting research on a cultural topic of their choosing, synthesizing their findings, and conveying the results in clearly written and well-organized prose in English.

- This learning outcome was assessed by a major term paper which required students a) to select an important historical question or problem, b) conduct research in both primary and secondary sources, and then c) produce a clearly-written and analytical narrative that showed change over time. Students selected the following issues or problems to investigate:
 - A History of Japan's Fishing Industry since the Meiji Era
 - The Idea of "Good Wife and Wise Mother" and the Changing Roles of Women in Postwar Japan



2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

- Popular Music in Japan in the Postwar Era
 - The Changing Nightlife of Japan: The Consumption of Leisure in Urban Japan since World War II
 - The Decline in Militarist Attitudes and the Rise of Pacifism under the American Occupation (1945-1952)
 - “Nihonjin Ron”—The Theory of Japanese Unique Character – and its Development in the 20th Century
 - Changing Japanese Popular Culture since World War II
- ❖ Using the rubric developed to assess this learning outcome, these were the results: In their ability to demonstrate competence in conducting research on a cultural topic of their choosing, synthesizing their findings, and conveying the results in clearly written and well-organized prose in English, three students performed at an excellent level (90% or above), three students at a good level (80% or above), and one student at a poor or below average level (60% or above).

b. What did the faculty in the department or program learn?

Summarize your findings and conclusions as a result of the assessment indicating strengths and weaknesses in student learning demonstrated by this assessment.

JAPN 302: Advanced Japanese comments by Noriko Nagata

- Overall, the four majors demonstrated very good achievement (80% or above) in all four language skills (speaking, writing, reading, and listening) assessed by (1a), (1b), (1c), and (1d). This indicates that the four skills were well integrated, and evenly developed.
- Grammatical competence is also emphasized in the curriculum so that students will be able to produce advanced-level sentences. Outcome (1e) shows that the students were able to produce advanced-level sentences using target grammatical structures (80% or above.)
- Although the kanji characters tested in this assessment were limited to 150 for writing and 260 for reading, student performance with these characters was very good (above 90%).
- Our curriculum is designed to foster students’ cultural knowledge about Japan throughout the required language courses. Especially, most of the materials and assignments in the Intermediate and Advanced Japanese courses are related to Japanese culture. The four majors demonstrated very good achievement (80% or above) in explaining basic Japanese customs and in writing a four-page essay on Japanese cultural (three students’ grades were above 90% and one student 70%).



2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

- The four-page essay was the most challenging assignment for the students. They were instructed how to organize an essay, how to search necessary vocabulary with dictionaries, how to site references in Japanese, and so forth. Then, the students were assigned to write a half-page draft every week (four pages over the course of two months) and to have every draft checked by a tutor (USF graduate student, Japanese native-speaker) at the Japanese Writing Center (the students met the tutor individually for thirty minutes every week.) Although the tutor was very helpful and their attendance was credited, two of the four majors did not participate fully (out of 10 sessions, one student attended 8 times, one 7 times, one 4 times, and one 1 time). The student who did the essay project poorly (70%) was the one who attended only once, which confirms the value of the tutor. Besides the tutor's help, I made corrections and suggestions for revisions four times, first after the introductory paragraph was written, second after two pages, third after four pages, and fourth after the final version was complete. The student who skipped most of the tutoring sessions showed me his draft only twice (a few sentences in the beginning and two pages after two months) even though I encouraged him many times. Unfortunately, he did not gain much from the essay project. We will give more attention to making the tutoring sessions sound attractive to the students.

JAPN 350: Japanese Culture comments by Steve Roddy

- The students in the major learned best when the materials covered were accessible in well-written, lively reading assignments that were not burdened by excessive detail. They were able to summarize and synthesize the materials, and to apply conceptual tools to the various subjects covered, when these topics were demonstrably relevant to the overarching themes of the course. For Learning Outcomes 2a and 2c, they were all able to achieve a satisfactory level or above (70%) on each of the two examination questions listed above. This result contrasts somewhat favorably with the first examination given earlier in the semester, when the numbers of those who achieved 90% or above on questions of similar import were slightly lower. However, for the question targeting Learning Outcome 2e, the results were less than satisfactory for a significant number of students. This may be a reflection of the “learning fatigue” that tends to set in toward the end of most semesters, since the topic (19th century musical performances by women) was one of the last covered before the examination.
- Students' skills in conducting research, including identifying significant topics, locating scholarly or other secondary as well as primary sources, and synthesizing their findings, were often stronger than their ability to present their work in a persuasive, coherent, well-written research paper. Most students gave oral presentations that were articulate and entertaining, but some lacked a commensurate level of achievement when they wrote up the results of their work. While all students were able to produce at least a satisfactory, and most a good or excellent, term paper, the writing and organizational skills of several of these students were fair to weak.



2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

HIST/JAPN 383: Modern Japan since Perry comments by Uldis Kruze

- Regarding (2b), overall, the students did well in learning about this important theme (militarism and pacifism) in Japan since World War II. Most (5 of 7) were able to produce an excellent narrative describing and analyzing the forces and people behind both movements. The two that did not come to that standard fell behind in narrative consistency, factual control, and analytical skills evaluating causal forces.
- Learning Outcome (2e) had the opposite outcome. Only three students of seven did work at the excellent level (90% or above); four did not come up to that standard. The major shortcomings were three in number: 1) A majority of students—four of seven-- did not include – or did not satisfactorily utilize – primary sources in developing their narrative. 2) A majority of students—four of seven-- did not develop a narrative that showed change over time, and the causes that led to those changes. 3) One student – at the 60% level – had poor writing and organizational skills in addition to the two shortcomings listed above.

c. What will be done differently as a result of what was learned?

Discuss how courses and/or curricula will be changed to improve student learning as a result of the assessment. Include a discussion of how the faculty will help students overcome their weaknesses and improve their strengths.

JAPN 302: Advanced Japanese comments by Noriko Nagata

- All the assessment tools I used were developed by myself. ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) offers a standardized procedure to assess functional speaking ability, called the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (ACTFL OPI). It would be a good idea to integrate such a standardized procedure into the USF Japanese oral proficiency assessment tools. I am planning to attend an ACTFL OPI workshop this fall to work on becoming a certified ACTFL OPI rater.
- The USF Japanese language courses are integrated with Robo-Sensei, an artificial intelligence program that allows students to practice producing Japanese sentences and to receive immediate, detailed grammatical feedback on their progress. Robo-Sensei also provides extensive coverage of informative cultural images about Japan. The assessment tools this year did not include Robo-Sensei, but it would be better to utilize Robo-Sensei to assess students' grammatical competence, sentence production skills, and cultural awareness more broadly.
- The students are expected to be able to write 400 kanji characters and to read 600 kanji characters by the end of the Advanced Japanese course. As mentioned above, the kanji tests used for this assessment did not include all required kanji. Although it is not plausible to test all required kanji in one semester, it would be better to create some sort of kanji exit exam to



2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

measure students' kanji ability more generally (perhaps covering a half of the required kanji as representatives).

JAPN 350: Japanese Culture comments by Steve Roddy

- We would like to improve the overall integration of the thematic units included in the course by consistently and repeatedly emphasizing a limited repertoire of conceptual and analytical tools, and weeding out topics that do not significantly contribute to the goals of achieving the Learning Outcomes cited above. The subject matter of this course was organized around an overall framework of examining the body as it is conceived and manipulated in various contexts, both historically and in contemporary Japan. Students were exposed to written and audiovisual materials on the tea ceremony, sumo wrestling, martial arts, clothing, and cuisine; throughout, he emphasized the aim of finding structural or ideological congruencies in the practices or prescriptive formulations of these cultural phenomena, all of which are regarded as expressions and markers of Japanese cultural identity. The strategy of focusing on corporal manifestations of cultural practices was successful, up to a point, in that students were able to better understand these practices by referring to notions of spatial presentation, facial or verbal expression, visual and hidden social cues, and aesthetic values associated with the body. To further strengthen the thematic unity and cohesion of the course, we will devote the last two weeks of the class to reiterating and expanding on these themes. Instead of assigning short fiction (as he did at the end of this term), we will have the students read selections from the ethnographic, medical, and philosophical literature that deal with Japanese conceptions of the body and physical and mental health. This will provide a logical conclusion that will reinforce materials covered in the earlier units of the course, and enable students to draw conclusions that were either implicit or relatively underemphasized in many of the readings.
- In terms of improving students' written work, we will require an outline and initial draft of the term paper at earlier stages of the semester. By flagging those students who have trouble formulating an adequate thesis and organizing the material into clearly argued and well-structured prose, we will be able to offer guidance and criticism well before the final paper is due.

HIST/JAPN 383: Modern Japan since Perry comments by Uldis Kruze

- To improve the outcome for Learning Outcome (2b), we will need to put more time into stressing the importance of a) narrative consistency, b) factual control, and c) analytical skills evaluating causal forces. Probably the most important learning concept will be to stress causality, a key concept in historical analysis.
- To improve the outcome for Learning Outcome (2e), we will need to put more time into stressing the importance of a) locating and using primary sources; b) developing a narrative



2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

that shows change over time; and c) good writing skills. Probably the most important learning concept will be to stress primary sources: how to identify and access them, and how to use them in developing a historical narrative.

3. Attach a copy of the components of the department/program assessment plan that have been modified since its initial submission:

a. Program Mission

The Japanese Studies program at USF offers well-rounded curriculum, including Japanese language, culture, literature, linguistics, art, religion, history, and business courses. The language courses are enhanced by Robo-Sensei and native-speaker tutors. The program is designed to develop strong Japanese language skills as well as substantial cultural awareness about Japan.

b. Program Learning Goals

See the attachment of “Japanese Studies Learning Goals and Outcomes 2009.”

c. Program Learning Outcomes

See the attachment of “Japanese Studies Learning Goals and Outcomes 2009.”

d. Program Learning Rubrics aligned with outcomes

See the attachment of “Japanese Studies Learning Rubrics 2009.”

e. Curriculum map that shows the courses that pertain to the outcome

See the attachment of “Japanese Studies Curriculum Mapping 2009.”

Please return to: Provost Office by June 1, 2009

You can send your replies as either a Word attachment (to: marin@usfca.edu) or as a hard copy to: Provost Office, Lone Mountain Rossi Wing 4th floor.

If you have any questions, please contact: William Murry, Director of Institutional Assessment (wmurry@usfca.edu or x5486).