

# JAPANESE

## Modern Languages Mission Statement

Educated people spend their lives pursuing growth in political, social and intellectual freedom. One kind of intellectual freedom requires us to break away from the notion that our native language is the most natural and apt means of expressing the full range of human experience. An education can start with the discovery that all words are purely conventional devices. They are nonetheless tools that stir emotions, articulate ideas, and establish relationships with others. Learning another language contributes to our education by intimately exploring cultural and linguistic concepts that broaden our understanding of what it means to be human in today's world.

Our basic courses offer the opportunity to begin acquiring the skills and knowledge necessary for the eventual mastery of a language. When students take full advantage of this opportunity, they can use the target language in all subsequent courses. The department emphasizes the use of the target language in most of its courses because it believes that students can best appreciate another culture from within its own mode of expression.

With a view toward career opportunities, the department encourages integrating language study with a variety of other academic areas, such as history, philosophy, international studies, environmental studies, biology, economics, politics and public affairs, global commerce, global health, and English. Courses in cultural studies and literature, aside from their intrinsic worth, also present multiple perspectives on other cultures and areas of intellectual experience.

A student who wants to spend a summer, a semester, or a year abroad with programs approved by Denison should consult members of the department and the Center for Global Programs (see Off-Campus Programs). On-campus opportunities to improve command of the language are provided by language tables, international films, club meetings, and similar activities sponsored by the department. There are also subsidized field trips to museums and pertinent activities in cities across the country, and in some cases international travel.

## Faculty

Associate Professor Charles St-Georges, Chair

Associate Professor Melissa Huerta, Associate Chair

Associate Professor Michael Tangeman, Assistant Professor Anne Sokolsky

**Academic Administrative Assistant**  
Liz Barringer-Smith

View faculty profiles and contact information (<https://denison.edu/academics/japanese/contacts/>)

## Additional Points of Interest

### General Departmental Regulations

Students who want to fulfill the basic requirement in language by continuing one begun in secondary school will find it advantageous to begin their course work in the first year. The Department of Modern Languages strongly recommends that students complete their language requirement by the end of their sophomore year.

## The Language Lab

An important asset of the department is the Language Lab with its 27 Macs, zone-free Blu-ray player and document camera. It also has a VIA Connect PRO that is a wireless collaboration and presentation solution that makes sharing and presenting easier for all computers in the room. The lab provides support for learning activities outside and inside the classroom, ranging from grammar drills to research and collaborative writing projects, as well as discussions of authenticated materials published on the Internet. The area is designed not only for individualized instruction but also for group work and small seminars that use a variety of digital materials for class discussion.

## Cultural Enrichment

Each semester the department offers students exceptional opportunities for cultural enrichment in language study. These opportunities include, for example, off-campus trips to target-culture plays, movies and performances, as well as campus visits by native scholars and performers. In that way, experiences in target cultures become more readily available to our students. These opportunities are made possible through a most generous endowment bestowed on the Department of Modern Languages by the Patty Foresman Fund. The department maintains a Modern Languages Facebook page where the Denison community can find information about upcoming events.

## The Foresman Lounge

Located in the central hub of the department, the lounge provides the Denison community with a space for a wide range of activities such as receptions, classes, and informal gatherings. This area has a kitchenette with a table and chairs for sharing lunch or a coffee with our faculty as well as mobile soft seating for easy reconfiguration of the space. It is also equipped with a wide range of technological devices to enrich our students' learning experiences. This room has a 52-inch flat screen TV connected to a webcam, zone-free Blu-ray player and a document camera. The lounge also has a ceiling-mounted laser projector that connects to a networked Mac computer, the Blu-ray player and a via for wireless connection to the data projector.

Although the Department of Modern Languages offers majors in French, German and Spanish, it also offers courses in other languages for the purpose of general education and support of other college programs. Courses in Japanese are listed below.

## Courses

### JAPN 111 - Beginning Japanese I (4 Credit Hours)

A comprehensive introductory course in modern Japanese develops the four basic skills: aural comprehension, speaking, reading and writing. The two beginning courses will concentrate on correct pronunciation, an active vocabulary of 500-1000 words as well as basic grammatical patterns.

### JAPN 112 - Beginning Japanese II (4 Credit Hours)

A comprehensive introductory course in modern Japanese develops the four basic skills: aural comprehension, speaking, reading and writing. The two beginning courses will concentrate on correct pronunciation, an active vocabulary of 500-1000 words as well as basic grammatical patterns.

**Prerequisite(s):** JAPN 111 or consent.

**JAPN 129 - Japanese Stories: Retelling Culture in Film, Drama, and Fiction (4 Credit Hours)**

This course introduces students to 1000 years of Japanese storytelling tradition in diverse mediums: epic tales, drama (bunraku/kabuki, and noh), fiction, and film. Students will engage with such representations of Japanese culture as: - Imperial court life of the 10th century, the role of spirit possession as women's "weapon," and a 20th-century novel that builds on these traditions. - A war between two clans in the 12th century that is the setting for a key duel between unevenly matched opponents retold over the centuries in three different mediums: epic tale, bunraku/kabuki theater, and noh drama. - In the same war, the tragic defeat of one of the clans is reimagined as the source of a famous ghost story written in the 19th century...by a European with connections to Cincinnati! - Postwar short stories that retell Japanese fairy tales to situate them in a Japan struggling to cope with the devastation of the Pacific War. - A mystery novel about government corruption, and a master director's film from the same period that treats the same subject - The possibilities – and horrors – of dreams as depicted by a 20th-century novelist, a master director, and an animator.

**JAPN 211 - Intermediate Japanese I (4 Credit Hours)**

Comprehensive grammar will be the core of the course, along with further development of reading ability and more extensive oral practice.

**Prerequisite(s):** JAPN 112 or consent.

**JAPN 212 - Intermediate Japanese II (4 Credit Hours)**

This course builds on the material covered in JAPN 211. Students will continue to practice speaking using ever more complex grammatical structures, write short paragraphs, and continue their study of Chinese characters used in Japanese (kanji) in earnest.

**Prerequisite(s):** JAPN 211 or consent.

**JAPN 219 - Voices from the Dark Valley: East Asians Under Japanese Fascism (1910-1945) (4 Credit Hours)**

This course provides students an introduction to the written cultural products (available in translation) from Japan, and two countries – China and Korea – occupied by Japan during the Pacific War (1931-1945). Although Japan's occupation of Korea began in 1910, this course will begin its consideration of this topic in 1890 because the Japanese political and social mechanisms that led to fascist militarist control in the 1930s have their origins at least as far back as 1890. This course fulfills the Modern Core requirement for the East Asian Studies major/minor.

**JAPN 235 - Introduction to Modern Chinese and Japanese Literature (4 Credit Hours)**

This course is designed to provide an introduction to modern Chinese and Japanese fiction for the student who has little or no background in the language, history, or culture of these countries. No prerequisite.

**Crosslisting:** EAST 235.

**JAPN 239 - Introduction to Japanese Genre Fiction (4 Credit Hours)**

Genre fiction (sometimes called "commercial fiction") around the world has been broadly categorized as less-refined, or less literary. Postmodern thinkers have demonstrated, however, that popular fiction can serve as a fascinating lens through which to read place (society, race, gender, etc.) and time (historical period). This class will serve as an introduction to Japan's long, rich tradition of genre fiction. In addition to reading recent criticism of the genres discussed, we will consider representative works, primarily by twentieth-century authors, in three genres: historical/period fiction, mystery/detective fiction, and horror fiction. This course is taught in English. No Japanese language required.

**Crosslisting:** EAST 239.

**JAPN 245 - Special Topics in Japanese (4 Credit Hours)**

Special topics in Japanese.

**JAPN 273 - Modern Japan in Film and Literature (4 Credit Hours)**

This course uses film and modern literature to consider responses to political, economic, and sociological changes in Japanese society over the course of the twentieth century. This course is taught in English.

**JAPN 309 - Japan's Modern Canon (4 Credit Hours)**

In this course we will read extensively from the works of four twentieth-century Japanese authors who have been elevated to the status of canonized writers, that is, whose works are regarded both in and out of Japan as essential in the history of Japanese letters. Note that readings will vary from semester to semester. This course is taught in English.

**JAPN 311 - Advanced Japanese I (4 Credit Hours)**

The two Advanced Japanese courses introduce students to a number of complex, essential grammatical structures, notably sentence modifiers (relative clauses), and verb categories (transitive and intransitive verbs) that allow students to create longer, more complex culturally coherent utterances. Students will also learn 200 Chinese characters.

**Prerequisite(s):** JAPN 212 or equivalent.

**JAPN 361 - Directed Study (1-4 Credit Hours)****JAPN 362 - Directed Study (1-4 Credit Hours)****JAPN 363 - Independent Study (1-4 Credit Hours)****JAPN 364 - Independent Study (1-4 Credit Hours)****JAPN 451 - Senior Research (4 Credit Hours)****JAPN 452 - Senior Research (4 Credit Hours)**