

Classical Japanese: Language, Text and Context 1 (A005125)

Course size (nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)

Credits 6.0

Study time 180 h

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2026-2027

A (semester 1)

English

Gent

group work

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

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LW21

lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

Master of Science in Teaching in Languages(main subject Oriental Languages and Cultures)

crdts

6

offering

A

Master of Arts in Oriental Languages and Cultures(main subject Japan)

6

A

Exchange Programme Oriental Languages and Cultures

6

A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

classical Japanese, classical Sino-Japanese (kanbun), *engi* texts, Japanese history, society, religions, philosophy, economics

Position of the course

This specialized course discusses the varieties of premodern Japanese language, such as *bungo* and *kanbun*, on the basis of historical texts and primary sources dating from medieval and early modern Japan as well as secondary scholarship. Each year's course is based on a selection of particular texts and research questions, linked to the materials discussed in other courses. Research results are discussed in class. Students also analyse a topic of their choice in small groups and present their results in class.

This course meets the following learning outcomes:

1.1,1.2,1.3,1.4,1.5,3.1,3.2,3.3,3.4,4.3,5.1,5.2,5.5

Contents

This course offers an opportunity to read and study premodern Japanese *engi* texts. The Japanese Buddhist term *engi* is often translated as "karmic origins" or "dependent origination." In twentieth-century Japanese scholarship, it was mostly used as an umbrella term for premodern texts recording the histories or foundational legends of Japanese Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines. However, when read within their broader context, these diverse "origin" texts reveal many localised versions of Japanese myths and legends, which deviate from official histories. Moreover, the *engi* texts contain rich references to the political goals and religious aspirations of premodern historical actors as well as networks of material and ritual production, thus reflecting on many social, political, and economic trends in Japanese history. Guided by these central themes, research results are discussed in class. In addition, students choose a topic of their own and analyze it in small teams. These results are presented in class and form a part of an individual oral examination.

Initial competences

The course 'Classical Japanese: Language, text and context' requires a thorough knowledge of 'Classical Japanese (BA 3 level)', and a good knowledge of the Japanese history, literature as well as East Asian religions/philosophy.

Final competences

- 1 To be able to translate, analyze and interpret Classical Japanese texts.
- 2 To be able to conduct research on the basis of primary sources.
- 3 To be able to relate primary sources to a historical, religious-philosophical, social and cultural framework.
- 4 To be able to discuss the impact of classical themes on contemporary Japan.
- 5 To be able to use academic secondary literature.
- 6 To be able to report on research results in a critical and academic way.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Group work, Seminar, Independent work, Peer teaching

Extra information on the teaching methods

Classical texts are interactively related to previously acquired knowledge, and are discussed on the basis of scientific studies. Students are intensively involved, and receive guidance for the interpretation of primary sources. In small groups a paper is prepared that has to be presented in class.

Study material

Type: Handouts

Name: Tekstvoorbeelden, hand-outs, artikelen, hoofdstukken uit boeken, afbeeldingen, aangeleverd door de docent en gratis te downloaden van Ufora

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Language : English

Available on Ufora : Yes

Online Available : Yes

Available in the Library : Yes

Additional information: Text samples, handouts, articles, book chapters, images, provided by teacher and freely downloaded from Ufora

References

Text samples, handouts, articles, book chapters, images, provided by teacher and freely downloaded from Ufora

Course content-related study coaching

Discussions in class provide a constant feedback. The paper that needs to be presented can be discussed with the lecturer during the course of the semester.

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Written assessment with open-ended questions

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Written assessment with open-ended questions

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Participation, Presentation

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible in modified form

Extra information on the examination methods

The written examination focuses on text passages both studied and not studied in class and on knowledge of the historical, philosophical, religious, cultural and sociological context of the text(s) discussed.

Calculation of the examination mark

Written examination (60%)

Permanent evaluation (40%)

In case one does not participate in one or more parts of the evaluation, one cannot

(Approved)

pass the examination. If the average final score in that case totals 10/20 or more, the score will be reduced to the highest non-pass score (= 9).

Facilities for Working Students

Facilities:

- 1 Student attendance during educational activities is required
- 2 Possible rescheduling of the examination to a different time in the same academic year
- 3 Feedback can be given during an appointment during and after office hours

Extra Information:

For more information concerning flexible learning: contact the monitoring service of the Faculty of Arts and philosophy