



Course syllabus for:

Japan 130 — Fall 2008
Classical Japanese Poetry: Autumn and Love Poems of the
Kokinshū* and *Shin-Kokinshū

Instructor: John R. Wallace / Meets: T & Th 2 – 3:30 PM, Dwinelle 258

Web sites: www.sonic.net/~tabine and [bSpace](#)

[How to reach me](#)

Office hours: 1:15-2PM T/Th and by appointment

My office is Dwinelle 3409

My email is jwallace@berkeley.edu

- It is helpful if you include J130 and your first and/or last name in the *subject* line of emails to me. This is very useful when I do email searches.
- I often do not check email after 9:30PM. Please keep that in mind.

[Announcements](#)

When not by email, the J130 MainPage at www.sonic.net/~tabine is the **official source of class announcements and schedules**. **DO NOT** download the online schedule. It is definitely subject to change. The MainPage side bar also indicates the most current version of this course syllabus. The number at the top of this page and the number on the web site should match.

[Course content & goal](#)

This course gives the student the opportunity to obtain a general ability to read in the original premodern Japanese *waka*, the 31-syllable poem form that was the primary form of poetry for most of Japan's literary history. *Waka* (now called *tanka*) continue to be popular in Japan. In this class *waka* from two collections are read — the *Kokinshū* (古今和歌集, ca. 905) and the *Shin-Kokinshū* (新古今和歌集, ca. 1205). We focus on two themes: poems of autumn, one of premodern Japan's favorite poetic topics, and love poems, which provide a contrast to nature-oriented poems. With attention both to grammar, vocabulary and various aspects of literary appreciation, the goal is to accustom the student in how to approach and understand *waka*.

[Prerequisites](#)

Japanese 120 "Introduction to Classical Japanese Grammar", or consent of instructor.

- ◆ Vocabulary lists are not provided for the poems. Part of the class work is looking up words and for critical terms this means using a classical dictionary (古語辞典, *kogo jiten*). Students who have not completed at least 2 ½ years of college level modern Japanese (J100A) may find the session-to-session preparation very challenging.
- ◆ Another part of the expected preparation of the poems is breaking down their grammar components. Students for whom some time has passed since completing J120 might feel they need a review of classical grammar (文語, *bungo*).

[Course materials](#)

- ◆ Class reading materials and grammar notes are in the form of photocopies or online documents and will be made available to the students by the instructor. If a large amount of copying becomes necessary, there may be a small fee to cover these costs. It will not exceed \$5 per person for the full semester.
- ◆ **Students will also need regular access to a classical dictionary** (古語辞典, *kogo jiten*).
- ◆ Generally speaking, a session's assignment is available through bSpace>Resources. However, the student should **always begin from the MainPage** where there may be outside links that are required to visit, multimedia material, and/or comments on how to approach the session assignment. Therefore, the

student should visit the MainPage and bSpace in preparation for each session.

Laptops (and multitasking)

Please see my policy and comments regarding the use of laptops because laptop use can affect a student's grade. It is linked on the side bar of the MainPage. Since our material is distributed electronically, and since online searches of images and such can be useful, I am comfortable with the use of laptops. You will need to convince me of your class preparation efforts, though, since generally speaking it is difficult to take good onscreen notes to prepare poems.

And by all means do not multitask! (This holds true for doing other Japanese homework, vocab lists and such, by the way.) Poems are not that easy to understand well. Multitasking on or off computer will have a definite impact on your class participation grade.

Grade categories

General comments

- ◆ Students are always welcome to discuss with me concerns about grades.
- ◆ Some grades are reported to bSpace, though in some cases this report is several sessions after the grade is determined. I try to keep bSpace more or less up to date but it is NOT the official gradebook record. There is one exception to this: GENERAL EXTRA CREDIT POINTS are recorded on the bSpace gradebook, in their own category, as a count of events (big or small, the count number is always "1" – it is not meant to measure the size of extra credit work but just track that it has been recorded). Extra credit earned on assignments is calculated into the assignment grade. This is for other types of extra credit activity that aren't strongly related to a specific graded assignment or exam.
- ◆ Go to the course MainPage for test dates, an excel sheet for calculating one's grade, test review material and other information about test content. Only primary details are noted below.
- ◆ All grades in all categories are either originally in or converted to (curved) a 12-pt scale where A=12, A-minus = 11 and so on. (See the charts at the end of this document.) This is also the way grades are communicated. To tell a student that they made a 12 on an assignment is to say that they received an "A". Test grades receive, initially, a percent score but this is curved and given a letter grade. The final grade is in nearly every case a mathematical average of the letter grades in all categories but I reserve the right to adjust this to the benefit of the student when it seems the grade is not a fair representation for some reason. I will not adjust the course average downwards.

Preparation for each session

A large portion of the learning component of this class depends on the student's at-home session preparation. I expect the student to prepare thoroughly for each session and I evaluate a student's preparation for every session. The students will be asked questions about vocabulary (basic meaning and beyond), grammar structure, and interpretation for many but sometimes not all of the poems assigned.

- ◆ How a student answers questions affords me the best opportunity to judge how much time was spent before class considering the poem.
- ◆ I also observe when possible what a student brings to class in the way of preparation.
- ◆ Pop quizzes on the assigned poems might also be used to check preparation.
- ◆ On occasion, I might ask students, as an individual or classwide, to prepare certain of the assigned poems for submission on the day they are read.

Regardless of what methods are used, the total weight of this grade category remains the same and all events (quizzes, etc.) are used in a collective way to determine a student's score.

The preparation grade is assessed at the end of the term but an unofficial report will be posted on bSpace by the end of the eighth week of the term.

Participation

Participation means meaningful listening (to both the instructor and fellow students) and speaking, attentiveness (especially avoidance of multitasking during class) and the overall effort to make the class meaningful for the student. When small groups are organized, the student is expected to fully participate in the

same way as during the normal class setup.

The participation grade is assessed at the end of the term but an unofficial report will be posted on bSpace by the end of the eighth week of the term.

Attendance

- ◆ Role is taken. A student is considered late if they are not in the room when I have checked whether he or she is present or not.
- ◆ Point values: **absence for whatever reason = 1 point; late arrival (after named checked during roll call) = .25 point**
- ◆ I strongly recommend students contact me ahead of time when they know they will be absent and to discuss with me the reasons for their absences. This might help in adjusting the score for this component of the final grade.
- ◆ Those registering for class later than the first session are generally considered as having been in class, though some makeup work might be asked of the student.
- ◆ All absences might require makeup work.
- ◆ It is the student’s responsibility to obtain independently from the instructor the information presented in a missed session.

Total absent / late points for the term	Letter grade recorded for this component of the final grade
0	A+
> 0.0 - 2.5	A
> 2.5 - 3.0	A-
> 3.0 - 3.5	B+
>3.5 - 4.0	B
> 4.0 - 4.5	B-
> 4.5 - 5.0	C+
> 5.0 - 6.0	C
> 6.0 - 7.0	C-
> 7.0 - 8.0	D+
> 8.0 - 9.0	D
> 9.0 - 12.0	D-
> 12	F

The cumulative sum of absent / late points is kept locally on the instructor’s computer and will be uploaded to bSpace at least three times during the term.

Exams

There are two in-class exams that will ask grammar and interpretation questions of poems not covered in class. The first exam covers autumn poems, the second love poems. **Students are allowed to make up exams only due to very unusual circumstances.** Please contact the instructor as soon as the student knows that he or she will miss an exam. Makeup exams are not the same exam as the one given on the date of the exam but there is no penalty for making up an exam. Thus the student either receives an “F” for a missed exam (unable to make it up) or is graded with full credit in mind when a test is made up.

One-on-One Session

Near the end of the term each student spends 10-20 minutes with the instructor who will ask questions about poems seen for the first time. There might be some changes to this plan, based on the progress of the group. Please ask for details on the first day of class.

How grade categories are weighted for the final course grade

- Class preparation 10%
- Class participation 10%

Class attendance.....	10%
Test One	25%
Test Two	25%
One-on-One Session.....	20%

Accommodation for students with disabilities

If you need accommodations for any physical, psychological, or learning disability or if you want me to have emergency medical information, please speak to me after class or during office hours.

Conversion of percent grades to letter grades

Exams sometimes have a percent grade before being curved to a letter grade. The percent grade is never used on the excel sheet as part of the computation of a student’s grade. It is first converted to a 12-pt (letter) grade. The *general* guideline I use for that conversion is as below but tests are curved on a case-by-case basis:

percent to letter, cutoffs	
100	A+
93	A
89.5	A-
86.5	B+
83	B
79.5	B-
76.5	C+
73	C
69.5	C-
66.5	D+
63	D
60.5	D-
60	F

Equivalents of 12-pt grades to letter grades

When a 12-pt grade is reported on bSpace or appears on a graded exercise, the letter equivalent to that number is as below:

13 = A-plus
12 = A
11 = A-minus
10 = B-plus
9 = B
8 = B-minus
7 = C-plus
6 = C
5 = C-minus
4 = D-plus
3 = D
2 = D-minus
0 = F

Conversion of 12-pt grade course average to letter grades for the final course grade

At the end of the term, the 12-pt scores for each grade category are calculated together, according to weight, for the final grade. That mathematical result is then rounded to the nearest letter grade step. That is, an 11.5 is rounded up to 12 while an 11.49 is rounded down to 11, and so on. The student can calculate possible scenarios by using the excel sheet provided on the MainPage. Below are the cutoffs for each final course letter grade.

When given, highest 1 or 2 class averages	A+
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11.5	A
10.5	A-
9.5	B+
8.5	B
7.5	B-
6.5	C+
5.5	C
4.5	C-
3.5	D+
2.5	D
1	D-
> 1	F