

LING/JAPN 563 | Structure of Japanese — Fall 2026 • UNC Chapel Hill

Course Resources: Information & Policies

Instructor	Jennifer Smith (jlsmith@email.unc.edu), 309 Smith Bldg, <i>she/her</i> • You are welcome to call me Jen, Dr. Smith, or Prof. Smith.
Course format	MWF 11:15–12:05 [for location, see Canvas Course Resources] 3.0 credit hours • In class: Lecture, discussion, collaboration between linguistics and language students. • Pre-class preparation: Problem solving, language data collection, readings. • Final project and presentation in place of a traditional final exam.
Course materials	Website: https://users.castle.unc.edu/~jlsmith/ling563.html • Required readings, optional readings, and assignments. • Lecture outlines, relevant links, assigned preparation, and daily information. See also the SoJ Canvas site .
Office hours	Tu 2:00-3:15 pm (309 Smith Bldg) and by appointment; Zoom by request • Come if you have questions, need help, or want more information—or just say hi!

I. Course description and outcomes

Course description

Introductory linguistic description of modern Japanese. For students of linguistics with no knowledge of Japanese and students of Japanese with no knowledge of linguistics. FC-KNOWING. Prerequisite: JAPN 768 or LING 767.

Coursework includes introductory readings, readings from the linguistics research literature, and hands-on problem solving and analysis of Japanese data.

Course outcomes

(see also VI. below for FC-KNOWING objectives)

- Identify systematic patterns and state insightful generalizations about Japanese data
- Apply tools and methods of linguistic theory to develop analyses of Japanese patterns
- Use the results of linguistic analysis to critically evaluate claims and proposals about the Japanese language and about linguistic theory
- Identify real-life contexts and situations (language teaching/learning, cross-cultural communication, etc.) in which the application of linguistic analysis to Japanese makes predictions or provides insights
- Develop and strengthen general skills for critical thinking, model building, hypothesis testing, data literacy, and argumentation

Who is this course for?

This course is for **linguistics students** who want to learn about Japanese and how it has influenced linguistic theory, and for **Japanese-language students** who want to learn about linguistic analysis methods and apply them in order to better understand Japanese pronunciation, grammar, and usage and how these compare to English. Undergraduate and graduate students are welcome if they satisfy **at least one** prerequisite: completion of at least LING 101/Introduction to Language, **or** Japanese ability equivalent to at least JAPN 102/Elementary Japanese II, **or** permission of instructor. Both Japanese language data and linguistics concepts will be explained in class or in readings/assignments as needed.

This course satisfies the Focus Capacity “Ways of Knowing” (FC-KNOWING).

II. Course requirements and grading information

Final course grade calculation

A. Preparation & participation	20%
B. Quizzes (4)	40%
C. Final project: Article summary	5%
Topic proposal & methodology plan	15%
Presentation, slides, & data appendix	15%
Revisions	5%

Grading scale (*letter T number*)

*No A+ course grades at UNC-CH

A+*	97–100 (54)	B+	87–89 (44)	C+	77–79 (34)	D+	67–69 (24)
A	93–96 (51)	B	83–86 (41)	C	73–76 (31)	D	60–66 (21)
A–	90–92 (57)	B–	80–82 (47)	C–	70–72 (37)	F	0–59

- Some assignments and activities involve accessing sound files or web pages. You are encouraged to use headphones for better audio quality. Please let me know in advance if you need accommodations for accessing sound files or online activities.

A. Preparation & participation

Linguistics is best learned by doing. To get the most out of this course, you should plan to **attend** class, **complete** preparation on time, and **participate** in activities and discussion. That said, any of us may have health, family, or personal issues that interfere with class attendance, so **flexibility** is built into the participation & preparation course component.

- General tips on preparing for class:**

- For a **reading**, make notes on the important points and work to understand the examples. Sometimes you will be given a reading-guide handout or discussion questions to help you find the key points in a reading.
- For a **data set**, work through the data on your own before class and make notes about the patterns that you find.

- Participation & preparation grading:** Expect frequent **preparation questions** and **participation activities**. These are graded **complete/incomplete**. Your preparation & participation grade is determined by the percentage complete out of the total possible, with the lowest 10% dropped; this allows you to miss several with no consequence. For this reason, there are no make-ups for missed preparation questions or participation activities except in cases of University Approved Absence (see below).

- *Preparation questions* (PQs) are usually due in Canvas before class, or occasionally on paper at the start of class. These might be check-in questions for a reading, problem-solving questions from a data set, or questions about your own language experience. PQs are typically short, but thinking about them helps you prepare for class discussion or review course material. They may *build on* or *extend beyond* concepts covered in previous class discussions. PQs are graded as complete if they are fully answered and show application of course concepts, even if they are only partly correct.
- *Participation activities* occur during class, often as part of a discussion. They are graded as complete if there is evidence that you participated (details depend on the activity).

- There is **no grade for attendance** specifically. If you need to miss class for health or other reasons, you do not need to ask permission or explain your absence. But note that you may miss participation activities when you miss class, and remember that it is your responsibility to check the “[Daily syllabus](#)” web page for lecture outlines, handouts, data sets, and any upcoming preparation or assignments.

B. Quizzes

- There will be **4 quizzes** during the first 10 weeks of the course, on the topics of phonetics/phonology, morphology, sociolinguistics, and syntax. Quizzes are in-class and closed-book, but you may bring one page of notes as a memory aid.
- If you need to schedule a **make-up quiz**, please discuss arrangements with me in advance. Without prior arrangements, a missed quiz may only be made up if you can provide documentation from Health Services, your dean, or another appropriate authority to demonstrate that your absence was unexpected and unavoidable.
- Linguistics graduate students (or undergraduates with advanced linguistics background) will in some cases be required or permitted to **replace** a quiz with an assignment that involves reading a linguistics research article on the relevant topic and answering a set of discussion questions. If this may apply to you, we will discuss it individually.

C. Final project

Detailed information will be provided later in the semester. An overview of the project components, with **tentative** due dates, is given here. Most project phases have an in-class workshop day to allow for consultation with me and with classmates.

- **Article summary:** a structured summary of a linguistics research article focusing on some aspect of Japanese or linguistics related to your final-project topic. (M Oct 26)
- **Topic proposal**, with specific research question and preliminary references. (W Nov 4)
- **Methodology plan:** concrete plan for collecting and analyzing data. (F Nov 12)
- **Project presentation**, to be held during the officially scheduled final-exam period (**F Dec 4, 4-7pm**). Depending on the number of students enrolled in the course, an additional presentation period may be scheduled and/or some presentations may be given asynchronously, but attendance during the final-exam period is mandatory. The presentation includes **slides** (and a supplementary data appendix) presenting your research question, project design, and results, representing intellectual work equivalent to at least 10 pages of prose.
- **Revisions** to your presentation slides and/or data appendix, based on feedback from the presentation (W Dec 9).

Deadline extension policy for the final project:

- (i) If you know that some component of your final project will be late, please email me to request an extension **at least 24 hours** before it is due. Just ask for an extension: I don't require proof that you “need” extra time. In almost all cases, I will give the extension. But be aware that each part of the project builds on previous parts, and take care not to let your entire project get off track.
- (ii) If an **emergency** makes you unable to complete a project component by its deadline, please email me to let me know as early as possible. Such assignments will generally still be accepted, possibly with a late penalty.

III. Course policies

- A. Devices in class: Please use laptops or other devices only for class-related activities. Studies show that students who use devices for non-class activities impair their own learning—and their neighbors' learning too (Fried 2006; Sana, Weston, & Cepeda 2013). Some portions of class time are **device-free**, except for official accommodations.
- B. Artificial intelligence (AI) use: Use of generative AI tools of any kind is not permitted in this course unless otherwise specified on an assignment or permission is given *in advance*. Any unauthorized use of these tools will be considered an instance of academic dishonesty and will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. (See also the UNC AI Policy below.)
- C. Recording of class sessions: In general, no audio or video recording of class sessions is permitted. If you have questions or concerns, please talk with me.
- D. Class absences: See information under II.A. Preparation & participation above, and see below for the UNC Attendance Policy on University Excused Absences.
- E. Extensions, make-up quizzes and late submissions: Please see under the relevant grading information section in II. above.
- F. Collaboration/citation for assignments:
 - (i) *Assignments*: You are encouraged to **discuss** assignments, including preparation questions and project components, with classmates. However, any **written work** you submit must be written by yourself alone unless otherwise specified.
 - (ii) *Quizzes*: No collaboration of any kind is allowed during quizzes, but you will be able to ask clarification questions.
 - (iii) Consulting outside materials (materials other than course readings, handouts, course web pages, or in-class notes) for an assignment is **not necessary** unless otherwise stated, and may negatively impact your grade if it prevents you from proposing a solution of your own—but if any outside materials are consulted, you are required to **cite** such outside references.
- G. Weather cancellations: Unless all University classes are canceled, assume that class will be held. But in bad weather, use your judgment about whether it is safe to travel to campus. If classes are canceled, check the course website for announcements and schedule changes.

Other policies (UNC standard and required items):

- Attendance policy — As stated in the University's [Class Attendance Policy](#), no right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings, except for these **University Approved Absences**:
 1. Authorized University activities: [University Approved Absence Office \(UAAO\)](#) website provides information and [FAQs for students](#) and [FAQs for faculty](#) about University Approved Absences.
 2. Disability/religious observance/pregnancy/short-term military service, as required by law and approved by the [University Compliance Office](#), or in the case of short-term military service, the Dean of Students.
 3. Significant health condition and/or personal/family emergency as approved by the [Office of the Dean of Students](#), [Gender Violence Service Coordinators](#), and/or the [University Compliance Office](#).
- Code of Conduct — I expect all students to follow the guidelines of the UNC Student Code of Conduct. In particular, students are expected to be aware of policies related to academic integrity. You can read more about the Code of Conduct at studentconduct.unc.edu. In any course, including mine, what

constitutes cheating can change from one activity to another. For example, collaboration may be encouraged for an assignment but qualify as cheating during an exam. Please see my guidelines for each activity, and if you are unsure, please ask me to clarify.

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) use policy — Carolina students are expected to follow these AI guidelines:
 1. AI should help you think, not think for you. You may be able to use these tools to brainstorm ideas, research topics, and analyze problems, but you must decide what's appropriate and accurate.
 2. Engage responsibly with AI. You must evaluate AI-generated outputs for potential biases, limitations, inaccuracies, false output, and ethical implications. Do not put personal or confidential data into these tools.
 3. The use of AI must be open and documented. You should declare, explain, and cite any use of AI in the creation of your work using applicable standards (e.g., APA, MLA, course guidelines). Understand that you are ultimately 100% responsible for your final product.
 4. Follow specific AI guidelines in this syllabus. If you are unsure, check with me. Guidance offered in this syllabus would be referenced should an issue be referred to Student Conduct for alleged academic misconduct.

- Acceptable Use policy — By attending the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, you agree to abide by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill policies related to the acceptable use of IT systems and services. The Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) sets the expectation that you will use the University's technology resources responsibly, consistent with the University's mission. In the context of a class, it's quite likely you will participate in online activities that could include personal information about you or your peers, and the AUP addresses your obligations to protect the privacy of class participants. In addition, the AUP addresses matters of others' intellectual property, including copyright. These are only a couple of typical examples, so you should consult the full [Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy](#), which covers topics related to using digital resources, such as privacy, confidentiality and intellectual property.

Additionally, consult the [Safe Computing at UNC](#) website for information about data security policies, updates, and tips on keeping your identity, information, and devices safe.

- Non-discrimination policy — As set out in the University's [Policy Statement on Non-Discrimination](#), the University is committed to providing an environment where all members of our community can learn, work, and thrive. Consistent with these principles and applicable laws, it is therefore the University's policy not to discriminate on the basis of age, color, disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation or veteran status as consistent with the University's [Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment and Related Misconduct](#). No person, on the basis of protected status, shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to unlawful discrimination, harassment, or retaliation under any University program or activity, including with respect to employment terms and conditions. The University will consider only relevant factors such as individual abilities and qualifications in admissions, hiring, disciplinary action, and all other decisions and will apply consistent standards of conduct and performance.

If you are experiencing harassment or discrimination, you can seek assistance and file a report through the Report and Response Coordinators (email reportandresponse@unc.edu or see additional contact info at safe.unc.edu) or the [University Compliance Office](#). Please note that I am designated as a Responsible Employee, which means that I must report to the UCO any information I receive about harassment or discrimination. If you'd like to speak with a confidential resource, those include Counseling and Psychological Services and the University's Ombuds Office.

- Grade appeal process — If you have any concerns with grading, please discuss it with me as soon as possible. If we cannot resolve the issue, you may talk to our director of undergraduate studies.

- Syllabus changes — The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus, including project due dates and quiz dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible.
- Intellectual diversity — This course engages diverse scholarly perspectives to develop critical thinking, analysis, and debate, and inclusion of a reading does not imply endorsement.

Resources for student wellness and learning

- University Compliance Office/Accommodations — University Compliance Office (UCO) Accommodations Team ([Accommodations - UNC Compliance](#)) receives requests for accommodations for disability, pregnancy and related conditions, and sincerely held religious beliefs and practices through the University's Policy on Accommodations. UCO Accommodations team determines eligibility and reasonable accommodations consistent with state and federal laws.
- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) — UNC-Chapel Hill is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body. The [Heels Care Network](#) website is a place to access the many mental health resources at Carolina. CAPS is the primary mental health provider for students, offering timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services. Go to the [CAPS website](#) or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health building for an initial evaluation to learn more. Students can also call CAPS 24/7 at 919-966-3658 for immediate assistance.
- Title IX and related resources — Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Reports can be made [online to the UCO](#) or by contacting the [University's Title IX Coordinator](#), Elizabeth Hall, or the [Report and Response Managers](#) in the University Compliance Office (UCO) (formerly the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office). Please note that I am designated as a Responsible Employee, which means I must report to the UCO any information I receive about the forms of misconduct listed in this paragraph. If you'd like to speak with a confidential resource, those include Counseling and Psychological Services, the University's Ombuds Office, and the [Gender Violence Services Coordinators](#). Additional resources are available at [safe.unc.edu](#).
- Writing Center and Learning Center — The [Writing Center](#) and [Learning Center](#) have many valuable resources to support student learning.

IV. Schedule of course topics

The schedule of course topics is available on the course web site, at:

<https://users.castle.unc.edu/~jlsmith/ling563/schedule.html>

V. Readings on reserve for this course

For more about Japanese linguistics:

The following books are on reserve for this course; **bolded** items are e-books available through [Course Reserves](#) on Canvas. (Some of the assigned readings also come from these books.)

- Tsujimura, N. 2014. *An introduction to Japanese linguistics*, 3ed. Blackwell. [2007, 2ed.]
- Tsujimura, N. (ed.). 1999. ***The handbook of Japanese linguistics***, 2ed. Blackwell.
- Miyagawa, S., and M. Saito (eds.). 2008. ***The Oxford handbook of Japanese linguistics***. Oxford.
- Yamaguchi, T. 2007. *Japanese linguistics: An introduction*. Continuum.
- Vance, T. 2008. *The sounds of Japanese*. Cambridge.

- Kubozono, H (ed.). 2015. *Handbook of Japanese phonetics and phonology*. Mouton.
- Shibatani, M., S. Miyagawa, & H. Noda (eds.). 2017. *Handbook of Japanese syntax*. Mouton.
- Pardeshi, P., & T. Kageyama. 2018. *Handbook of Japanese contrastive linguistics*. Mouton.
- Okamoto, S., & J. Shibamoto-Smith (eds.). 2004. *Japanese language, gender, and ideology*. Oxford.
- Okamoto, S., & J. Shibamoto-Smith. 2016. *The social life of the Japanese language*. Cambridge.
- Irwin, M. 2011. *Loanwords in Japanese*. Benjamins.
- McClure, W. 2000. *Using Japanese: A guide to contemporary usage*. Cambridge.

For more about linguistics in general:

If this is your first linguistics course, you may want to buy or borrow an introductory linguistics book that you can consult for more information about terminology or concepts. One useful choice is *Contemporary Linguistics*, which is used in LING 101 and available on reserve in Davis Library. Another good choice is *Language Files*; multiple editions are available in the library, and one is on reserve for our course:

- Mihalicek, V., & C. Wilson (eds.). 2011. *Language files*, 11ed. Ohio State U.

VI. Focus Capacity: Ways of Knowing

Learning Outcomes

These are the learning outcomes that are expected of students after completing a course.

- Recognize and use one or more approach(es) to developing and validating knowledge of the unfamiliar world.
- Evaluate ways that temporal, spatial, scientific, and philosophical categories structure knowledge.
- Interrogate assumptions that underlie our own perceptions of the world.
- Employ strategies to mitigate or adjust for preconceptions and biases.
- Apply critical insights to understand patterns of experience and belief.

Questions for Students

These are the types of questions you should be able to answer after completing a course.

- What norms and expectations do I take for granted?
- What categories and concepts frame my assumptions, experiences, and beliefs?
- What practices of investigation or inquiry best challenge those assumptions and expectations?
- How can I consider whether my beliefs might be wrong?