



2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

**PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT
AY 2009-2010**

Report Date: June 1, 2010
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 Fall 2009 and Spring 2010, we assessed the following outcomes:

- (1f) with ten Japanese Studies majors in JAPN 310 (Zen and the Art of Japanese Calligraphy)
- (3a), (3b), and (3c) with three Japanese Studies majors in JAPN 357 (Naturalism in Japanese Literature)
- (2b), (2d), and (2e) with six Japanese Studies majors in JAPN 351 (Contemporary Japanese Culture)
- (2a) and (2e) with four Japanese Studies majors in HIST/JAPN 390 (History of Traditional Japan)
- (2b) and (2e) with five Japanese Studies majors in HIST/JAPN 387 (US-Japan Relations)
- (2c), (2d), and (2e) with five Japanese Studies majors in THRS/JAPN 368 (Japanese Religion and Society)

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

Noriko Nagata, Steve Roddy, Uldis Kruze, John Nelson

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

JAPN 310: Zen and the Art of Japanese Calligraphy (Fall 2009) assessed by Noriko Nagata

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.).

Learning outcome:

(1f) Students will exhibit the ability to produce the block style of Japanese calligraphy and to write



2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

a haiku poem in Japanese calligraphy on long scroll paper.

- One third of the course period was devoted to a hands-on tutorial of basic brush strokes and a standard style of Japanese calligraphy. Students submitted a total of 32 calligraphy assignments. For each assignment, they wrote a Japanese word in calligraphy and it was graded according to the following four categories: brush stroke, brush line, character shape, and character size. In the calligraphy assignments, three majors demonstrated “very good achievement (above 90%)”, six majors “good achievement (above 85%),” and one major “average achievement (above 80%)”. The results satisfied learning outcome (1f).
- For the final project, the students were assigned to write a haiku poem on long calligraphy paper. It was also graded by the four categories mentioned above. Six majors exhibited “very good achievement (above 90%)”, three majors “good achievement (above 85%),” and one major “average achievement (above 80%).” The results also satisfied learning outcome (1f).

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.

- Overall, ten majors developed good skills to produce the block style of Japanese calligraphy. Only one major (Chinese student) had a previous experience with calligraphy. It was very impressive to see their achievement, starting with zero skill. Zen philosophy lectures were integrated into the course. Zen emphasizes learning by doing. It takes ten years to internalize your skills to perform an art without thinking of it: such an action is spontaneous, natural, and untrammled. By practicing Japanese Calligraphy, the students could develop a better understanding of Zen philosophy, which motivated their calligraphy practice.

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.

- When a student missed the class and failed to learn a new brush stroke, I had to demonstrate the current brush stroke for that student in class, which took up some precious classroom time and was not fair to other students. I always suggest that students should come to my office hours to make up for any missed instruction, but they do not necessarily come. If I require that makeup work be done in office hours (with a penalty of a failure), they may make more effort to do so, which will help them and the other students.

JAPN 357: Naturalism in Japanese Literature (Fall 2009) assessed by Steve Roddy

a. What did you do?



2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

- One midterm examination (given in the 8th week), three short papers, and one longer paper formed the basis for evaluating students' progress toward meeting the learning objectives of the course. The single exam of the course consisted of two sets of essay questions: the first tested the students' knowledge of general themes of 20th century Japanese literature, while the second elicited interpretative answers about the various novels and short stories (by Tayama Katai, Tanizaki Jun'ichirô, Uno Chiyo, and Akutagawa Ryûnosuke, among others) covered in class readings. The written assignments of the class were similarly divided into two types: three short essays which were focused on close textual analysis, and one longer paper (7-10 pages) on a topic of the student's choosing, but related to the overall themes of the course.
- The following exam questions assessed learning outcomes 3a and 3b:

(3a) Students will exhibit the ability to outline the major features of Japanese literary development, including identifying significant authors, texts, and trends, during the traditional and modern periods.

- ❖ Essay question: What is an "I-Novel", and how did this form arise as a product of the Naturalist Movement in Japan?
- ❖ One student's answer to this question was excellent (90% or above), one's was fair (70% or above), and the third one's was poor (50% or above).

(3b) Students will exhibit the ability to analyze the themes and forms of literary works and their relationships to historical and literary contexts, and to appreciate the plurality of meanings within literary texts, including their ethical dimensions.

- ❖ Essay Question: Some have argued that Naturalist writers tried to create the voice of a "thinking male subject", for whom women existed only as the objects of their desires, and whose female characters thus lacked a similar subjectivity or agency that would enable them to act and even to think independently. Can Uno Chiyo's narrative voice be considered that of a "thinking woman", free of such male condescension toward females? Moreover, does Uno's treatment of Kazue differ substantively from that of *The Quilt's* Yoshiko, an aspiring writer who, like Kazue, also seeks independence and satisfaction in both love, and in intellectual life as a writer?
- ❖ Only one Japanese Studies major chose to answer this question (they were given a range of essay questions to choose from), with a score of excellent (90% or above).

(3c) Students will exhibit the ability to write concise and insightful English essays about Japanese literary works.



2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

- ❖ Three short essays (2-3 pages), and one final paper (7-10 pages) on the readings were assigned over the semester. The short essays were written as answers to prompts on specific course readings, while the longer paper gave leeway to the students to formulate their own topics, and also to read in the critical literature on the history of Japanese prose fiction of the 20th century.
- ❖ The final papers submitted by Japanese Studies majors were written on the following topics:
 - Kirino Natsuo's *Grotesque* and the Dark Side of Contemporary Japanese Society
 - Prostitution in Japan
 - A Menagerie of Monsters in the Fiction of Kirino Natsuo and Ohba Minako
- ❖ One student's final paper achieved a very good score of 90% or above, one a good score of 80% or above, and the third, an adequate score of 70% or above.

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

- Students in the Japanese Studies major performed at an adequate to superior level in most of the assignments discussed above. The one exception was the question that elicited an answer designed to address Learning Outcome 3a; two of them had moderate to severe difficulty explaining the general history of Japanese Literary Naturalism, and its relationship to European literature. This may indicate that the inclusion of such historical context is too ambitious, or that more time should be devoted to these topics during class sessions and in reading assignments.

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

- This course was originally designed to provide students with an understanding of one of the leading schools of modern Japanese literature, by tracing its evolution from the late-19th to the mid-20th century. In the first version of the course in 2005, I hewed more closely to this original plan, but in 2009 I made some adjustments in order to explore themes only tenuously tied to the Naturalist Movement itself. Perhaps as a result of this more diffuse range of authors and texts, the clarity of the earlier version of the class was somewhat diluted, which may in turn explain why some of the students experienced greater difficulty in grasping some of the main concepts of literary naturalism. I will reexamine these issues before teaching the course again in coming years.

JAPN 351: Contemporary Japanese Culture (Spring 2010) assessed by Steve Roddy

a. What did you do?



2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

- Two examinations (given at Weeks 7 and 12, respectively) and a final research project and presentation were used to assess the students' learning. Each examination consisted of five and six essay questions, respectively, as well as five shorter questions. The essay questions assessed the students' grasp of the analytical concepts applied to the course topics of Takarazuka theatre, manga, anime, and contemporary music, by the authors of our principal readings, and included, inter alia, concepts such as animatism and cinematism, *shôjo*, the *genba* or "place of actualization", racial and ethnic identities in hip hop, otaku database consumption, and play (*asobi*) in the underground club scene. Two exam questions were used to assess Learning Outcomes 2b and 2d; as for Learning Outcome 2e, the research project served as the primary basis for assessment of the skills listed under this latter category.

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

- ❖ Essay question (from Examination #1, given on March 10): Does the cross-dressing of Takarazuka's stars present a challenge to a male-dominated, patriarchal society, or does it merely reproduce the widespread assumption that "Japan is a man's world"? Why, or why not?
- ❖ Of the four Japanese Studies majors who chose to answer this question, two answered it very well (90% or above), and two answered it well (80% 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 (from Examination #2, given on April 24): Discuss the ways in which racial identities and issues prominent in American hip-hop music were understood and eventually assimilated and utilized by Japanese performers. How were such issues relevant to changes in Japanese society of the past few decades, and how did these find expression in lyrics, costume, or other aspects of hip hop performance?
- ❖ Of the five Japanese Studies majors who answered this question, one answered it very well (90% or above), three answered it well (80% or above), and one answered it adequately (70% 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.

- ❖ A research project was assigned to assess Learning Outcome 2e. This paper was evaluated on the basis of the following criteria: relevance of the chosen topic to the broader themes of



2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

the course, the significance of the findings, use of primary and secondary research materials (both written and audiovisual), and the quality of expression and coherence of logical argument in the written version. Projects submitted by Japanese Studies majors covered the following topics:

- The Videogame *Final Fantasy*: Mythos and Genre
 - Japanese Rock in Japan and America
 - Japanese Television Dramas
 - Japanese Hip Hop and the Struggle to Keep it “Real”
 - Japanese Pop Idols
 - Imaginary Friends: 2D Love and the Japanese Male Fixation on Fictional Characters
- ❖ Three of these final projects were graded as meeting the criteria listed above at 90% or above, two at 80% or above, and one at 70% or above.

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

- Students majoring in Japanese Studies performed at a relatively high level on the two examination questions listed above, with scores generally above the 80th percentile. Their answers demonstrated a good to excellent grasp of some of the issues covered in the units on the Takarazuka Revue and J-Hop (Japanese Hip-hop), respectively. Moreover, their performance remained more or less constant from the first to the second exams. As for the final research projects, the breadth of titles gives a hint of the eclectic range of interests and ideas pursued by the students. Many students came to the class as confirmed “otaku” of various areas of Japanese popular culture, and most deepened their knowledge of these topics by employing some of the tools of analysis introduced in the class reading assignments. The resulting presentations and written projects were generally strong, although problems with writing cogently and in a logically ordered, well-structured format eluded some of the students.
- A significant issue faced by two of the Japanese Studies majors had to do with time management. I required that a first draft, including bibliography and outline, be presented for comment and approval two weeks before the final version was due, but at least two students had difficulty meeting this deadline. Moreover, the resulting projects betrayed their haste. It appears that procrastination was a major factor in both of these cases.

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

- The students’ learning outcomes in 2b and 2d were reasonably strong, in the sense that they were able to master the materials well enough to present good to very good answers on the topics covered by these exam questions. This relatively good showing could be attributed to the familiarity toward these subjects that many of these students possessed prior to taking the course, thanks in several cases to their long-held interests in contemporary Japanese culture.



2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

- As noted above, problems occurred primarily in the area of writing and research of the final project. I implemented a requirement of an outline and draft specifically to try to ensure that students would progress steadily and in a timely fashion toward the goal of completing their projects, but a minority of students failed to meet these deadlines. The answer may lie in simply moving the timeline for research and writing back to the middle of the semester, rather than only requiring written assignments during the last four weeks of class.

HIST/JAPN 390: History of Traditional Japan (Fall 2009) assessed by Uldis Kruze

a. What did you do?

In this course, I assessed both the 12-page term paper and the final exam essay for the total number of four (4) Japanese majors enrolled.

(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.

- Three majors demonstrated “very good achievement (above 90%)” and one major “average achievement (70% to 80%)”.

(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.

- Three majors demonstrated “very good achievement (above 90%)” and one major “average achievement (70% to 80%)”.

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

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

- Basically the students did very well on their understanding of the cultural and historical features of Japan. The only shortcomings were in the area of historical methodology that I will have to emphasize in the future.

HIST/JAPN 387: US.-Japan Relations (Spring 2010) assessed by Uldis Kruze

a. What did you do?

In this course, I assessed both the 12-page term paper and the final exam essay for the total number of five (5) Japanese majors enrolled.



2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

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

- Four majors demonstrated “very good achievement (above 90%)” and one major “very poor (at most 60%)”.

(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.

- Four majors demonstrated “very good achievement (above 90%)” and one major “very poor (at most 60%)”.

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

- I learned two things:
 - ❖ The students had a very good grasp of Japanese culture. Most scored very high on that segment of the rubric.
 - ❖ While a majority did well on the term paper or research paper, some had difficulty with formulating good questions and finding appropriate primary sources

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

- I will need to spend more time discussing and demonstrating the elements of a good research paper. Part of that effort will be to create one or two online Forums at Blackboard and have the students generate good historical questions, such as “what do I want to know about the history of anime?” If I gave them practice time developing good historical questions, they would be more confident in developing them within the context of their paper projects. Another Forum at Blackboard could address the issue: “What are good primary sources? What are good primary sources in Japanese history?” I think this could be helpful too.

THRS/JAPN 368: Japanese Religion and Society assessed by John Nelson

a. What did you do?

The following outcomes were assessed by five majors’ final essays. The five majors are indicated by Major 1, Major 2, Major 3, and Major 4. The titles of the essays are as follows:

- Anime and Japanese religions
- Funerals
- Soka Gakkai



2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

- Christianity in Japan
- Noh

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

One major demonstrated “good achievement (80% to 90%)”, one major “average achievement (70% to 80%)”, one major “less than adequate or poor”, and two majors “very poor achievement (at most 60%).”

(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.

One major demonstrated “very good achievement (above 90%)”, one major “good achievement (80% to 90%)”, one major “average achievement (70% to 80%)”, and one major “poor achievement (60% to 70%)”. One major’s essay was not applicable to this learning outcome.

(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.

One major demonstrated “good achievement (80% to 90%)”, one major “average achievement (70% to 80%)”, one major “less than adequate but not poor”, and one major “poor achievement (60% to 70%)”.

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

Overall, the results look satisfactory.

Regarding learning outcome (2c), two majors out of five exhibited average or above average achievement. A few majors had trouble with historical exposition.

Regarding learning outcome (2d), three majors out of four exhibited average or above average achievement explaining major themes (their selected topics) of Japanese culture.

Regarding learning outcome (2e), three majors out of five exhibited average or above average achievement in writing a research essay in English.

The one who performed poorly for (2c), (2d), and (2e) exhibited inability to convey or to organize her thoughts.

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



2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

No changes are planned to adapt courses or curricula to low performing students. The fact that a majority of majors exhibited either average or above average performance indicates there is a good correlation between course material, teaching methods, and learning outcomes.

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 “2. Japanese Studies Learning Goals and Outcomes 2010.”

c. Program Learning Rubrics aligned with outcomes

See the attachment of “3. Japanese Studies Learning Rubrics 2010.”

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

See the attachment of “4. Japanese Studies Curriculum Mapping 2010.”