JAPN 4900.004
Special Problems
Woven City and the Future of Cities —
Fall 2026

Japanese, Intermediate-Low level, Woven City and the Future of Cities
Instructor: Dr. Kaori Furuya Email: kaori.furuya@unt.edu Office: Lang 405G
Phone Number: 940-565-2404 (main office)
Class Hour: 2:30 pm on Monday (about 1 hour)
On zoom or in person
Office Hour: 8:20-9:20 am on Tuesdays and Thursdays or by appointment

Course Description and Objectives

This course studies Toyota's Woven City in Susono, Shizuoka, as a real, operating test city. Announced in 2020 and officially launched on September 25, 2025, it is described by Toyota as a "living laboratory" and a test course for mobility. Students learn what Woven City is, how it is designed, which technologies are tested there, and who takes part. In the last weeks, they use that knowledge to ask broader questions about smart cities, experimental cities, and the future of urban life.
The course starts from understanding Woven City, not from judging it. Students use evidence from sources to describe what exists and what has changed since 2020.

The course has three goals:

a. **Content Knowledge:** Understand Woven City's history, design, technologies (mobility, energy, data, robots, AI), and participants, and connect it to the concepts of the smart city and the experimental city.
b. **Japanese Language Skills:** Read short, authentic Japanese sources (Toyota, Woven by Toyota, local government, easy news) at about N4 level, and build topic vocabulary. Japanese ability is not graded directly.
c. **Research Skills:** Use sources as evidence, compare sources, form a research question, and present findings in a short paper and presentation.

Method: The course relies on documentary sources only: official materials, news, and a small number of academic readings. No surveys or interviews are conducted. Each week combines one main reading, a short Japanese reading note, and one small research task, so the workload stays suitable for one hour of meeting time.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Explain what Woven City is, where it is, why Toyota built it, and how it has developed from 2020 to the present.
2. Describe how mobility, sustainability and energy, data, AI, and robots are used in Woven City.
3. Identify who participates in Woven City (Weavers, Inventors, Toyota, residents) and how experiments connect to everyday life.

4. Explain the concepts of the smart city, the experimental city, and the living laboratory, and apply them to Woven City.
5. Read short Japanese sources and report key words and main points in English.
6. Develop a research question and present an evidence-based answer in a paper and a presentation.

Readings

All readings are free online. Students read only the parts assigned for each week. Japanese sources are read for key words and main points, not word by word.

Toyota / Woven by Toyota (Japanese)

- Toyota (2025, Jan. 7). モビリティのテストコース“Toyota Woven City”、Phase1 の建築を完了し、準備を本格化
- Woven by Toyota (2025, Sept. 25). モビリティのテストコース Toyota Woven City で、本日実証を開始
- Woven by Toyota (2026, Apr. 22). トヨタおよびウーブン・バイ・トヨタ、カケザンを加速する AI 技術やしくみを公開
- Toyota. Woven City photo collection (visual reading)

Toyota (English)

- Toyota (2020, Jan. 7). Toyota to Build Prototype City of the Future
- Toyota (2020, Jan. 7). "Woven City" announcement at CES 2020
- Toyota (2021, Feb. 23). Toyota Breaks Ground for "Woven City"
- Toyota (2025, Jan. 7). "Toyota Woven City," a Test Course for Mobility, Completes Phase 1 Construction and Prepares for Launch
- Toyota (2025, Jan. 7). CES 2025 Press Conference - Presentation by Akio Toyoda

Academic readings (excerpts only)

- Hollands, R. G. (2008). Will the real smart city please stand up? Intelligent, progressive or entrepreneurial? *City*, 12(3). Abstract, part of the introduction, and conclusion.
- One short reading on living labs / urban experimentation (to be selected; introduction and conclusion only).

Easy Japanese news

- NHK NEWS WEB EASY: one article per week from Week 4 on, chosen by theme (AI, self-driving, robots, electric vehicles, environment, elderly people, rural areas, new transportation). Because articles rotate, specific articles are chosen during the semester.

Grading Scales

Weekly Preparation and Discussion — 20%
Japanese Reading Notes — 15%
Short Research Tasks — 20%
Final Presentation — 20%
Final Paper — 25%
A: 90–100 B: 80–89 C: 70–79 D: 60–69 F: Below 60

- **Weekly Preparation and Discussion — 20%**
  Students complete the assigned reading before each meeting and take part in the discussion.
- **Japanese Reading Notes — 15%**
  For each Japanese reading, students write (1) five words they understood, (2) three sentences in English about what they learned, and (3) three words they did not understand. Japanese ability itself is not graded; completeness and effort are.
- **Short Research Tasks — 20%**
  One small task per week, such as a timeline, an annotated map, a technology profile, or a 150–250 word response. Each task must use evidence from the assigned sources.
- **Final Presentation — 20%**
  A 15–20 minute presentation, "What is Woven City?", covering the location, Toyota's purpose, design, mobility, technologies, sustainability, participants, and what Woven City tells us about future cities. Simple Japanese may be included.
- **Final Paper — 25%**
  A short research paper (about 2,000–3,000 words in English) that answers one research question about Woven City, using the course sources only, with a short list of Japanese key terms. The research question is chosen in Week 11. The due date will be announced in class.

Weekly Schedule

Week	Topic	Main Activity
1	Introduction: What Is Woven City?	Read the Phase 1 (2025) and official launch (2025) articles in Japanese. Find Susono, Higashi-Fuji, Mt. Fuji, 2021, 2024, and 2025 in the text. Write 100–200 words: "What is Woven City?"
2	What Is a Smart City? Smart City Concept	Read excerpts of Hollands (2008). Define "smart city" and discuss: is Woven City a smart city?
3	From Smart Cities to Experimental Cities: Experimental City Concept	Read Toyota's 2020 "living laboratory" statement and a short reading on living labs. Write your own definition: "A living lab is a place where ___."
4	Toyota and the Corporate City	Read the 2020 announcement and the 2021 groundbreaking. Discuss why Toyota used the former Higashi-Fuji factory site. Make a one-page timeline: 2020, 2021, 2024, 2025.
5	What Is Being Tested? Mobility	Read "Prototype City of the Future" (streets, autonomous vehicles, e-Palette) and look at the photo collection. Annotate a map. Write 150–250 words: "How will people move around Woven City?"
6	What Is Being Tested? Sustainability / Energy	Read the Phase 1 (2025) article (LEED Platinum) and the sustainability part of the CES 2025 presentation. Discuss: what does "sustainable city" mean in Woven City?
7	What Is Being Tested? Data / AI	Read the 2026 article on AI technology and Inventor Garage (Japanese) and the AI part of CES 2025. List what AI does and what data it uses.

Week	Topic	Main Activity
8	What Is Being Tested? Robots / AI	Watch the robots, drones, and personal mobility parts of CES 2025. Choose ONE technology and explain: What is it? What does it do? Who uses it? Why is it useful?
9	Who Participates? Weavers, Inventors, Toyota, Residents	Read the official launch article (2025). Identify each group and what each does in Woven City.
10	What Have We Learned? Living Laboratory: Connect the Experiments with Actual Residents	Trace the flow from Inventor Garage to Inventor Field to the Residential Area. Write "A Day in the Life of a Woven City Resident"; mark which details come from sources and which are imagined.
11	What Have We Learned? Vision vs. Reality: Compare the 2020 Vision with What Exists Now	Make a table: 2020 plan, current status, source. Choose the final research question.
12	Woven City: What Kind of Future City Is It?	Final presentation (15–20 minutes) and discussion: what can Woven City tell us about future cities? Final paper submission as announced.
13	Review	

No class meeting on September 7 and November 23. The calendar is subject to change.

ADA Accommodation Statement:

The most current statement regarding disability accommodation is provided on the ODA website: https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access/faculty/faculty-guide/syllabus-statement.html The University of North Texas makes reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities. Students needing a reasonable academic accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the student will request their letter of accommodation. ODA will provide faculty with a reasonable accommodation letter via email to begin a private discussion regarding a student's specific needs in a course. Students may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to meet with faculty regarding their accommodation during office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the Office of Disability Access website.

Guidelines on Resolving Student Concerns in the WLLC Department:

When a student has a course-related concern about their instructor (e.g., appeal a grade, disagreement about attendance record, interpretation of a class assignment, assigned grades, etc.), the following steps should be taken to resolve the issue:

1. The student should first attempt to informally resolve their concern by speaking directly with their instructor.

2. If there is no satisfactory resolution to their concern, the student should email a description of the issue to Dr. Christoph Weber, chair of the WLLC department (christoph.weber@unt.edu).
3. The department chair will contact the assistant/associate chair of the WLLC department. They will meet with the student and instructor separately to resolve the issue.
4. The department chair will inform the student about the resolution of their concern.

Guidelines on Grade Appeals in the WLLC Department:
Students should attempt to resolve the grade dispute with their instructor first. If there is no satisfactory resolution, the student can initiate a grade appeal with the instructor based on the following criteria:

1. The grade is based on unfair treatment during the regularly scheduled class period.
2. The instructor deviated from the guidelines outlined in the course syllabus without providing a valid academic reason, or
3. An error occurred in calculating the grade, including the failure to factor in an assignment, project, quiz, or examination.

UNT CARE Team:
The mission of the CARE Team is to:

- Assist in protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the students and members of the UNT community.
- Support student success.
- Provide a comprehensive response to students whose behavior could be harmful to themselves or others.

Students will be notified by Eagle Alert if there is a campus closing that will impact a class. The calendar is subject to change. Additional details can be found in the Emergency Notifications and Procedures Policy.

Course Evaluation

The Student Evaluation, SPOT, will be available at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on this class. The SPOT is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT, and responses are used by the department in evaluating the faculty. We work to continually improve our courses, so we appreciate your feedback!

Mission of the World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures: Representing many world languages, literatures and cultures, our dedicated faculty promote excellence in research, teaching and professional service. Committed to cultural diversity and inclusivity, we teach our undergraduate and graduate students communication, critical thinking and research skills for competitive employment around the world.

Vision: We strive to establish a reputation both nationally and internationally in research, teaching and professional service. Seeking harmony in diversity, we foster global literacy, responsible citizenship and interdisciplinarity.

Japanese National Honor Society:
UNT has a chapter of the Japanese National Honor Society (JNHS). The mission of the society is to recognize our outstanding students and encourage their scholastic achievement and excellence in the

study of Japanese language. In addition, we aim to promote ways for students to use Japanese on campus and in the community. Certificates of Excellence and red-and-white cords to wear at graduation will be given to students who are granted membership in the society.

Criteria for JNHS membership:

- Completion of 5 semester courses of Japanese language study at the college level
- GPA of 3.5 in Japanese language courses
- Overall GPA of 3.0