

Japanese 4040: Advanced Topics in Japanese Culture
The Lives of the Samurai
University of North Texas --- Spring 2026

Instructor and Office:

Instructor: Dr. Kaori Furuya
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Class and Office Hour:

Office Hour: 8:20-9:20 on Tuesdays
or Thursday by appointment
Class Hour: Tu & Th 11:10-12:30
Classroom: Lang 201

Course Description:

This course surveys Japan's unification process in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries through the lives of three most famous samurai in Japan: Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and Tokugawa Ieyasu. This course will focus on their personalities and careers as well as political, social and cultural events that led to the unification of Japan. The discussion will be based on a selection of texts, video clips, and short skits that illustrate the topics addressed in the class.

Prerequisites: Completion of three 3000 courses

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, learners will be able to:

- Gain in-depth social and cultural understanding of the samurai lives and social norms in the sixteen and seventeen centuries.
- Display critical understanding of the conditions of the production and reception of the culture and society in those periods.
- Read and understand with increasing ease texts written in authentic Japanese.
- Speak clearly and creatively on the topics covered in the class
- Develop a broader range of vocabulary and kanji

Required Materials:

- *Sengokujidai no fuuunji Oda Nobunaga* by Suzuki Shunpei (1983)
- *Zouri tori kara sengokuno eiyuuni Toyotomi Hideyoshi* by Okada Yoshio (1981)
- *Edobakufu o hiraku Tokugawa Ieyasu* by Masumoto Seicho (1981)

Grading Scales:

Homework assignments	30%
Quizzes	25%
Skits	30%
Presentations & Paper	15%

November 6 is the last day to drop the course. If you submit your drop paperwork by this date, you will receive a W or WF on your transcript, which will not be calculated into your GPA.

100% = A 80 – 89% = B 70 – 79% = C 60 – 69% = D 59% or below = F

- If you are absent five or more times, you will receive an F in this course.
- Please reserve your excused absences for situations in which you are actually sick or have another legitimate reason.
- Make-up work or exams will not be provided for unauthorized/unexcused absences without official documentation.
- If you do not complete the final project, you will receive an F in this course.

The use of AI tools is not allowed in this class. If the instructor suspects that AI was used on an assignment, the assignment will receive an F, and the student’s final course grade will also be an F.

Homework Assignments (30%):

the material assigned will be discussed and corrected in class and be collected in class on the assigned due day. They must be neat and legible and should be written in complete sentences, unless the instructor specifies otherwise. You will also write short summary papers as part of homework. This helps you prepare for the project. The format and contents of writing will be given in class.

Quizzes (25%):

There are six quizzes given in class. Each quiz includes questions on what was covered from the topics as well as the vocabulary and phrases covered in class and the assigned reading materials, including a short summary of the reading materials. Detailed information will be provided in class.

Presentations (30%):

This is a group work. Based on the reading materials, you are expected to create short skits and present them in class.

Presentation and paper (15%):

The final exam will cover the topics that relate to the last samurai’s live covered during the whole semester. Taking the final exam is mandatory to receive a passing grade in this course. Taking the final exam is mandatory to receive a passing grade in this course.

No late submissions will be accepted.

NOTE: If any changes are made during the semester (especially during the first module), I will post them in the syllabus section on Canvas and announce them in class.

Weekly Schedule:

<u>Module 1</u>
August 18 (Tue) — Class introduction, self-introduction, and Comprehension Sheet 0 (Introduction) August 20 (Thu) — Comprehension Sheet 1 (1. The Thirteen-Year-Old Lord), <u>Self-Introduction</u> (Comprehension Sheet 2)

August 25 (Tue) — <u>Quiz 1</u>, Comprehension Sheet 3 (2. The First Battle) August 27 (Thu) — Comprehension Sheet 4 (3. Meeting Takechiyo) September 1 (Tue) — <u>Quiz 2</u>, Comprehension Sheet 5 (4. His Father's Funeral) September 3 (Thu) — Comprehension Sheet 6 (5. His Life Is in Danger), Presentation Preparation September 8 (Tue) — <u>Quiz 3</u>, Comprehension Sheet 7 (6. The Battle of Okehazama), Presentation Preparation September 10 (Thu) — <u>Quiz 4</u>, Presentation Preparation September 15 (Tue) — Presentation 1
Module 2 September 17 (Thu) — Comprehension Sheet 8 (1. Hideyoshi's Early Life) September 22 (Tue) — <u>Quiz 5</u>, Comprehension Sheet 9 (2. Work Inside the Castle, Repairing the Castle) September 24 (Thu) — Comprehension Sheet 10 (3. The Water Attack on Takamatsu Castle) September 29 (Tue) — <u>Quiz 6</u>, Comprehension Sheet 11 (4. Revenge) October 1 (Thu) — Comprehension Sheet 12 (5. The Heir) October 6 (Tue) — <u>Quiz 7</u>, Comprehension Sheet 13 (6. Osaka Castle's Bed), Presentation Preparation October 8 (Thu) — <u>Online Class — Comprehension Sheet 14 (7. Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Tokugawa Ieyasu)</u> October 13 (Tue) — <u>Quiz 8</u>, Comprehension Sheet 15 (8. Entertainment at the Time), Presentation Preparation October 15 (Thu) — <u>Quiz 9</u>, Presentation Preparation October 20 (Tue) — Presentation 2
Schedule 3 October 22 (Thu) — Comprehension Sheet 16 (1. Tokugawa Ieyasu's Childhood) October 27 (Tue) — <u>Quiz 10</u>, Comprehension Sheet 17 (2. Coming of Age, Returning Home, and Becoming Independent) October 29 (Thu) — Comprehension Sheet 18 (4. Building Edo) November 3 (Tue) — <u>Quiz 11</u>, Comprehension Sheet 19 (5. The Battle of Sekigahara) November 5 (Thu) — Comprehension Sheet 20 (8. Laws for the Warrior Houses), Choose a Paper Topic November 10 (Tue) — <u>Quiz 12</u>, Presentation Preparation, Begin Working on Your Paper, <u>Paper Draft 1</u> November 12 (Thu) — Presentation Preparation November 17 (Tue) — Presentation 3, <u>Paper Draft 2</u> November 19 (Thu) — Movie November 23–29 — Thanksgiving Break December 1 (Tue) — <u>Presentation 4 (About Your Paper)</u> December 3 (Thu) — Review, <u>Extra Credit 1</u>, <u>Extra Credit 2</u>, <u>SPOT</u> December 8 (Tue) — Paper Due

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