

**The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology**  
**UG Course Syllabus Spring 25-26**

Communicative Japanese for Beginners I

LANG1211

2 credits

Pre-requisites: N/A

Co-requisites: N/A

Exclusion: LANG1210

**Name of Course Leader:** Masayuki HIRATA

**Email of Course Leader:** lcmasa@ust.hk

**Office Hours of Course Leader:** Available by appointment only. Students should contact their section instructor directly with any questions.

### **Course Description**

This new **2-credit** course is designed for students beginning their Japanese learning journey and who want to develop practical communication skills through face-to-face instruction and practice. It runs over **8 weeks** and adopts a **pass/fail grading system**.

### **Who Should Enroll:**

- **Beginners:** This course is ideal for absolute beginners and beginners who:
  - Have no prior knowledge of Japanese, or
  - Have some exposure to Japanese (e.g., studied *hiragana/katakana* or basic grammar) but wish to refresh and rebuild their foundations in Japanese to develop practical communication skills through face-to-face instruction and practice.
- Students are also encouraged to take the **1-credit self-paced online course LANG1212: Japanese Vocabulary and Grammar Essentials I** alongside LANG1211 to strengthen their foundation in beginner-level vocabulary and grammar.
- Beginners who already have a basic foundation in Japanese—such as knowledge of *hiragana*, *katakana*, and elementary *kanji*—and who prefer a steady pace of study while aiming to develop comprehensive skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) may consider enrolling in **LANG1210: Japanese Language and Culture for Beginners I (3 credits)**.

### **Course content:**

- **Develop foundational communicative skills** such as greetings, self-introductions, expressing preferences, asking and answering questions, describing locations and movements, and making simple comparisons through interactive speaking and listening activities.
- Through practical exercises and authentic interactions, students will gain confidence in using Japanese in real-life situations while deepening their understanding and appreciation

of the Japanese language and culture.

- **Textbook Recommendation:** The content of this course is **closely aligned** with Lessons 1–12 of the textbook 『大家的日本語 初級 I 改訂版』 (*Minna no Nihongo* 2nd Edition, 大新書局, 2015). While the course provides some online learning materials, students are **strongly encouraged** to obtain a copy of the textbook to **supplement their learning** through additional practice, exercises, and reference.

### Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate basic Japanese conversational skills, including greetings, self-introductions, and asking and answering questions about names, nationalities, and daily activities.
2. Describe locations, affiliations, ownership, movement, transportation, and the existence of people, animals, and objects using appropriate vocabulary and grammatical structures.
3. Express preferences, opinions, and reasons, discuss past events, and make comparisons using adjectives and basic sentence patterns.
4. Recognize and interpret basic Japanese vocabulary, grammar, and writing systems (*hiragana*, *katakana*, and simple kanji) in everyday communication.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of Japanese culture and social norms, especially as they relate to language use and interpersonal communication.

### Assessment and Grading

This course adopts a **Pass/Fail grading system** to support a low-pressure and learner-centered environment. Students must complete all required tasks and demonstrate achievement of the course's Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) to pass.

### LANG 1211 Assessment Overview

Assessment Task	Contribution to Overall Course grade (%)	Details
Course Participation	40%	Assesses students' active participation and interaction through homework, pre-class tasks, in-class quizzes, and learning activities.
Learning Portfolio (Week 10)	10%	A 2–3 minute individual video reflecting on learning progress and experience.
Final Exam (Week 10)	50%	Comprehensive assessment of students' communication skills and understanding of the Japanese language.

## Mapping of Course ILOs to Assessment Tasks

Assessment Task	Mapped ILOs	Explanation
Course Participation	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3, ILO4, ILO5	Evaluates students' active engagement in class activities, including speaking, listening, and interaction tasks that reinforce vocabulary, grammar, and cultural understanding.
Learning Portfolio (Week 10)	ILO4, ILO5	Assesses students' ability to reflect on their learning process and demonstrate awareness of language and cultural insights.
Final Exam (Week 10)	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3, ILO4	Comprehensive assessment of students' communication skills and understanding of the Japanese language through performance-based tasks.

## Grading Rubrics

This course uses a Pass/Fail grading system. To pass, students must demonstrate consistent engagement and satisfactory achievement of the course's Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) across all assessment components.

### Pass Criteria:

- Actively participate in class activities, including pair work, role-plays, and interactive tasks.
- Complete all required homework, pre-class tasks, and in-class quizzes.
- Submit a reflective learning portfolio video showing thoughtful engagement and progress.
- Demonstrate basic communicative proficiency in Japanese during the final performance-based assessment.

### Fail Criteria:

Students may fail the course if they:

- Miss or fail to participate in key classroom activities or tasks.
- Show limited or no progress in communicative ability or cultural understanding.
- Fail to attend or participate meaningfully in the final assessment.

In addition to the criteria above, students must achieve a minimum overall score of **50%** to pass the course.

## **Course AI Policy**

At HKUST, we embrace innovation and technology, including Generative AI. Some of the assignments in this course aim to foster innovative thinking by using chatbots for both language learning and cultural exploration.

Our approach relies firmly on pedagogical principles, with an ethical commitment to ensure fairness in the use of AI. If students use AI tools in course assessments, they must adhere to the principles of academic integrity.

To learn more about how to use GenAI tools appropriately in language courses, students are required to complete a Canvas learning module developed by the Center for Language Education. This module can be found on the course Canvas site. Students should ensure they have completed it before attending class.

## **Communication and Feedback**

Assessment marks for individual assessed tasks will be communicated via Canvas within two weeks of submission. Feedback on assignments will include strengths and areas for improvement where relevant. Students who have further questions about the feedback including marks should consult the instructor within five working days after the feedback is received.

## **Resubmission Policy**

Resubmissions are not accepted, except in exceptional circumstances.

## **Required Texts and Materials**

Course materials and additional resources are provided via Canvas.

## **Academic Integrity**

Students are expected to adhere to the university's academic integrity policy. Students are expected to uphold HKUST's Academic Honor Code and to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. The University has zero tolerance of academic misconduct. Please refer to [Academic Integrity | HKUST – Academic Registry](#) for the University's definition of plagiarism and ways to avoid cheating and plagiarism.