

## Topics in Japanese Culture and Society: Japan's Aging Society

### Course Description

This course uses authentic Japanese-language materials organized around a theme in order to expand students' vocabulary, cultural literacy, and competency in written and spoken Japanese. Students will develop knowledge and fluency in the thematic area in addition to building self-study habits for continuing toward broader proficiency in Japanese. Class discussions will be conducted mainly in Japanese with occasional use of English, though the balance will be adjusted depending on the proficiency level of students in the course. Prerequisite: JAPAN 3050 or equivalent.

The theme for this iteration of the course is Japan's aging society. Japan's low birth rate and aging population (少子高齢化, *shōshikōreika*) have broad social and economic impacts, which are in turn reflected in the literature and popular culture of postwar Japan. Through an examination of literary texts, *manga*, films, and other materials, we will explore issues related to the problem of an aging population, including poverty, isolation, care labor, gender, migration, and technology.

### Learning Outcomes

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

- recognize and use Japanese vocabulary and speech patterns for discussing social problems, especially the aging population
- comprehend short texts and audiovisual materials
- state and support an opinion in Japanese in a presentational setting
- discuss social and cultural aspects of Japan's aging society in English

### Course Requirements and Grading:

#### 1. *Participation and Preparation* 25%

Regular attendance and active participation in class are vital to success in the course. Participation takes the form of contributing to in-class discussions, reading or viewing assigned materials before class, and completing written homework assignments on Canvas.

#### 2. *Vocabulary Quizzes* 20%

Vocabulary quizzes will be administered twice per unit (see schedule), with words drawn from assigned materials. The lowest quiz score will be dropped from the final grade calculation.

#### 3. *Unit Tests* 30%

There will be three exams (see schedule). Each test will consist of vocabulary, listening comprehension, reading comprehension, and essay components.

#### 4. *Presentation* 25%

In addition to three mini presentations making use of key expressions covered in the course (see schedule), each student will prepare a final presentation related to the topic of the course. Presentations will be approximately 7–10 minutes in length and include a visual aide. No academic research is required, but presentations should discuss information or cultural material outside those covered in class. Further details and guidance, as well as in-class time for project work, will be provided throughout the semester.

#### **Sample Course Materials:**

- ニュース・ドキュメンタリー：老いるショック
- 白書：高齢化の状況
- 小説：嫌がらせの年齢
- 漫画：傘寿まり子
- 小説：魂込め
- 映画：老人Z
- 映画：0.5 ミリ