

# REPORT FROM PROGRAMSENSOR

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## REPORT 1: ASIA 100 (HØST 2014)

### **About the course: ASIA 100**

This is a report on the course, *ASIA 100, Kultur, språk og historie i Øst-Asia*, which is offered as an introductory course for students of the Bachelor programs of Japanese language and Chinese language at the University of Bergen.

ASIA 100 is a 12 week long lecture course, taught for 2 hours a week. In the 13<sup>th</sup> week, the language test as a compulsory activity is offered separately to the students of Japanese language as well as the students of Chinese language.

ASIA 100 was first offered in autumn 2014. The purpose of the course is to provide a basic historical and geographical knowledge of East Asia, focusing on two of the biggest nations, China and Japan, and introduce their languages to the students.

### **The course contents and teaching**

The first seven classes of the course are common for both students specializing in Japanese language and Chinese language. The class is divided into one for the students of Japanese language and another for the students of Chinese language from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup>.

According to the semester plan, the contents of the classes from the 1<sup>st</sup> week to the 7<sup>th</sup> week are an introduction to East Asia in general, the history of China and Japan, the situation in East Asia in the modern period, education in China and Japan, and writing systems in East Asia; the contents of the classes for the students of Japanese language from 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> week focus on linguistic issues, emphasizing the practice of two kinds of Japanese scripts; and the course is examined in the 13<sup>th</sup> week.

## **Pensum**

According to the pensum list, the following books are used:

First half of the semester: *A History of East Asia – from the Origins of Civilization to the Twenty-First Century* by Charles Holcombe, and "Kompendium" on Education in Japan and China

Second half of the semester: *Nihongo Kana – An Introduction to the Japanese Syllabary* (The Japan Foundation)

There is also a digital literature: Taylor, Martin & Insup: *Writing and Literacy in Chinese, Korean and Japanese*, John Benjamins, 1995.

*A History of East Asia – from the Origins of Civilization to the Twenty-First Century* is one of few books providing an overview history of East Asia at an introductory level. Most students are satisfied with the book according to their evaluation. The Japan Foundation's *Nihongo Kana* has a very good reputation among the learners. The students who used this book are satisfied, according to their evaluation. I conclude that the two books are suitable for the course.

## **Evaluation**

At the end of the semester, a 3 hour long written examination is offered. The results of the examination are graded by the characters A-F, of which the F is fail. Completion of the course gives 10 study points.

## **Comments**

It is common that Japanese language programs at various institutions offer some courses which teach Japanese culture and history as part of the program, so that the students have basic knowledge about Japan. ASIA 100 teaches also Chinese history and Sino-Japanese relations to the students of Japanese language, which I think is very good. Japan has had

close contact with China and has been culturally influenced a lot in through history, therefore it is very useful for the students studying the Japanese language to have perspective on both nations and their relations.

The course also introduces education in Japan. Since the students of the Japanese language program later study at universities in Japan, this part of the course gives practical information to the students. In relation to this, it would be a good idea to provide an introduction to business culture in Japan. This is useful in the academic area as well, based onto judge from feedback from the students of my teaching of Japanese culture within my Japanese language courses at NTNU.

In the second half of the semester, the course teaches basic Japanese language including the writing system. It is very good to give the students plenty of time to learn and practice Japanese script in order to make the further learning process more efficient. According to the students' evaluation, some students did not use the textbook (*Nihongo Kana*). It might be a good idea to introduce some more digital resources for learning Japanese script, as some students seem to prefer digital tools to books judging by the students taking the Japanese language courses at NTNU.

