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### **Language and Linguistics (LL) Cluster**

**(Dr. W. Uegaki and Dr. K. Yoshioka)**

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The cluster includes two BA2 courses: Language and Linguistics Seminar *Japanese as a second language*, and *Introduction to Japanese Linguistics*. In BA3, these courses are followed by the Linguistics seminar *Trends in Japanese Linguistics* in the first semester 1, leading to the Linguistics Cluster *Afstudeer Seminar* in the second.

Familiarisation with the field of linguistics is achieved through the course Language and Linguistics Seminar *Japanese as a second language* where the students are introduced to the field of Second Language Acquisition, a sub-branch of Applied Linguistics that studies the process of adult language learning. The course *Introduction to Japanese Linguistics* explores the structure and history of the Japanese language as well as into other languages and dialects spoken in Japan.

The importance of a multi-disciplinary and cross-linguistic approach is highlighted in the course *Trends in Japanese linguistics*, in which key-issues in various sub-fields of Japanese linguistics are presented against the framework of the languages of the world. By focussing on disciplines such as typology, phonology, syntax, semantics, language contact, multilingualism, sociolinguistics and discourse analysis, the students get acquainted with various subfields that can generate challenging thesis topics.

A thesis topic being identified and explored in the first semester, the production of the BA thesis is followed up in the second semester, within the Linguistics Cluster *Afstudeer Seminar*. This course is designed to assist students in completing their BA thesis research project, including locating and reading Japanese language sources.

#### **Potential thesis topics:**

- *Typology*: lexicon, phonology, morphology, syntax
- *Historical linguistics*: the history of the Japanese language from Old Japanese up to present, grammaticalization
- *Language contact*: Sinification of Japanese, westernization of Japanese, Korean influence, Ainu influence, other foreign influences
- *Syntax & semantics*
- *Bi- and multilingualism*: language acquisition, bilingual mind, language policy
- *Sociolinguistics & discourse analysis*: translation and localization of manga & games, gender language

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**Media, Arts, Culture and History (MACH) Cluster**

**(Dr. E. Machotka, Prof. Dr. I.B. Smits, + t.b.a.)**

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Japan appears in a wide variety of presentations and representations, which are central to the MACH cluster. The cluster focuses on the study of Japanese (works of) culture: think of: art, literature (including graphic literature), film (including animation) and theatre, lived experience, social codes and meanings, ideology, etc., both in the present and in the past. How can we understand these images and narratives, also in a regional and global perspective? How to find specific context knowledge and how to ask rewarding questions? The MACH cluster organizes its teaching around these issues.

Throughout their degree trajectory the MACH cluster provides students with courses that combine the evaluation of concrete case studies with increasing familiarity with different approaches to these questions. The cluster focuses on media, arts and (cultural) history.

**Potential thesis topics:**

- fine arts (painting, drawings, prints, sculpture) in historical and contemporary contexts
- architecture
- literature (classical and modern)
- film
- manga and anime
- Japanese Confucianism
- Christianity in Japan
- technology, medicine and trade in historical context
- China-Japan cultural relations
- Holland's role in Japan's early modern period and modernization
- narratives and nation-building
- fascism, liberalism and socialism in Japan
- cultural nationalism
- Japan's colonial empire
- Second World War in Asia: History and Legacies
- history and memory

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**Politics, Economics, and International Relations (PEIR) Cluster**

**(Dr. L. Black, Dr. S. Shibata, Dr. B. Wakefield)**

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What challenges does the Japanese government face in today's globalized world? To what extent do historical issues constrain Japan's relations with other states or its ability to contribute to international society? How can we understand Japan's domestic politics and their impact on Japan's international relations? Who are the key actors involved in shaping Japanese politics and what are the core debates? The Politics, Economics, and International Relations (PEIR) cluster critically engages with these questions to understand the politics, economics, and International Relations of Japan.

Over the course of their bachelor degree, students in the PEIR cluster will follow a trajectory that covers the domestic politics of Japan, Japan's international relations, regionalism and regionalization in East Asia, political economy of Japan, critical approaches to the IR of East Asia, and to the political economy of Japan. In these courses, students will gain the theoretical and methodological foundations needed to conduct independent and original research. The focus of the PEIR cluster is regional and global, as well as national. Students are therefore encouraged to take relevant courses outside the Japan department in order to critically and comparatively assess Japan's engagement with global politics. PEIR students will graduate from Leiden University with a solid understanding of core issues in the politics, economics, political economy, and IR of Japan that will be attractive to a wide range of employers as well as to set the groundwork for graduate studies.

**Potential thesis topics:**

- Elections and electioneering
- Domestic politics and policy
- Historical disputes and issues – such as Senkaku/Daiyutai, history textbooks, Yasukuni Shrine, 'comfort women'.
- Security and the role of the Self-Defence Forces (SDF)
- Evolving East Asian regionalism and regionalization
- China's rise and the 'China threat'
- North Korean nuclear, missile, and abduction issues
- Free Trade Agreements (FTAs)
- Economic Crises
- Environmental Issues
- Relations with the European Union (EU)
- Relations between state and market
- Role of socio-economic institutions in Japan
- Change in the form of the state
- Reforms in the financial market in Japan
- Change and transformation in the models of Japanese firms
- Transformation in the labour market and labour movement in Japan

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**Society and Culture (SC) Cluster**

**(Prof. Dr. K. Cwiertka, Dr. A. Ezawa, Dr. E. Herber, Dr. H. van der Veere,  
Dr. M. Winkel)**

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Contemporary society stands central within the Society and Culture cluster. It is the Japanese people – both as groups and individuals – who are our main object of inquiry. We analyze them from a wide range of perspectives: from living and working conditions to gender equality, from fashion trends and subcultures to deviant and criminal behavior, from new religions and pilgrimage to tourism and consumption. Courses taught by the instructors affiliated with the cluster not only try to describe phenomena that have shaped contemporary Japanese society and culture, or identify the ones that are currently emerging, but also aim to help students to understand and explain them.

Although the present remains our main focus, we may examine historical origins of the phenomena we study, or analyze developments that have taken place in the past. This is an interdisciplinary cluster, which means that students have an opportunity to become familiar with a variety of methodologies that are used in the disciplines of anthropology and sociology, as well as religious studies and criminology.

**Potential thesis topics:**

- clothing and fashion
- crime and criminal justice
- food and restaurant culture
- gender, family, social inequality
- leisure and tourism
- material culture and consumption
- popular culture (including music)
- race, ethnicity, identity
- religion and religious rituals (Buddhism, Shintō, and new religions)
- subcultures
- ‘Triple disaster (3.11)’ and its aftermath
- worldviews and epistemological systems; semiotics of East-Asian thinking
- waste management and recycling