Notice that the layout of the puzzle grid resembles that of a conventional nonogram (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonogram), also hinted at by the word “Japanese” in the flavor text. However, unlike a normal nonogram, the numbers for each row and column are missing.

As you can see, the letters labelling each row and the numbers labelling each column correspond to the Princeton course titles below the grid. The course numbers for each of these courses provide the nonogram row/column clues. For example, the clue “Electronic Commerce / Elementary Japanese I” corresponds to “ORF 401 / JPN 101” which in turn encodes the nonogram clue 4111.

After solving the nonogram, one obtains a seemingly arbitrary grid of black and white squares. However, note from the layout of the bolded lines in the grid (3x2 rectangles) and the word “blind” in the flavor text that the black and white colors might be interpreted as Braille.

If each 3x2 rectangle is read as a letter in Braille, with each black square representing a dot, the resulting phrase is “JOHN AND BULLDOG’S FIERY PYRE.” Recalling the Princeton bonfire earlier this year, in which John Harvard and the Yale bulldog were burned in effigy, we thus obtain the answer: BONFIRE.