POLITICAL SCIENCE 143B
NORTHEAST ASIAN POLITICS: JAPAN

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COURSE GOALS

This course examines the politics and policy of contemporary Japan, applying a range of theoretical perspectives to analyze both recent history and current events. After a brief historical review, we survey the core political institutions of the postwar era, examine patterns of political interaction, survey recent social changes, and analyze current debates over policy issues ranging from economic reform to defense policy.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Midterm (3/6) 10%
- Two short papers (due 4/4 and 5/5) 40%
- bCourses postings 10%
- Class participation 10%
- Final examination 30%

READING ASSIGNMENTS

Books for purchase (also available on reserve at Moffitt Library):

Krauss and Pekkanen, *The Rise and Fall of Japan’s LDP* (2011)

Course Reader (available at Copy Central on Bancroft)

* The Garon and Samuels books are “recommended” for purchase because they are available on bCourses.

In addition to the assigned readings, you must keep up with current events in Japan by reading at least one quality newspaper and one weekly news magazine on a regular basis. You are strongly encouraged to subscribe, but you may also fulfill this assignment by checking Internet news sources regularly. You may want to keep a file of news clips to use for your press review paper. You are also expected to read any news clips posted on the bCourses site.
PART I: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Introduction: Why Study Japan? (1/21)

Japan's New Politics 1993-present (1/23)
Gordon, 308-54, especially 322-30 and 340-42.
Steven Vogel, “Japan’s Long Road to Competitive Politics,” Current History (September 2010).
“LDP Didn’t Win; DPJ Lost,” Oriental Economist (January 2013), 1-3.

The Meiji Restoration (1/28)
Gordon, 11-21, 47-75.

Meiji Politics (1/30)
Gordon, 76-137.

Taisho Democracy and Japanese Militarism (2/4)
Gordon, 161-201.
Garon, 3-22.

The Occupation (2/6)
Gordon, 224-241, 268-88.

PART II: POSTWAR POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

The Postwar System (2/11)
J.A.A. Stockwin, Governing Japan (2008), 156-78.

Electoral Politics (2/13)
Krauss and Pekkanen, 29-64.
Ichiro Ozawa, Blueprint for a New Japan (1994), 62-75.
The Liberal Democratic Party (2/18)

The Opposition Parties (2/20)
“The DPJ Manifesto” (2009), 1-5.

The Bureaucracy (2/25)

The Media (2/27)

Interest Groups: Business, Labor, Farmers (3/4)

Midterm (3/6)

**PART III: THE POLICY PROCESS**

Contending Models of the Policy Process (3/11)
The Developmental State (3/13)

The Clientelistic State (3/18)

Inclusion: Patterns of Incorporation (3/20)

Exclusion: Protest and Conflict (4/1)

PART IV: SOCIAL CHANGE

The Consumer Movement (4/3)

The Role of Women (4/8)

Demographic Shifts (4/10)
PART V: POLICY ISSUES

Economic Policy (4/17)

Defense Policy (4/22)
Gerald Curtis, “Japan’s Cautious Hawks: Why Tokyo is Unlikely to Pursue an Aggressive Foreign Policy,” Foreign Affairs (March/ April 2013), 77-86.
“Abe Agrees to Delay Constitutional Revision,” Oriental Economist (July 2013), 6-7, 14.

Foreign Policy (4/24 and 4/29)
Michael Green, Japan’s Reluctant Realism (2003), 35-75.
Samuels, Securing Japan, 185-209.

Earthquake and Aftermath (5/1)
[Various news clips to be determined.]

Course Review Session (5/8)
[Attendance optional.]
WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

READING MEMOS (five postings total)
Write a one-paragraph memo (150 words maximum) on the readings for one class session and post it to the bCourses site by 5 p.m. the day before the relevant class. If you are posting on the 1/23 readings, for example, you should post by 5 p.m. 1/22. We will discuss some of the memos in class. All students should post their first memo by 2/5, and then post regularly (at least one memo every five class sessions) for a total of five memos by 4/28. The memos may take a variety of forms: 1) Critique one or more of the readings, 2) Relate the readings to a recent news story or news commentary, 3) Write your own question on the readings and answer it, 4) Propose a topic for discussion that relates to the readings, 5) Answer one of the discussion questions (see the bCourses site). Feel free to experiment with this assignment: do not answer the discussion questions more than twice during the semester.

FREE DISCUSSION MEMOS
You are also encouraged to post Free Discussion memos. There are no restrictions on the length of these postings. You may write about anything relevant to the course. For example: review a book or a movie, report on a public lecture on campus, discuss a news article or opinion column, or debate policy issues. If you participate on the free discussion board, you may count that as credit for one reading memo. In that case, you will still need to post one reading memo at least once every five class sessions until you complete four.

PRESS REVIEW PAPER (due by 12 noon on 4/4)
Write a 1500-word essay on media coverage of Japanese politics. Focus primarily on the period of this course (i.e. January through March). You may: A) review one newspaper or news magazine’s coverage of Japan in depth, or B) review news coverage from a variety of newspapers and magazines on a particular news story. For either approach to this assignment, make sure to analyze and critique the coverage. Has it been accurate and insightful? Has it been biased? Do the reporters understand the dynamics of Japanese politics? How could the reporters improve the coverage? Incorporate course readings and material from lectures as appropriate.

POLICY ANALYSIS PAPER (due by 12 noon on 5/5)
Write a 1500-word essay on Japanese government policy in the period since December 2012 in one issue-area, such as economic reform or foreign policy. You are encouraged to focus on a specific issue (e.g. consumption tax or secrecy law) within these categories. Base your paper primarily on course readings, plus news clips on your specific topic as needed. Briefly describe this policy and then analyze the political factors shaping the policy. Focus on the political dynamics of the issue, not on advocating a particular policy stance. How does the Abe administration’s approach to this policy differ from that of the DPJ or previous LDP administrations? Which interest groups, government agencies, and political parties are involved in setting policy in this area? What are their respective positions on the issue? How do they interact? Link your argument to theories and analytical perspectives introduced in the course.