



Dartmouth College
Department of Government

Politics of Japan: A Unique Democracy?

Course Number: Government 40.03.01, AMES 43.04.01
Term, Year: Winter, 2016
Class Room: 201f Carpenter Hall
Class Time: Mon, Wed, Fri 13:45-14:50 (x-Period: Thu 13:00-13:50)
Instructor: Professor Yusaku Horiuchi
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Office Hours: Mon, Wed 15:30-17:00 (in Hinman Forum) and by appointment

Course Description

This course offers a survey of Japanese politics with a focus on understanding the electoral and policy-making processes in Japan from theoretical and comparative perspectives. No prior knowledge of Japanese politics is required. The course will explore political culture, electoral systems and voting behavior, candidate selection and electoral campaign, dynamics of party competition, government-business relationships, local politics and central-local relationships, the roles of the mass media and civil society, Japan's international relations, etc.

The course is roughly divided into three parts. The first part will introduce the current status of Japanese politics and approaches to the study of Japanese politics. The second part will provide students with an overview of post-war political history in Japan. The third part will examine various topics examined in the broader theoretical and comparative literatures, by treating Japan as a "case."

Learning Outcomes

The main objectives of this course include the following:

- To expand students' interest in contemporary Japanese politics; in particular, key institutional and political changes in Japan since the formation of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in 1955;
- To provide students exposure to theoretically and methodologically important studies, which use Japan as a case;
- To help students improve their skills to evaluate existing studies, which test empirical causal hypotheses based on rigorous research methods; and
- To provide a foundation for further exploration of topics that may be of particular interest.

Readings

This course has the following textbook: Rosenbluth, Frances McCall and Michael F. Thies. 2010. *Japan Transformed: Political Change and Economic Restructuring*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. A new or used copy is available at Wheelock Books. Alternatively, you can purchase a new or used copy, or rent it, from Amazon.com or other online retailers. All other readings are posted on the Canvas course site.

Topics (Subject to Change)

Part I: Approaches to the Study of Japanese Politics

- Japanese Politics Today
- Making Sense of Japanese Politics
- Japanese Political Culture
- Is Japan a Unique Democracy? A Case Study
- Making Sense of Prewar Political Experiments

Part II: An Overview of Postwar Japanese Political History

- Old Politics under SNTV
- Old Political Economy
- More on Old Political Economy
- New Political Economy?
- New Politics?
- Japan's Place in the World

Part III: The Study of Japan as A Case

- Does Representation Matter?
- Cultivating Rice and Vote
- Okinawa
- Civil Society
- Mass Media and Public Opinion
- Local Politics That Matter
- Corruption and Electoral Fraud
- Pork-Barrel Politics
- Smile and Happiness

Assignments

Pop Quizzes (15%)
Midterm Exam (20%)
Film Review (10%)
News Story Project (20%)
Final Paper (25%)
Participation (10%)

*Note: This is a short version of the course syllabus.
The full version is available at the Canvas course site.*