

PLSC 4323.001

Politics of Japan

TR, 9:30-10:45, Mesa 4113

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A Note Regarding the Syllabus and Course: Certain information in this syllabus is subject to change. This includes due dates, tentative course schedule, and office hours. Students will receive changes to the syllabus in writing through e-mail.

Course Description

This course introduces students to the politics of Japan with an heavy emphasis on Postwar Japan. However, students will receive some background on antebellum Japan as a reference point for understanding of Japanese Politics. The course will introduce students to the politics of Postwar Japan including geography, economics, political institutions and culture, as well as history. The second portion of the course will deal with the first problem of Japanese Politics: Primacy of Power in Policymaking. This includes a discussion of the arguments in support of the Bureaucratic Dominance Hypothesis and Rational Choice Theory. The final part of the course includes the second problem of Japan Politics: Single Party Dominance of the Liberal Democratic Party.

This course is numbered as PLSC 4323: Politics of Japan. It serves as an upper level course in political science that fulfills 3 hours of credit for political science majors and minors. This course has no prerequisites. However, an understanding of American politics will help. Additionally, while no previous courses in political are necessary, I will occasionally refer to concepts introduced in PLSC 3301, 3302, and 3321. This course requires a considerable amount of reading and writing.

Required Materials

Text(s): *Japan's Political Marketplace*

Author(s): J. Mark Ramseyer and Frances Rosenbluth

ISBN-13: 9780674472815

Course Objectives

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand basic institutional structures of Japan
2. Understand how economics shapes the politics of postwar Japan
3. Understand Japan's political culture and how it influences politics.
4. Understand Japan's geography and how it contributes to Japan's political development.
5. Understand the role of Japan's history in the role of the Bureaucratic Dominance Hypothesis
6. Understand the importance of Japan's civil service importance in the drafting of statutes and regulations
7. Understand rational choice theory in the context of Japanese policymaking.
8. Understand the reasons for the Liberal Democratic Party's rise to power.
9. Understand the institutional argument for the single party dominance of the LDP
10. Understand the distributive politics argument for the LDP's single party dominance.

Grade Distribution:

Quizzes	25%
Objective Examination	25%
Evaluative Essays (2)	50%

Course Requirements

Quizzes

Quizzes may be announced or unannounced; they may cover lecture or reading materials. Normally, these quizzes will be unannounced and cover readings. So make sure you are aware of the reading schedule and make sure you are reading before class. These quizzes will comprise 25% of your final course grade. Normally, quizzes will consist of 1 or 2 free response questions that require a verifiable command of the covered material. You are free to ask other students (and political science majors) what these quizzes look like. I normally grade these within 1 class meeting. As a result, unless you have a legitimate justification, quizzes may not be taken after they are offered.

Evaluative Essays

In this course, you are required to successfully complete two evaluative essays. In an evaluative essay, you are required to answer a question with an argument supported by the literature in comparative politics. There are no page minimums or maximums. You are welcome to consult with me before you begin writing. These are graded with an A-F scale. The prompt will be distributed one week prior to the due date. These essays together comprise 50% of the final course grade.

Letter Grade Distribution

>= 4.00	A+	1.70-1.99	C
3.70- 3.99	A	1.30 - 1.69	C-
3.30 -3.69	A-	1.00 - 1.29	D+
3.00 - 3.29	B+	0.70 - 0.99	D
2.70 - 2.99	B	0.30 - 0.69	D-
2.30 - 2.69	B-	<= 0.29	F
2.0-2.29	C+		

Course Policies

• General

- Students with disabilities admitted to the University of Texas of the Permian may request reasonable accommodations and classroom modifications as addressed under Section 504/ADA regulations. Students needing assistance due to disability must contact Ms. Leticia Madrid, PASS Office, Mesa Building, Room 1160, phone 432-552-2631, prior to receiving accommodations.
- Per university requirements, I hold regular office hours and normally, I keep my door open.¹ This is your chance to ask more specific questions regarding material or to visit. Feel free to stop by. Even if you don't have course related concerns, this is a good time to come by and chat about topics that may interest you. If for some reason, you are not available during my office hours, feel free to email me. Under most circumstances, I can work around your schedule if we need to meet.
- Academic Dishonesty is not permitted in this course. According to the Handbook of Student Conduct:

“Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, misrepresenting facts, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses (without the prior permission of the instructor) or the attempt to commit such acts.”

Any student suspected of academic dishonesty will receive notification through secure communication either verbally or via email. The student may exercise the right to explain themselves or explain how the instructor made an error in judgment regarding the suspicion. If the student agrees with the assessment, I will file a disposition of academic dishonesty with the Dean of Students and, if it is a first time offense, the course assignment will receive a score of 0. If the student disputes the allegation, I will file a disposition of academic dishonesty with the Dean of Students and the Dean of Students will continue the process.

¹Often times, I will have my son in my office. Being a one year old, he only has three possible thoughts in his head: What is it? I want to touch it. I want to taste it. Once these are completed, his next train of thought is: I want to escape this room. So occasionally, I have to close my office door, I will put a sign up indicating that I am in, but the door is closed.

- **Grades**

- For better or worse, I am contracted by the university to provide instruction to students in the field of political science based on academic accomplishment in the discipline. However, part of my contractual obligations require the provision of a performance evaluation to not only the university but also the College of Arts and Sciences and the Department of Political Science.
- I will make sure that at any given point and time, your performance is not secret. You will be aware of how you are doing the course. But, a word of warning is in order.
- I do not write many favorable things about your performance. I am completely honest about your progress. Some of you have probably taken a course with me and understand this reality. I have many personal and professional character flaws. However, honesty is not one. I can and will be brutally honest with you. If your work product is horrible, I will tell you it is horrible. If it is acceptable, I will tell you it is acceptable. I do not inspire students or provide ego boosts to students. I am a firm believer that developing thick skin is a vital part of not just academic life, but life in general. Throughout the semester, I will provide students with comments I received from my mentors to show how subpar my work was at certain times. I truly believe that harsh but honest criticism makes better writers, analysts, and ultimately political scientists. This is not personal and does not affect or influence my thought of you in any way.

Finally, I want all of you to become good political scientists. I do not care how smart you are; I care about your productivity and the level of work product. This course is an upper-division elective, but it is an advanced elective in my main area of technical expertise.
- Grades will be maintained in the Blackboard course shell. Students are responsible for tracking their progress by referring to the online gradebook.

- **Quizzes**

- Students must read the source material for each class. I reserve the right to hold quizzes randomly and without notice. All students must complete quizzes independently.
- Unless a student provides documentation, there are no makeup on quizzes. Remember if I offer a makeup quiz, it may substantially differ from other students.

- **Attendance and Absences**

- I utilize no attendance policy. Empirical studies show mixed results regarding the advantages and disadvantages of attendance policies using either rational incentives or disincentives. My policy assumes that the course offers enough challenges to sufficiently punish students for missing class regularly. However, it should be noted that I believe foregoing class lectures will be detrimental to course performance, but this is a personal decision and I don't want students attending who have no desire to be there.

Tentative Course Outline

Weeks 1 & 2

- Topics
 - Syllabus
 - Introduction to Japan's History
 - The Tokugawa Shogunate
 - The Meiji Restoration
 - The Pacific War
- Required Reading
 - None

Weeks 3 & 4

- Topics
 - Introduction to Postwar Politics
 - Japan's Political Institutions
 - Political Parties in Postwar Japan
 - Public Policy in Japan
- Required Reading
 - Richardson, Bradley and Dennis Patterson. 2001. "Political Traditions and Political Change: The Significance of Postwar Japanese Politics for Political Science." *Annual Reviews of Political Science* 4: 93-115.
- Suggested Reading
 - Baerwald, Hans. 1974. *Japan's Parliament: An Introduction*. Cambridge University Press.
 - Dower, John W. 1999. *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*.
 - Kohno, Masaru. 1997 *Japan's Postwar Party Politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
 - Patterson, Dennis and Richard Beason. 2004. *The Japan that Never Was: Explaining the Rise and Decline of a Misunderstood Country*.

Weeks 5 & 6

- Topics
 - Japan's Economic Miracle
 - The Fall of Japan
 - The Beginnings of a Resurgence/The 1964 Olympic Games
 - Ikeda and the Income Doubling Plan
- Required Reading
 - Johnson, Chalmers. 1982. *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925-1975*. Pages 1-7.
- Suggested Reading
 - Hewins, Ralph. 1967. *The Japanese Miracle Men*.
 - Stone, Peter. 1969 *Japan Surges Ahead: The Story of an Economic Miracle*.
 - Kahn, Herman. 1970. *The Emerging Japanese Superstate*.

Weeks 6 & 7

- Topics
 - Explanations of the Economic Miracle
 - The Cultural Explanation of the Economic Miracle
 - The Bureaucratic Dominance Thesis
 - Rational Choice Theory: A Positivist Approach to Japanese Politics
- Required Reading.
 - Nakane, Chie. 1970. *Japanese Society*. Chapter 1.
 - Johnson, Chalmers. 1975. "Who Governs? An Essay on Official Bureaucracy." *Journal of Japanese Studies* 2: 1-28.
 - Johnson, Chalmers. 1982. *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925-1975*. Chapter 1.
 - Ramseyer, Mark J. and Frances Rosenbluth. 1993. *Japan's Political Marketplace*. Chapters 1, 6-7.

Weeks 8 & 9

- Topics
 - The Empirical Record of Economic Policymaking in Postwar Japan
 - Industrial Policy
 - Fiscal Policy
- Required Reading:
 - Beason, Richard and David Weinstein. 1996. “Growth, Economies of Scale, and Targeting in Japan (1955-1990).” *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 286-295.
 - Kohno, Masaru and Yoshitaka Nishizawa. 1990. “A Study of the Electoral Business Cycle in Japan: Elections and Government Spending on Public Construction.”
 - Patterson, Dennis and Richard Beason. 2001. “Politics, Pressure, and Economic Policy: Explaining Japan’s Use of Economic Stimulus Policies.” *World Politics* 53: 499-523.
 - Thies, Michael. 1998. “When Will Pork Leave the Farm? Institutional Bias in the United States and Japan.” *Legislative Studies Quarterly*

Weeks 10 & 11

- Topics
 - Single Party Dominance in Postwar Japan
 - Trends in Japan’s Electoral History, 1955-1993.
- Required Reading
 - McMichael, Taylor. 2015. *Japan’s Unseen Pork: Intergovernmental Transfers, Apolitical Formulas, and Electoral Strategy in Postwar Japan*. Unpublished Book Manuscript. Chapter 3: Political Shifts and Intergovernmental Transfers in Postwar Japan.

Weeks 12 & 13

- Topics
 - Cultural Explanations of LDP Electoral Dominance
 - Electoral Institutions and Rules
 - Distributive Politics and Pork Barrel Politics
- Required Reading
 - Fukui, Haruhiro and Fukai, Shigeko N. 1996. “Pork Barrel Politics, Networks, and Local Economic Development in Contemporary Japan.” *Asian Survey* Pages 268-286.
 - Scheiner, Ethan. 2006. *Democracy Without Competition in Japan: Opposition Failure in a One-party Dominant State*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1.

Weeks 14 & 15

- Topics
 - Japan's Lost Decade
 - The Best Fail: The LDP's 1993 Electoral Defeat
 - Wait, Why Did You Do That? The Opposition's Inexplicable Support for Electoral Reform
 - The First and Last Terrorist Attack in Japan: Aum Shinrikyo
 - Japanese Foreign Policy
 - Contentious Diplomacy with China and South Korea
 - Current Issues in Japanese Politics
- Required Reading
 - None

Week 16

- Topics
 - Final Essay Review
 - Final Essay due by Thursday, May 12th, 12:15 P.M.