

POSC 35003
Michael Strausz

Japanese Politics and Society Through Film
Summer 2014

course time: Monday-Friday, 10:00am-1:00pm

classroom: Scharbauer 1011

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office hours: Mondays 1:00pm-3:00pm, Wednesdays 2:00-3:00pm, or by appointment

office: Scharbauer 2007F

Course Description:

In the years since American warships forced Japan to open itself up to trade in 1854, Americans have seen Japan as a rising power, a bitter wartime enemy, an economic rival and powerhouse, the home a mysterious and exotic culture, the world headquarters of cutting edge technology, and the source of martial arts, Hello Kitty, pokémon, and Yu Darvish. In this class, we will aim to look beyond these superficial images of Japan. We will examine Japanese politics and society through both the scholarship of those who have dedicated their lives to studying Japan and through films (mostly films made by and for Japanese audiences). Ultimately, we will strive to understand how Japanese politics and society work and to use this understanding to deepen our sense of how politics and societies function more generally.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will demonstrate knowledge of and an ability to analyze and evaluate the fundamental social processes that characterize Japanese society using social science methodologies.
2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the interconnectedness of society, culture and individual identity in Japan.
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to develop informed judgments about global issues.
4. Students will strengthen their abilities to read challenging texts, think critically, watch movies actively and critically, and write analytically and clearly.

Expectations:

1. *Assigned readings:* Prepare for each class by carefully reading the assigned materials, and bring the day's assigned reading to class with you.
2. *Attendance Policy:* Come to class on time, participate actively, and stay for the duration. If you miss a class where an in-class activity or pop quiz was administered, you will receive a grade of zero unless the absence was an Official University Absence or unless the absence was due to properly documented illnesses or properly documented personal/family emergencies. If you leave early on a day when you submitted work (without prior approval) you will receive a grade of zero on that work.
3. *Course Communication Policy:* Check your TCU email, as announcements regarding the course will sometimes go to that address. Also, your grades will be updated in the LearningStudio gradebook.
4. *Technology Policy:* The ability to use computers, smartphones, or other electronic devices in class is a privilege, and can be revoked if a student is found to be using those devices for anything other than coursework for this class. Students wishing to audio

record class are required to come to my office hours to discuss acceptable classroom use of recording devices and to sign a contract indicating that you will use those recordings responsibly.

5. *Deadlines*: Deadlines for assignments are strictly enforced. Unless otherwise noted, an assignment submitted after the deadline will lose 10 points (out of 100) if it is submitted within 24 hours after the deadline, 20 points (out of 100) if it is submitted between 24 and 48 hours after the deadline, 30 points (out of 100) if it is submitted between 48 and 72 hours after the deadline, etc. So, for example, if a paper deadline is 10 am on Monday and you submit your paper at 11 am, you will automatically lose 10 points. Once grades have been officially submitted for the course, late assignments will no longer be accepted.
6. *Student Disability Services*: Texas Christian University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 regarding students with disabilities. Eligible students seeking accommodations should contact the Coordinator of Student Disabilities Services in the Center for Academic Services located in Sadler Hall, 11. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the Coordinator as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations. Further information can be obtained from the Center for Academic Services, TCU Box 297710, Fort Worth, TX 76129, or at (817) 257-7486.
7. *Academic Misconduct*: I expect that the work that you turn in will be your own. Students determined to have committed academic misconduct will face penalties including (but not limited to) a grade of zero on the related assignment. I will not hesitate to bring suspected academic misconduct to the proper authorities. For more information on TCU's academic misconduct policy, see Section 3.4 from the Student Handbook.

Grading: Grades in this course will be determined as follows:

Reading Quizzes (at least 6), homework, and in-class exercises: 25%

Movie review essay #1: 25%

Movie review essay #2: 25%

Final exam 25%

Grades are determined on a 100-point scale as follows:

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|-------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|
| A: 93.5 and above | B: 82.5-86.4 | C: 72.5-76.4 | D: 62.5-66.4 |
| A-: 89.5-93.4 | B-: 79.5-82.4 | C-: 69.5-72.4 | D-: 59.5-62.4 |
| B+: 86.5-89.4 | C+: 76.5-79.4 | D+: 66.5-69.4 | F: 59.4 and below |

Paper deadline extensions will not be allowed except in the cases of properly documented illnesses or properly documented personal/family emergencies.

If you feel that you have been graded unfairly on any course assignment, please wait 24 hours after the assignment is returned and then contact me with a typed statement about why you believe you were graded unfairly. This statement must provide substantive reasons why you believe that you were graded unfairly. The appeal process must be started one week after the exam/homework was returned.

Quizzes: We will have at least six quizzes in this class. The quizzes will mostly cover assigned readings, but might touch on materials that we have covered in class. If you do the readings and pay attention in class, your quiz grade should end up being quite high. Quizzes will usually take place at the beginning of class, and no extra time will be granted to students arriving late. If you miss a class because of a properly documented illness, properly documented family/personal emergency, or an Official University Absence, you have three days to either visit my office hours or make an appointment with me to make up your quiz. If you wait more than three days to see me after missing a class where a quiz was given, you will receive a grade of zero for the missed quiz. Students who miss classes for reasons other than Official University Absences, properly documented illnesses, or properly documented family/personal emergencies will receive a grade of zero for missed quizzes. I will drop the lowest quiz grade.

Movie review essays: Students in this class will write reviews of two of the movies that we will watch. These reviews will be 4-6 pages. They will evaluate the quality of the movie (including a discussion of the film techniques that the moviemakers used) and discuss the social and/or political context of the movie (this will require you to do a bit of research and to discuss one or more required readings as well).

Office Hours: I encourage students to take advantage of my office hours in order to ask questions about the course materials or to chat about issues related to the course or political science more generally. If you would like to get in touch with me to ask a question or schedule an appointment, I encourage you to e-mail me. You are not required to schedule an appointment to come to my regularly scheduled office hours.

Course Materials: A few assigned readings for this course (those marked “webliography”) are linked to the course’s webliography on LearningStudio. The rest of the assigned readings for this course are available in the Doc Sharing section of the course’s LearningStudio site.

Schedule:

12-May *Introduction*
No assigned reading

UNIT 1: World War II’s impact on Japanese Politics and Society

13-May *Watching Film Like a Pro*
Guest lecturer: Eric Marshall
Assigned readings:
Fabe, Marilyn. 2004. “The Beginnings of Film Narrative: D. W. Griffith’s *The Birth of a Nation*” In *Closely Watched Films: An Introduction to the Art of Narrative Film Technique*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Fabe, Marilyn. 2004. “Glossary” In *Closely Watched Films: An Introduction to the Art of Narrative Film Technique*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Film we will watch in class: *The Burmese Harp*

14-May *Embracing Defeat*
Assigned readings:
Dower, John W. 1999. *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*. New

York: Norton, pp. 19-64.
Film we will watch in class: *Momotaro and the Eagle of the Sea*

UNIT 2: Politics in Postwar Japan

15-May *Japanese Politics: Mainstream or Exotic?*

Assigned readings:

Stockwin, Arthur. 2014. "Japanese Politics: Mainstream or Exotic?" In *Critical Issues in Contemporary Japan*, edited by Jeff Kingston. London: Routledge.
Inoguchi, Takashi. 2014. "Japan in 2013: Abenomics and Abegeopolitics." *Asian Survey* 51 (1):101-112.

Film we will watch in class: *Campaign*

15-May *The Meaning and Function of Japanese Democracy*

Assigned readings:

Haddad, Mary Alice. 2012. "Making Democracy Real." In *Building Democracy in Japan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

19-May *Social Crises and Political Solutions*

Assigned readings:

Kingston, Jeff. 2014. "Demographic Dilemmas, Women, and Immigration." In *Critical Issues in Contemporary Japan*, edited by Jeff Kingston. London: Routledge.

Leheny, David. 2014. "What's Behind What Ails Japan?" In *Critical Issues in Contemporary Japan*, edited by Jeff Kingston. London: Routledge.

First Movie Review (of *Burmese Harp* or *Campaign*) due at 10:00am.

UNIT 3: Education and Sports

20-May *Middle Schools and Adulthood*

Assigned readings:

Fukuzawa, Rebecca Erwin. 1994. "The Path to Adulthood according to Japanese Middle Schools." *Journal of Japanese Studies* 20 (1):61-86.

Film we will watch in class: Either *The Learning Machine* or *Japan's About Face*

21-May *A Crisis in Japanese Education?*

Assigned readings:

Aspinall, Robert. 2014. "Violence in Schools: Tension between 'The Individual' and 'The Group' in the Japanese Education System." In *Critical Issues in Contemporary Japan*, edited by Jeff Kingston. London: Routledge.

Brinton, Mary C. 2010. "The Lost Generation." In *Lost in Transition: Youth, Work, and Instability in Postindustrial Japan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

22-May *Sports, Japanese Style*

Assigned readings:

Kelly, William W. 2009. "Samurai Baseball: The Vicissitudes of a National Sporting Style." *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 26 (3):429-441.

Kelly, William W. 1997. "An Anthropologist in the Bleachers: Cheering a Japanese Baseball Team." *Japan Quarterly* 44 (4):66-79.
Film we will watch in class: *High School Baseball*

UNIT 4: Death and Disaster

23-May *The Japanese Funeral*

Assigned readings:

Suzuki, Hikaru. 2003. "McFUNERALS: The Transition of Japanese Funerary Services." *Asian Anthropology* 2 (1):49-78.

Davies, Roger J., and Osamu Ikeno. 2002. "Sōshiki: Japanese Funerals" in *The Japanese Mind: Understanding Contemporary Japanese Culture*. Boston: Tuttle.

Film we will watch in class: *Departures*

27-May *Earthquakes, Nuclear Meltdowns, and Terrorist Attacks*

Murakami, Haruki. 2001. "Blind Nightmare: Where are We Japanese Going?" In *Underground: The Tokyo Gas Attack and the Japanese Psyche*. New York: Vintage International.

Osnos, Evan. 2011. "Seven Months Later: Japan's Nuclear Predicament." *The New Yorker*, October 17. (webliography)

Second Movie Review (of *High School Baseball*, *The Learning Machine*, or *Departures*) due at 10:00am.

UNIT 5: Marriage, Love, and Relationships

28-May *Marriage and Divorce in Contemporary Japan*

Assigned readings:

Alexy, Allison. 2011. "The Door My Wife Closed: Houses, Family and Divorce in Contemporary Japan." In *Home and Family in Japan: Continuity and Transformation*, edited by Richard Ronald and Allison Alexy. Milton Park: Routledge.

Brooke, James. 2005. "Tokyo Journal; Here Comes the Japanese Bride, Looking Very Western." *New York Times*, July 8. (webliography)

Film we will watch in class: *Good Morning*

29-May *Masculine, Feminine, and the Cute in Contemporary Japan*

Assigned readings:

Kato, Norihiko. 2006. "Goodbye Godzilla, Hello Kitty: What Japan's Pop-Culture Products tell us about its Struggles with Defeat, Democratization and Globalization." *American Interest*, September 1. (webliography)

30-May FINAL EXAM