

**POSC 35603**  
**Michael Strausz**

**Japanese Politics and Society Through Film**  
**Summer 2015**

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**course time:** Monday-Friday, 10:05am-12:00pm

**classroom:** Scharbauer 1011

**e-mail:** michael.strausz@tcu.edu

**office hours:** Tuesdays 1:00pm-3:00pm, Thursdays 1:00-2:00pm, or by appointment

**office:** Scharbauer 2007F

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**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 of a mysterious and exotic culture, the world headquarters of cutting edge technology, and the source of martial arts, Hello Kitty, pokemon, 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 movies, both documentary and fictional films. Ultimately, we will strive to understand how Japanese politics and society work, and we will use this understanding to deepen our sense of how politics and societies function more generally.

**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:* Students wishing to use computers, tablets, or smartphones to take notes in class are requested to use those devices *only* for class related purposes. I know how tempting it can be to use an electronic device for Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Ravelry (the knitting social networking site), games, and other fun distractions, but if I catch a student doing so, that student will no longer be permitted to bring his or her electronic device to class. Remember that your primary responsibility at TCU is to learn. If you don't trust yourself to avoid online distractions, I encourage you to take notes with pen (or pencil!) and paper. Students wishing to make audio or video recordings of classes are required to come to my office hours to discuss acceptable use of those records and to sign a contract indicating that you will use those recordings responsibly. In the absence of written permission, you are not permitted to make audio or video recordings of classes.

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, 1010. 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) 257-6567.
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 (Due **Thursday, July 16 at 10:05 am**): 25%
- Movie review essay #2 (Due **Monday, July 27 at 10:05 am**): 25%
- Take home final exam (Due **Friday, July 31 at noon**): 25%

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

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 are not able to turn in a homework assignment because of a properly documented illness, properly documented family/personal emergency, or an Official University Absence, you are required to turn it in by the beginning of the next class. 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, homeworks, and in-class exercises. 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 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 “weblibliography”) are linked to the course’s weblibliography 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:**

- 6-Jul      *Introduction*  
No assigned reading  
Film we will watch in class: *The Cutting Edge: The Magic of Movie Editing*
- 7-Jul      *Watching Film Critically*  
Fabe, Marilyn. 2004. “Glossary” In *Closely Watched Films: An Introduction to the Art of Narrative Film Technique*. Berkeley: University of California Press.  
Germano, Roy. 2014. “Analytic Filmmaking: A New Approach to Research and Publication in the Social Sciences.” *Perspectives on Politics* 12 (3):663-676.  
Yanow, Dvora. 2014. “I Am Not a Camera: On Visual Politics and Method. A Response to Roy Germano.” *Perspectives on Politics* 12 (3):680-683.

## **UNIT 1: The Shadow of War**

- 8-Jul      *The Meaning of Surrender*  
No assigned reading  
Film we will watch in class: *The Burmese Harp*
- 9-Jul      *Embracing Defeat*  
Dower, John W. 1999. *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*.

New York: Norton, pp. 19-64.

## UNIT 2: Politics in Postwar Japan

- 10-Jul *Campaigns and Elections in Japan*  
No assigned reading  
Film we will watch in class: *Campaign*
- 13-Jul *Japan: Who Governs?*  
Johnson, Chalmers. 1975. "Japan: Who Governs? An Essay on Official Bureaucracy." *Journal of Japanese Studies* 2 (1):1-28.  
Gauder, Alisa. 2011. "The Institutional Landscape of Japanese Politics." In *The Routledge Handbook of Japanese Politics*, edited by Alisa Gauder, 3-13. London: Routledge.
- 14-Jul *From Miracle to Basketcase*  
Leheny, David. 2006. "A 'Vague Anxiety' in Postwar Japan." In *Think Global, Fear Local: Sex, Violence, and Anxiety in Contemporary Japan*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 27-47.  
Rosenbluth, Frances McCall, and Michael F. Thies. 2010. "Japan's Postwar Political Economy." In *Japan Transformed: Political Change and Economic Restructuring*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 72-94.
- 15-Jul **Class is cancelled**
- 16-Jul *The Politics of Protest in Japan*  
Davis, John H. 2014. "Courting Justice, Contesting 'Bureaucratic Informality': The Sayama Case and the Evolution of Buraku Liberation Politics." In *Going to Court to Change Japan: Social Movements and the Law in Contemporary Japan*, edited by Patricia G. Steinhoff, 73-100. Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Japanese Studies, The University of Michigan.  
Strausz, Michael. 2006-2007. "Minorities and Protest in Japan: The Politics of the Fingerprinting Refusal Movement." *Pacific Affairs* 79 (4):641-656.  
**First movie review due at 10:05 am**

## UNIT 3: Education, Sports, and Japanese Young People

- 17-Jul *Japanese Education*  
William W. Kelly's "Viewing Notes for 'The Learning Machine'"  
Films we will watch in class: *The Slow Way Home* and *The Learning Machine*
- 20-Jul *More on Japanese Education*  
Goodman, Roger. 2011. "Japanese Education and Education Reform." In *Routledge Handbook of Japanese Culture and Society*, edited by Victoria Bestor, Theodore C. Bestor and Akiko Yamagata. London: Routledge.
- 21-Jul *Otaku and Densha no Otoko (Nerds and the Train Boy)*  
Azuma, Hiroki. 2009. "The Otaku's Pseudo-Japan." In *Otaku: Japan's Database*

*Animals*. Translated by Jonathan E. Abel and Shion Kono. English ed. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 3-24.  
Freedman, Alisa. 2009. "Train Man and the Gender Politics of Japanese 'Otaku' Culture: The Rise of New Media, Nerd Heroes and Consumer Communities" *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific* (20). (webliography)

22-Jul *Sports in Japan*  
Kelly, William W. 2011. "The Sportscape of Contemporary Japan." In *Routledge Handbook of Japanese Culture and Society*, edited by Victoria Bestor, Theodore C. Bestor and Akiko Yamagata. London: Routledge.  
Film we will watch in class: *High School Baseball*

#### **UNIT 4: Death and Disaster**

23-Jul *The Japanese Funeral*  
No assigned reading  
Film we will watch in class: *Departures*

24-Jul *Natural Disasters*  
Murakami, Haruki. 2002. "super-frog saves tokyo." In *after the quake: stories*. Translated by Jay Rubin. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

27-Jul *Aum Shinrikyo and Terror in Japan*  
Reader, Ian. 2000. "Concluding Comments: Aum Shinrikyo and Religious Violence." In *Religions Violence in Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.  
**Second movie review due at 10:05 am.**

#### **UNIT 5: Love, Relationships, and Family Life**

28-Jul *The Japanese Family*  
No assigned reading  
Film we will watch in class: to be announced

29-Jul *Marriage and Divorce in Japan*  
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)

30-Jul *Romance in Japan*  
Yoshida, Akiko. 2011. "No Chance for Romance: Corporate Culture, Gendered Work, and Increased Singlehood in Japan." *Contemporary Japan* 213-234 (23):2.

31-Jul TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM DUE AT THE END OF CLASS