GOVT/ CEAS 296:
Introduction to Japanese Politics

Spring 2017
Class: Tuesday and Thursday 1:20-2:40 PAC221
Office Hours: Thursdays 11-12 CEAS 201

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Overview
This an upper-division course on Japanese Politics. You do not have to know anything about Japan, and some background in political science would be helpful but is not necessary. The course is designed to give you a general understanding about the main features of contemporary Japanese politics and a more specialized understanding of a topic of your choice.

While the focus of this course is Japan, an important theme will be international comparison. We will be investigating the dynamics of Japan’s political institutions, but we will be doing so with an eye toward broader comparisons with other advanced industrialized countries. Therefore, we will be asking questions like: “How is Japan different from other industrialized countries? “How is Japan similar?” “Is Japan becoming more or less like other countries?”

Another theme that will be emphasized is change over time. We will be looking at the process of Japan’s democratization as well as several areas of contemporary policy. In each case we will be examining the ways that political, economic, and social actors interact to transform politics and policy. So, we will also be asking questions like: “How did Japan democratize?” “How has Japan’s foreign policy changed over time?” “What is the importance of international forces on Japanese policy?” “What domestic actors drive policy change?”

Japanese politics is experiencing a period of dramatic institutional and cultural change. Internationally, Japan’s role in regional and global politics has shifted with the rise of China. Domestically, Japanese citizens are becoming more assertive and finding new ways to make their voices heard. This is an exciting time to study this fascinating country.

Objectives
There are five primary learning goals for this class:
 Understand the how government and politics works in Japan
 Develop a comparative perspective when analyzing politics around the world
 Expand independent research skills
 Improve oral presentation skills
 Improve academic writing skills

Expectations
This is an upper-division seminar, so I expect a high level of student involvement in the course. The course will involve in-class discussions of the reading, a take home midterm, and an independent
research paper with an oral presentation about that research. I expect each student to come to class prepared and to participate actively in all class activities.

Readings: Mary Alice Haddad *Building Democracy in Japan* (Cambridge 2012) available at Broad Street Books, Amazon, etc. Other readings will be posted on Moodle.

**Grading**
There are four components of your final grade: participation, quizzes, a take-home midterm exam, and a final research paper and presentation. This is a writing intensive course, and we will be focusing on writing throughout the course and will put considerable emphasis on improving writing skills.

Participation:
Students are expected to come prepared to class each session. This means having read and thought about the reading material. The success of this course depends in large part on student willingness to engage in the material and push our conversations up to a higher level. As part of the participation grade, students will also be required to contribute to a group presentation about “Japan in the news” one time during the semester. They will also need to participate in the movement workshop (part of environmental politics section).

Quizzes:
There will be 5 “pop” quizzes over the course of the semester. The purpose of these quizzes is to make sure that you keep up with the reading and to help prepare you for the larger take-home assignments. I will count the top four quizzes. No make-up quizzes will be given.

Public event write-ups: I highly encourage you to attend public events (lectures, films, exhibits, etc.) on campus that have to do with Japanese politics. If you go to one of these events and submit a one-page write up that summarizes the event/lecture (puzzle, argument, evidence) and asks three questions, I will grade your write up. Each public event write up will count as ½ a quiz, so if you write up two events, together they replace one quiz grade.

Midterm Exam:
The midterm exam will cover the broad conceptual material in the first half of the course. It will be a take home exam. Grades will be reduced by 1/3 (e.g. from A- to B+) for every 24hrs or part thereof that the exam is late.

Research Paper
You will complete an independent research paper on the topic of your choice related to Japanese politics. The paper must be 18-20 pages long and use at least ten different academic sources (books, journal articles, primary sources; other sources such as newspaper articles, magazine articles, blogs, etc. can be used but don’t count toward the ten). Prior to the final paper you will hand in a thesis statement, outline, and a preliminary bibliography. Throughout the semester you will be meeting in “research groups” with peers conducting research on similar topics in order to discuss your progress, share resources, and circulate drafts. Towards the end of the semester you will present your research
to your peers in an academic conference format of themed panels. You will also conduct peer reviews of rough drafts of the paper before handing it in during exam week.


I am not tolerant of cheating or plagiarism. See the Student Handbook’s section on the Honor System for an explanation of student responsibilities, the process involved in prosecuting an Honor System violation, and an essay on plagiarism. http://www.wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/studenthandbook/standardsregulations/studentconduct.html.

I take the Honor System very seriously and will take any violations to the Honor Board. I will give you all the tools you need to do well on all of your assignments throughout the semester, so there should be no need for unacceptable assistance. If you have questions about the appropriate way to use or cite a source, please do not hesitate to ask me before you hand in your paper.

**Breakdown of grade:**

The breakdown of the course grade is as follows:

- Participation
  - In class discussion 10%
  - Quizzes 10%
- Take-home Midterm 35%
- Final Project
  - Oral Presentation 5%
  - Paper 40%

**Grade Complaints:**

Grade complaints will not be entertained until 24 hours after the exam/assignment is returned to you or more than two weeks after the exam/assignment has been returned. If you have a question concerning the grade you have received:

1) Wait 24 hours.
2) Write out an explanation of your question, including the reasons why you think your grade should be changed.
3) Submit your written complaint/question to me, and make an appointment to meet either during my office hours or at some other time.

**A Final Note**

I hope that you will look to me as a resource. I highly encourage you to take advantage of my office hours to stop by and talk about issues raised in the course, or other questions you have. I am very open to feedback about the course, and would appreciate you sharing any thoughts you might have for improvement earlier rather than later in the semester. I am very excited about this course on Japanese politics, and I hope that we can all have an interesting and productive semester!

I reserve the right to change this syllabus without notice.
Reading Schedule

Section 1: History and Structure of Postwar Japanese Government and Politics

- What are the origins of Japan’s postwar political system?
- What is late development?
- How did it effect Japan’s political development?
- Who governs Japan?

Jan. 26  Introduction

Jan. 31  Origins of Modern Japanese Politics
Mary Alice Haddad, Building Democracy in Japan (Preface, Ch. 3)

Feb. 2  The 1990s and the Remaking of the 1955-system
Gerald Curtis, The Logic of Japanese Politics (Columbia 1999), Ch. 1.
Haddad, Building Democracy in Japan (Ch. 4)

Feb. 7  Executive Branch: Central Bureaucracy
Ellis Krauss and Benjamin Nyblade, 2005 “‘Presidentialization’ in Japan? The Prime
Minister, Media and Elections in Japan” British Journal of Political Science 35:2, 357-368.

Feb. 9  Legislative Branch: Party System and the LDP
Ellis Krauss and Robert Pekkanen, “The Rise and Fall of the Liberal Democratic Party” The
Steven Reed, “The Liberal Democratic Party: An Explanation of Its Successes and

PAPER QUESTION DUE—The “Puzzle” you want to answer and 3 sources.

Feb. 14  Legislative Branch: Opposition Parties
Phillip Lipscy and Ethan Scheiner, “Japan Under the DPJ: The Paradox of Political
Politics” Ch. 9 in Sherry Martin and Gil Steel. Democratic Reform in Japan: Assessing the Impact. (Lynne Reinner, 2008).

Japan in the News #1

Feb. 16  Judiciary
Steinhoff, Patricia G. Going to Court to Change Japan: Social Movements and the Law in
Contemporary Japan. (University of Michigan Press, 2014). Ch. 1
Feb. 21  Local Government

Feb. 23  Civil Society

MIDTERM DUE MONDAY FEB 27 at 9am Turnitin.com SAVED as 1 FILE, hard copy turned in During class on Tuesday February 28.

Section 2: International Politics—Japan’s Shifting Role
- How has changing regional politics affected Japan’s role?
- What are the key issues in Japan’s foreign policy? How have they changed?
- How have Japan’s international interests shifted? How have its diplomatic strategies changed?

Feb. 28  Changing Regional Relations

Optional Reading:
- Walter Hatch and Kozo Yamamura, Asia in Japan’s Embrace (Cambridge 1996).

Japan in the News #2

Mar. 2  Nationalism
Nakano Koichi, “Contemporary Political Dynamics of Japanese Nationalism” Japan Focus, 1 1/15/2016 14:2.
Optional Reading

Mar. 7 Security

Optional Reading:

Trade (TPP)

Optional Reading
• Ulrike Schaede, Choose and Focus (Cornell 2008).

SPRING BREAK!!!!

Section 3: Domestic Politics—Rise of Citizen Voices
• What are Japan’s pressing domestic social needs?
• What is the role of Japanese citizens in identifying those needs and providing solutions?
• How do Japanese citizens assert demands on their government?
• How are they doing that in ways that are different from before?

Mar. 28 Haddad Building Democracy in Japan, Ch. 1, 2.
Optional Readings


Mar. 30  *Traditional Civil Society Groups*
Haddad *Building Democracy in Japan* ch. 5

Optional Readings


**Japan in the News #3**

Apr. 4  *New-Style Civil Society Groups*
Haddad, *Building Democracy in Japan*, Ch. 6

Optional Readings

- Jennifer Chan ed. *Another Japan is Possible* (Stanford, 2008)
- Isa Ducke, *Civil Society and the Internet in Japan* (Routledge, 2007).

**PAPER OUTLINE DUE:** Major Sections, 2-4 sources listed under each section

**Mandatory Film Screening:** Slow Way Home. Ring Family Theater @ 5:30

**Section 4: Domestic Policy—Social Welfare, Gender, Environment 3-11**

Apr. 6  *Poverty and Inequality*


Optional Readings


**Japan in the News #4**

Apr. 11  *Minority Issues*


**Optional Reading**


Apr. 13  *Gender*

Haddad, *Building Democracy in Japan*, Ch. 7

**Optional Reading**

- Robin LeBlanc *Bicycle Citizens* (California, 1999) and *The Art of the Gut* (California, 2009)

**Mandatory Talk: Lenoard Schoppa: Slow Way Home; CEAS seminar room @ 4:30**

Apr. 18  *Environment*

*Movement Workshop--MEET IN FAYERWEATHER 106 -- DRESS to MOVE*


**Optional Reading**


Apr. 20  
3-11, Japan’s Triple Disaster  
Richard Samuels. 3.11 *Disaster and Change in Japan*. Cornell UP. 2013. Ch. 1.  

Optional Reading  
• [http://teach311.org](http://teach311.org)  
• Toshihiko Hayashi, “Japan’s Post-Disaster Economic Reconstruction: From Kobe to Tohoku,” *Asian Economic Journal* 26:3, 189-201

**Japan in the News #5**

Apr. 25 *The Future of Japanese Politics*  
Haddad *Building Democracy in Japan*, Conclusion

Apr. 27 *Presentations*

May 2 *Presentations*

May 4 *Presentations*

May 8  
**Rough Draft Posted to Moodle by May 8 by noon**

May 9 *Wrapping Up*

**Final Paper Due: May 18 by 12:00 noon**—Digital Only: Turnitin.com and Moodle