IPS 225: Japanese Politics and Political Economy

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Class Schedule:       Office Hours:
Thu: 2:15-5:05       Tue: 1-3pm, Thu: 1-2pm
Rm. 160-315       Encina East, Rm. 102

Course Aims:
This course will introduce students to Japanese politics in the post-war period, focusing on three topics that make Japan stand out in a comparative context. First, we will explore the causes and effects of the Liberal Democratic Party’s unprecedented political dominance. While most democracies experience frequent changes in government, the LDP maintained single-party control for four decades. What were the underpinnings of the LDP’s electoral success, and did this result in distinctive public policies? Who were the winners and losers under LDP dominance?

Second, we will examine the spectacular rise and subsequent collapse of the Japanese economy. How did a war-ravaged nation achieve double-digit economic growth for close to two decades? Was Japanese growth a “miracle,” as many scholars have argued, or was it founded on standard neo-classical economic principles? Is Japan’s post-1990 economic malaise caused by the inability to adapt to a changing world, or is there an inherent incompatibility between systems that produce initial development and systems required to sustain long-term growth?

Finally, we will look at Japan’s engagement with the rest of the world, focusing in particular on its relations with the United States and Asia. How has the lack of a strong military, combined with its close security arrangements with the US, affected Japan’s geopolitical relations with the rest of Asia? Why has Japan – contrary to international relations theory – failed to take a strong leadership role in the development of Asian multilateral institutions? Should Japan’s foreign policy change with the end of the Cold War and the rise of China?

In discussing these issues, this class will adopt an explicitly comparative framework, examining Japan’s political, economic, and security history in the context of events in other parts of the world. The readings will draw on general theories from comparative party politics, economic development, and international relations, and the lectures will compare the Japanese experience with that in other advanced-industrialized and developing democracies.

Course Requirements:
In lieu of exams, students will be expected to write two research papers, focusing on one of the three themes of this course. The first paper (10 pages, due Nov. 13th) should be descriptive – students should draw on assigned readings and demonstrate their grasp of Japan in the context of party politics, economic development, or international relations. The main goal of this paper is to craft a strong literature review, and this paper is worth 25% of the final grade.

The second paper (25 pages, due at the end of the term) should be analytical – students
can pick a specific topic of their choosing, but it should be consistent with one of the three themes of the class. In this second paper, you must develop and defend an argument that is central to Japanese politics research, such as the influence of culture on Japanese politics, the importance of bureaucratic involvement in economic policy-making, the distributive consequences of single-party dominance, and the importance of US military presence in East Asian security. This paper is worth 50% of the final grade.

Specific topics will be chosen in consultation with the instructor. On Oct. 19th (Week 3), students will be expected to submit a list of issues and puzzles about Japan that they would like to analyze for their first paper. In Week 7 (by Nov. 20th), students will meet with the instructor to discuss possible arguments to develop in the second research paper. During exam week, students will meet over two sessions to present their research in front of the rest of the class. We’ll discuss this in greater detail later on in the course.

The final 25% of your evaluation will be based on seminar participation. Each week, 1-2 students will serve as session leaders, who will briefly summarize (over 10-15 minutes) the readings and suggest 3-4 topics to discuss during our meeting. Session leaders should also write a 1-2 page summary of the readings, to be emailed to the instructor by 9AM on the morning of class (I will then distribute the summaries by email to class). We will determine reading allocations during our first class.

Course participation / seminar leader: 25%
Descriptive paper (10 pgs): 25%
Analytical paper (25 pgs): 50%

You are expected to follow standards of good academic writing. The Chicago Manual of Style is a good reference point should you have questions about paper structure, bibliographies, etc., although I will go over some main points in the weeks preceding paper deadlines. It is CRUCIAL that you avoid plagiarism — using other people’s ideas and words without appropriate citation — since this can result in suspension from the University (I won’t be too happy either). The course website (link below) has some information about Stanford University’s rules regarding plagiarism. Make sure to take a look before you start your paper, but when in doubt, cite the material in footnotes or in the bibliography.

Readings, Texts:

Students are expected to have completed each week’s required readings before class. Most of these are drawn from the list of required books, detailed below and available at the Stanford Bookstore (denoted by author’s name in the syllabus). The remainder is book chapters and journal articles, which are available for download (or via a link) from the course website (denoted as “website” in the syllabus). The course website is at the Stanford Courseworks link, which can be found at: http://coursework.stanford.edu/index.shtml. If you’ve registered for the course, you will automatically have access to the class information. If not, email me and I’ll sign you up.

**Required Books (available at the Stanford Bookstore):**

Green, Michael J. *Japan's Reluctant Realism: Foreign Policy Challenges in an Era of*
Recommended readings are just that – recommended – but they provide a great resource for those of you interested in that week's particular topic. Importantly, the recommended readings should come in handy for your writing assignments, either by developing a broader theoretical framework or by providing more detailed empirical information. These can be found at Green Library or online through the e-resources link from the Stanford Libraries homepage.
Part I: 1945-1960s – The Postwar Decades

1. From Prewar to Postwar (Oct. 5th)
   - Dower, John. 1999. *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*. NY: W.W. Norton & Co, Chapters 1, 2, 12, 13 (WEBSITE)

   **OPTIONAL**

2. The Origins of the LDP and Conservative Hegemony (Oct. 12th)
   - Kohno, pg. 49-90
   - Pempel, pg. 42-110
   - Schlesinger, pg. 17-90

   **OPTIONAL**


3. The Electoral Underpinnings of LDP Dominance (Oct. 19th)

   *Topics due for FIRST PAPER*

   - Kohno, pg. 91-134
   - Scheiner, Chapters 2, 3

   **OPTIONAL**

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Japanese Politics

Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press., pg. 1-98


4. The Iron Triangle: Political Economy of Growth (and Dissenting Views) (Oct. 26th)

- Richard Katz, *Japan: The System that Soured—the Rise and Fall of the Japanese Economic Miracle*, Chapter 6 (WEBSITE)

OPTIONAL


- Schlesinger, pg. 91-146
- Schoppa, Ch. 1, 3

**OPTIONAL**
- Rosenbluth, Frances McCall. 1989. *Financial Politics in Contemporary Japan*

**6. The Evolution of Japanese Security Policy (Nov. 9th)**

*FIRST PAPER DUE on Nov. 13th*

- Green, Ch. 2

**OPTIONAL**

**Part III: 1980s-Current – Fall of the LDP, Economic Stagnation, Japan in a Multilateral Asia**

**7. The Collapse of the LDP and Coalitional Politics in the 1990s (Nov. 16th)**

*Topics due for SECOND PAPER*

- Scheiner, Chapters 6, 8
- Schlesinger, pg. 157-279
- Pempel, Chapters 5, 6

8. Economic Growth: Miracle or Not? (Nov. 30th)
- Schoppa, Ch. 4-6, 8
- Richard Katz, *Japan: The System that Soured—the Rise and Fall of the Japanese Economic Miracle*, Chapters 8, 9 (WEBSITE)

OPTIONAL

9. Japan, the US, and Asia Now (Dec. 7th)
- Green, pgs. 77-192

OPTIONAL

*December 14th, SECOND PAPER DUE*