Course ID Number: REC5610

Course Title: Japanese Political Culture & Foreign Policy

No. of Credits: 2

Graduate School of International Relations
International University of Japan

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Course Introduction

This course analyses Japanese political culture, in its historical context, focussing on the question of how the forces that occupy the strategic heights of the nation's power structure (conservative parties, the bureaucracy, the business community and other groups) have interacted with each other, on the character and evaluation of political factionalism, and the continuing significance of geostrategic-cultural orientations such as "Westernism" and "Asianism." The impact of these factors on Japan's postwar external relations is then examined in detail.

The objectives of this course are to unearth these submerged, hidden influences on Japan's relations with her allies and neighbors, to trace their impact on the day to day evolution of her foreign policies during this period, to identify the elements of continuity and change, to disentangle and clarify relationships of cause and effect. In this way, the course seeks to demonstrate the critical importance and continuing relevance of history, not only to the understanding of the recent past, but also to the analysis of contemporary events and to intelligent speculation about future possibilities.
Course Description

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After a brief summary of several critical foreign policy decisions, notably the "decision" to ally with the United States in the Cold War, the "decision" to rearm, the decision to normalise relations with the Soviet Union, the decision to renegotiate the Security Treaty, the decision to avoid direct involvement in American containment of China and in the Vietnam War, the decision to develop relations with the Republic of Indonesia and the decision to establish ties with the Republic of Korea, attention will focus on Japanese responses to politico-strategic and economic developments in the Asia Pacific region in the period 1969 - 1978.

This decade presents interesting parallels and some striking contrasts to the times in which we currently live. The late 1960s and the first part of the 1970s witnessed the realisation of American - Soviet strategic parity, the end of the Vietnam War, the reemergence of Europe, China and Japan itself as significant factors in world politics, upheavals in the Middle East, important changes in South Asia, Latin America, Africa and Oceania, and a drift forwards a complex multipower balance of power system. At the same time Japan, the United States, China and several Western Pacific nations were shaken by major domestic political crises.

The foreign policies and strategic postures of states, it will be argued in this course, seldom evolve as "rational responses" to the "objective realities" of international society. Nor are they purely the outcomes of domestic political struggles, in the narrow sense of that term. The international environment, the desire for self assertion, the search for security, the pursuit of economic interests, all these things, no doubt, have considerable impact on the external policies adopted by any particular society at any point in time. Yet the international environment must be evaluated, economic trends analysed and the national interest interpreted by the political leaders, bureaucrats, strategic planners, business people and others who occupy key positions in the decision making apparatus of the state. These men and women, and those upon whom they rely for advice, view the world through the prism of their own education and experience. The goals they pursue, the analyses they make and the conclusions they reach are, therefore, profoundly influenced by what may be termed, loosely, the accumulated legacy of history, by the impact of layer upon layer of virtually unquestioned assumptions about the society and its place in the world, by traditional cultural, religious and class loyalties, by moral values, hopes, fears and prejudices derived, as often as not, from the very distant, half forgotten past, and subject themselves to perpetual change under the impact of new experience.

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Lecture Schedule

The lecture programme is divided into three segments. The first section sketches, with a broad brush, the principal trends in both world and regional policies during the period 1944-1978, with particular emphasis on the 1970s.

The second section examines the Japanese political system, Japan's foreign policy decision making machinery and the evolution of Japanese attitudes towards Asia and the West against the background of the Cold War. The character and significance of Liberal Democratic Party factionalism in this context is subjected to close scrutiny.

The third section analyses the development for Japan's ties with the United States, the Soviet Union, the Peoples Republic of China, the island of Taiwan, the Korean peninsula and Indonesia.

Two ninety minutes lectures, with a refreshment break between each, will be given every week of the semester. Since some flexibility is desirable it is difficult to give a precise outline of each week's lecture schedule in advance.

Generally speaking, however, the course can be expected to develop in the following pattern:

| Week I     | Introductory remarks |
| Week II – III | World Politics, 1944 - 1978 |
| Week VII – X | Japan's relations with the United States, the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, the island of Taiwan, the Korean peninsula and Indonesia. |

Assessment

Assessment will be by essay only. A well researched, cogently argued and properly documented essay on one of the attached topics should be handed in at the end of term. Students may also work on a topic of their own choosing, provided they discuss it with me and secure my approval beforehand. Essays should be about 5,000 words in length.

Essay Topics

I. Which of the following exerted the greatest influence on the Japanese foreign
policy decision making process in the period 1969-1978?

i. the United States
ii. the Liberal Democratic Party
iii. the bureaucracy
iv. the business community
v. the Diet
vi. Japanese public opinion
vii. other factors.

II. Why has the American-Japanese Security Treaty system endured so long? Discuss with reference to both international and Japanese domestic factors.

III. Was Japan's decision to normalise relations with the Peoples' Republic of China simply a response to changing United States global strategy?

IV. Why did Japan-Soviet relations fail to improve significantly during the superpower détente of the 1970s?

V. Analyse the changing composition, character and objectives of the postwar Japanese "Indonesia lobby."

VI. Examine the geostrategic, economic and political factors underlying Japan's postwar relations with the two Koreas.

VII. Were American objectives in rearming Japan the same as Japanese objectives in submitting to rearmament?

VIII. The 1970s saw Japan shift from an extremely close relationship with the United States towards a more omnidirectional international posture. The end of the Cold War has witnessed an apparent return to bilateralism. Why?

IX. Several prominent postwar Japanese leaders have dreamed of promoting the development of an Asian Community. Examine the international and domestic factors which have so far limited the success of their endeavours.

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**Reading Materials**

**Required Reading**

CSIS, Japan Indonesia Relations in the Context of Regionalism in Asia, CSIS, Jakarta, 1976.
Hook, Glenn D., Militarization and Demilitarization in Contemporary Japan, Routledge, 1996.


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Morisson, Charles Edward, Japan, the United States and a Changing Southeast Asia, University Press of America, 1985.
Saito, Shiro, Japan at the Summit: Japan's Role in the Western Alliance and Asia Pacific, Routledge for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1990.
Shioda, Hirokazu, Japanese Investment in Southeast Asia: Three Malaysian Case Studies, Hong Kong Centre for Progress of Peoples, 1989.
Woronoff, Jon, Japan's Commercial Empire, M.E. Sharpe, 1984