Course ID Number: REC5630

Course Title: Contemporary Japanese Politics

No. of Credits: 2

Graduate School of International Relations

International University of Japan

Term: Fall 2013

Instructor: Tomohito Shinoda

Course Description:

This course is designed to give students a general introduction to the political system of Japan. The contents of the course will include the principles of political culture, political institutions and public policymaking. The format of the course will be lecture and discussion. As the course is an introductory course, most class time will be given to lecture. The most important goal, however, is to gain the basic understanding of the current politics. Therefore, there will also be much discussion of both the readings and of contemporary events.
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A Friday, most likely in November, may be set aside for a field trip to Tokyo, visiting the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Headquarters of the Liberal Democratic Party and the Democratic Party, and the Diet. This depends on consent of the class.

Organization: This course is lecture-based class, but the instructor encourages students to participate discussion in order to find out more details of the contents.

Course Grade: The course grade will be based on final exam (60%), one oral presentation (20%), and class attendance and participation in classroom discussions (20%) will account for the remainder of the course grade. In order to pass the class, you need to get at least 50 out of 100 points.

Policies: The students are expected to read all the reading materials and attend all the classes. One week absence would result in the deduction of 4 points. The adjustment can be made for the following two cases: sickness and family emergency. If you miss 40 percent of class without reasonable causes, you fail to pass.

Materials: The materials are listed in the following course outline for each week. The main textbook is *Contemporary Japanese Politics* by Tomohito Shinoda (2013).

CLASS OUTLINE

Week One: Historical Review
A brief review of the historical development of the political system from the beginning of the Feudal System (12th Century) through Edo and Meiji Period, to the end of WWII with emphasis on the prewar problems in the development of democracy.

Required: Hayes, 11-28; Reischauer, 113-217.
Suggested: Beasley, 1-208.

Week Two: Occupation and Constitution
This week we will examine the occupation reforms, including the enactment of the current Constitution, which established the structure of the government and institutionalized democracy.

Required: Government Section, SCAP, 82-144; Hayes, 29-44.
Suggested: Schaller, all.

Week Three: Political Parties and the Diet
The role of political parties in Japan, paying special attention to the reasons why the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) ruled for almost 40 years, intra-party politics within the LDP and the evolution of parties under the present coalition governments.

Suggested: Curtis, Chaps 1-4; Hrebenar, all.
**Week Four: Bureaucracy**  
One of the major characteristics of Japanese politics is the strong bureaucracy. We will look at the role of civil servants in postwar Japan and the current arguments in administrative reform. Students are assigned to report on an individual ministry or agency of the central government.

Suggested: Johnson, MITI, all.

**Week Five: The Big Business and Other Interest Groups**  
Big Businesses in Japan have been a major player in domestic political process. The coexistence of powerful business organizations and conservative political culture produced close working relations between the two.

Required: Vogel ed., 33-70; Woronoff, 150-74; Richardson, 174-199.  
Suggested: Calder, all.

**Week Six: Policymaking Process**  
We will examine how the political actors discussed in the previous classes interact for the policy outcomes. We will compare the arguments of pluralism and corporatism.


**Week Seven: Cabinet and the Prime Minister**  
Although the power of the bureaucracy is strong, the executive authority constitutionally belongs to the Cabinet. This week, we will examine the constraints and obstacles which the Cabinet faces and the leadership of the prime ministers. We will also look into the current arguments of the strengthening the prime minister's office.

Students are assigned to report on an individual prime minister: how strong their leadership was and how they overcome the political obstacle they faced.

Required: Shinoda (2000), Chap. 1; Gaunter, 48-59.  

**Week Eight: Electoral System and Local Politics**  
In this section we will examine the Japanese electoral system, how it effects the way in which candidates campaign, the parties' campaign strategies in general and the voting behavior of the Japanese public. We also look at the local politics.

Required: Shinoda(2013)27-30, and Chap.4; Gaunter, 60-114.  
Suggested: Reed, all.

**Week Nine: Foreign Policy**  
This week we will cover Japan's foreign policy and Japan's role in the post-cold war international relations system.

Required: Gaunter, 297-360.  
Suggested: Inoguchi, all; Mochizuki, all. Green, all.

**Week Ten: Government under the DPJ and Final Exam**  
The final section of the course is discussion on the DPJ government. Second Part of this day will be for final exam.

**Required and Suggested Texts on Closed Reserve:**


