Course | Course code | Course title
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REC5630 | CONTEMPORARY JAPANESE POLITICS

Name of Instructor | Credit Number: |
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Instructor’s contact Information | Office# | Office Hours | E-mail:
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RI-304 | By appointment | tshinoda@iuj.ac.jp

Class Schedule
Day / Time: TBA

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.

Learning Objectives: This class seeks to provide students with a thorough understanding of Japanese politics. After taking this course, students would better understand what is going on in the current Japanese political scene with some historical background.

Career Relevance: This class would be essential for students who would plan to work in Japan or for Japan-related positions in their future career. This would provide a deeper understanding on not only what is going on in the current business scene, but also the social-historic aspects of political issues.

Course Context or Rationalization: This class is designed to provide comprehensive analysis for Japan’s politics. It covers historical aspects, and explains different actors and institutions including political parties, the Diet, the bureaucracy, the interest groups, the cabinet and the prime minister as well as the policy making process which include these actors.

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

Assessment: 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.

Prerequisite: N/A
Textbook(s) Required: Students do not need to purchase the required books.


1. **Course Introduction**

**2. 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.

**3. Occupation and Constitution (1)**
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.

**4. Occupation and Constitution (2)**

**5. Political Parties and the Diet (1)**
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.

**6. Political Parties and the Diet (2)**

**7. Bureaucracy (1)**
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.

**8. Bureaucracy (2)**

**9. The Big Business and Other Interest Groups (1)**
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.

**10. The Big Business and Other Interest Groups (2)**

**11. Policymaking Process (1)**
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.

**12. Policymaking Process (2)**

**13. Cabinet and the Prime Minister (1)**
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.

14. Cabinet and the Prime Minister (2)

15. Electoral System and Local Politics (1)
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.

16. Electoral System and Local Politics (2)

17. Foreign Policy (1)
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.

18. Foreign Policy (2)

19. Government under the DPJ
The final section of the course is discussion on the DPJ government. Second Part of this day will be for final exam.


20. Final Exam

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<th>Others (if any)</th>
<th>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.</th>
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