

International Studies 263--Government and Politics of Japan

Professor John F. Copper

Office: 120 Buckman Hall

Telephone: Ext. 3741 Office Hours: 11:00-12:00 MWF or by appointment

Course Description:

Students in this course will learn about Japan's political history, political culture, the effect of geography on history and politics, the impact of the West on the Japanese political system (especially the United States via the post-World War II occupation of Japan), political elites, organs of government, political parties, interest groups, the relationship of business to politics, the impact of economic growth on political change, and Japan's foreign policy and security policy.

Several general themes will be pursued throughout this course: the uniqueness of the Japanese political system, the Japanese political model, the relationship between economic modernization and political change, the current crisis in Japanese politics, and Japan's new role in the world.

Texts:

Curtis, Gerald, *The Logic of Japanese Politics*

Hayes, Louis D, *Introduction to Japanese Politics*

Hoye, Timothy, *Japanese Politics: Fixed and Floating Worlds*

Grading:

Quizzes will be objective-type (true/false, multiple choice, fill in the blanks). There will be five or six quizzes during the semester. The lowest quiz grade will be automatically dropped. To make up a quiz you must have a written excuse. Mid-term and Final examinations are both objective and essay: 50% each. They are in-class exams. Some of the questions on the quizzes will likely be also on the mid-term and final examinations, so you should review your quizzes before taking either examination. The final examination will be cumulative, but will be approximately 75% on the last half of the course. You are also required to write a book review after reading an outside book of your choice. This book has to have a recent copyright date and must be approved by me. Following is a breakdown of the weight given to each of the above: Quizzes 25%, book review 10%, mid-term examination 30%, final examination 35%.

Week I

Topics: Starting this course we will first ask the question: Why study Japanese Politics and the Japanese political system? The answer lies in part in Japan's success as a nation, and, therefore, in the relevance of Japan as a model. Japan has been viewed as a model of business management and economic growth. It may (and perhaps should?) become a model—of an efficient, and in some ways a very good, political system. The Japanese political system is also interesting because it was in large part copied from the West, especially the United States. It is, thus, a benchmark to use to assess political change in the U.S. Japan is also a problem for the U.S.: being at once the most respected and most hated (biggest threat) nation in the post-Cold War era.

This week we will also examine Japan's geography and early history as it relates to the development of its political culture and political institutions.

Assignments: Hayes, Introduction
Hoye, chapter 1
Curtis, chapter 1

Recommended readings: Reischauer, Part I

Quiz #1 will be the second meeting of this week, including a map test.
(Subsequent quizzes may or may not be announced.)

Week II

Topics: This week we will study the modern history of Japan with an emphasis on the evolution of political institutions, the Constitution, etc... We will also assess the political modernization process in Japan in the last century, the impact of the West on Japan, World War II, and the U.S. Occupation and its influence on the Japanese political system.

Keep in mind that Japan's Constitution and its political system were designed by General MacArthur and his staff. Thus, you need to question the logic of them giving Japan the kind of system they did, how it fit and didn't fit, and the need for change now.

Assignments: Hayes, chapter 1 and 2
Hoye, chapter 2
Reischauer, part II, chapter 13

Recommended readings: McNelly, chapter 1 and 2
Stockwin, chapter 4 and 5
Kishimoto, chapter 2
Johnson, chapter 1

Week III

Topics: This week's topics include Japanese society, political culture, political behavior, elites (political and other) and education in Japan. The main goal of this week's assignments and lectures is to give the student an understanding of the givens in Japanese politics. Keep in mind that Japan evolved recently from feudalism, that it is a class society in some ways that Western countries are not (yet differences in wealth are less) and political behavior is probably less separate from other forms of behavior or is more conditioned by the culture than in most countries. Also bear in mind the importance of loyalty, duty, etc.

Assignments: Hayes, chapter 8 and 10
Hoye, pp. 121-129

Recommended readings: Stockwin, chapter 3
Vogel, chapters 3, 4 and 5
Herman Kahn, chapter 2
Johnson, chapter 2
Karel van Wolferen, chapters 4, 6 and 7

Week IV

Topics: This week the main issue of concern will be the relationship of business to economics in Japan and the Japanese economic miracle and how it has influenced politics. You should first try to connect economic change with social change. Then assess the reasons for Japan's economic success in terms of both economic and political factors. Consider also the close relationship between the business community in Japan and the government. Both are centered in Tokyo. Also think about the problem of "money politics" and vested interests. Likewise, give some thought to the idea that if the Japanese economic system is worth copying, how about the business/political "merger." Finally, think about and be able to suggest reasons for Japan's recent economic and financial crises. Are there systemic problems that relate to the political system?

Assignments: Hayes, chapter 9
Hoye, pp. 131-148

Recommended readings: Reischauer, chapters 14 and 15
Vogel, chapters 6,7,8 and 9
Kahn, chapters 3 and 4
Johnson, chapters 3, 4 and 5

Week V

Topics: This week we will look at political interest groups in Japan. The most important are business (big and small), labor and agriculture. There are, however, a number of other interest groups of lesser importance. To understand how the Japanese political system works, like our own, we must know who influences political decision-making and how. Note how business and labor are less separate and less antagonistic in Japan as compared to the U.S. or most other Western countries. Also observe how agriculture is a potent political force even though it is small. Try to delineate other interest groups in terms of their power and influence and how they related to the ones cited above. Finally, how do interest groups make their wishes known and evoke favorable policy decisions?

Assignments: Hayes, chapter 7
Curtis, chapter 21

Recommended readings: McNelly, chapter 3
Richardson and Flanagan, chapters 7 and 8
vanWolferen, chapter 3

Week VI

Topics: Now we will look at the development of constitutionalism in Japan, its first Constitution and the present Constitution (sometimes referred to as “the translation” since it was written in English by MacArthur and forced on Japan). In that context we will look at the “fundamentals” of the Japan’s political system. We will also analyze some constitutional problems that are of concern today in Japan. Lastly, we will look at the bureaucracy and its relationship with business.

Assignments: Hoye, chapter 6

Recommended readings: Johnson, chapters 6 and 7
Kishimoto, chapter 3
Stockwin, chapters 8 and 10

Week VII

Topics: Review of previous readings and assignments.

Assignments: Midterm Examination

Week VIII

Topics: This week we will study the executive branch of government in Japan. This includes the Prime Minister and his office, the cabinet and the technocrats and bureaucrats. Keep in mind the relationship of the Prime Minister to the Diet and to his political party. Note how the powers of the Prime Minister compare to executives in other political systems, especially the President of the U.S. Try to develop some concepts about the way one would become Prime Minister, how he must behave, whether he might leave office and return. Note the advantages and disadvantages of the Japanese system in looking at the powers and role of the executive branch of government. Finally, give some thought to the argument that the prime minister has very little political power and that executive decision making authority lies in the hands of the bureaucrats or the political machine and the kingmakers.

Assignments: Hayes, chapter 3
Hoye, pp. 70-85

Recommended readings: Kishimoto, chapter 5
McNelly, chapter 6
Johnson, chapter 9

Week IX

Topics: This week we examine the legislative branch of government and elections. Students should pay special attention to the careers of politicians, how they represent their constituencies, their behavior in the Diet, Diet committees, and the relationship of the legislative and executive branches of government. Note the role of special groups that have no defined role and have no counterpart in the U.S. system and their role in decision-making. We will also look at national elections in Japan and how the electoral system relates to the legislative branch of government and to Japanese politics in general. We will also look for trends.

Assignments: Curtis, chapter 3
Hoye, pp. 63-70

Recommended readings: Kishimoto, chapters 3 and 4
McNelly, chapter 5
Stockwin, chapter 6

Week X

Topics: This week's topic is the role of political parties in Japan. As in the U.S., political parties have no constitutional role. Yet their influence is immense and without them the system would not work as it does. Nor can one comprehend the Japanese political system or Japanese politics without knowing their role. Keep in mind that Japan has been a one-party dominant system. Or is this an accurate description? If so, how does democracy work that being the case? What hope is there for the opposition? What role does it play? What is the future of party politics in Japan? Is the recent defeat of the Liberal Democratic Party significant? We will also assess Japan's post war elections. You need to look for trends in voting and elections.

Assignments: Hayes, chapter 4 and 5
Curtis, chapters 2,4 and 5

Recommended readings: Kishimoto, chapter 6
McNelly, chapter 4
Stockwin, chapters 7 and 9
Ramseyer, chapter 1,2,3,4,5,6 and 7

Week XI

Topics: This week we will discuss current political issues in Japan. Some issues are old and have been debated for some time. We want to also look at some recent ones. These issues must be considered in the context of Japan's political culture, the system and how it works. By assessing the way current problems are handled, or not handled, you should be able to better understand how the political system in Japan works. Here you need to show some insight gained from studying Japanese politics. This week we will also examine the premise that political power doesn't reside where it seems, or where it is supposed to constitutionally, but rather in the bureaucracy--especially certain ministries.

Assignments: Hayes, chapter 10 and 11

Recommended readings: Reischauer, chapter 16
Stockwin, chapter 11
Johnson, chapter 10

Week XII

Topics: This week we will assess Japan's legal system and how it relates to lawmaking and law enforcement and the use of law and lawyers to resolve political issues (which, importantly, is not frequently). We will also turn from the central government to an analysis of local politics in Japan. Keep in mind that in Japan, though a unitary political system wherein the central government is dominant, many important issues are local in nature. Note that voter turnout and citizen interest in local politics exceeds that of the United States and many other countries. Pay special attention to the relationship between local politics and national politics and how local leaders become national leaders or fail to.

Assignments: Hoye, pp. 129-131

Recommended readings: Kishimoto, chapter 7
McNelly, chapter 7
Ramseyer, chapters 8 and 9
vanWolferen, chapter 8

Week XIII

Topics: Japan's foreign policy; Japan's defense policy. We will focus on the foreign policy decision-making process, foreign policy issues and relations with other nations of the world -- particularly the U.S., Russia and China. We will also look at Japan's defense spending, Japan's role in Asia, weapons system, as a global power (including its role in the United Nations) and the impact of the end of the Cold War on Japan. Also think future U.S.-Japan relations.

Assignments: Hayes, chapter 12 and 13
Hoye, chapter 7

Recommended readings: Reischauer, chapter 17
Stockwin, chapter 12
Johnson, chapter 11,13 and 14
vanWolferen, chapter 15 and 16

Week XIV

Topics: The final week is for summing up and for asking and answering questions about the future of Japan politically. It is also a time to again ponder the question of Japan as a model -- a political model. How can other countries benefit from the Japanese experience in political development? How can the U.S. learn from appraising the Japanese political system -- which is cheaper to operate, more efficient and in many ways better than the American system?

Assignments: Hayes, chapter 14
Curtis, chapter 6
Hoye, chapter 8

Recommended readings; McNelly, chapter 9
Stockwin, chapter 13
Vogel, chapter 10
Kahn, chapter 5 and 6
vanWolferen, chapter 12