

Sam Nunn School of International Affairs
Georgia Institute of Technology

Spring Semester
2013

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS 3231
GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS OF JAPAN

COURSE SYLLABUS

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OBJECTIVES AND ORGANIZATION

On 11 March 2011, the most powerful earthquake ever to strike Japan unleashed a wall of water that plowed miles inland, killing nearly 20,000 citizens and displacing hundreds of thousands more. These forces of nature inflicted massive damage, and caused a manmade crisis at a nuclear power plant. It remains to be seen whether or not the cascading disasters of March 11th will come to represent a “critical juncture” in Japan’s political evolution. If so, the legacy of “311” could join the 1868 “Meiji Restoration” and the American-led military occupation of Japan as a pivot point at which institutional arrangements are upended and replaced by fundamentally new ones. A primary objective of this course is to assess the effects of these and other pivot points to understand how Japan’s major political institutions were forged. We then seek to explain the roles and functions of today’s major political institutions – political parties and electoral systems, government bureaucracy, the prime minister and cabinet, pressure groups, and the mass media – in the policymaking process. Finally, we will attempt to identify potential “lessons” to be derived from the Japanese case for today’s developing and developed countries. Indeed, Japan has become one of the world’s richest countries – the first non-Western country to industrialize – and a technological leader. And Japan emerged from the ashes of total defeat in the Pacific War and the legacy of militarism and imperialism to become a stable parliamentary democracy. We will conclude by asking what lessons can be gleaned from the Japanese experience? *There are no prerequisites for this introductory course, and no familiarity with Japan's language, history, or politics is presumed.*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

You are expected to come to class having read the assigned materials and prepared to actively participate in classroom discussion. *Informed questions are always welcome!* There will be map quiz and two examinations, a mid-term and a final, based upon readings and material covered in lectures. Examination questions will be distributed in advance to allow time for focused reflection and preparation. In addition, you will be asked to prepare two one-page

research briefs – to be submitted electronically as PDF documents – that focus on a specific political institution or type of policy. Time will be devoted during the semester to explain how to prepare a research brief and the expectations for this assignment. Grading for the course will be weighted as follows: map quiz (5%), midterm examination (30%), two one-page research briefs (30%, or 15% each), and final examination (35%). Active, informed, and consistent class participation will be given positive consideration in borderline grading decisions.

READINGS

Most of the required readings for this course are available free-of-charge on-line or have been uploaded to T-Square. The only required textbook for purchase is:

Ikuo Kabashima and Gill Steel. *Changing Politics in Japan*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010

Please note that, *for the most part*, the readings for a given week are meant to provide background information for the following week's lectures.

In addition, it is recommended that you regularly peruse an English-language Japanese newspaper to keep abreast of political developments. Here are a few to choose from:

Mainichi Shinbun (<http://mainichi.jp/english/english/>)
NHK World (<http://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/index.html>)
Japan Times (www.japantimes.co.jp/)
Asahi Shinbun (<http://www.asahi.com/english/english.html>)
Yomiuri Shinbun (<http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/index-e.htm>)

SCHEDULE OF LECTURE TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1 – January 8 & 10 – Course Overview: Japan's Pivot Points

Readings: Kushida, *Japan's Fukushima Nuclear Disaster* (posted to T-Square); Woodall, *Growing Democracy*, "Introduction"

Week 2 – January 15 & 17 – Lessons of “311” and the Triple Disasters

Readings: Woodall, *Growing Democracy*, Chapter 1 (posted to T-Square)

- January 15: BBC Horizon Special: Japan Earthquake (documentary)
- January 17: Guest lecture on the “Fukushima Nuclear Crisis” (Liz Dallas, Ph.D. student, Sam Nunn School of International Affairs)

Week 3 – January 22 & 24 – “Black Ships” and the Meiji Restoration

Readings: Smith, "Japan's Aristocratic Revolution" (posted to T-Square)

Week 4 – January 29 & 31 – From Meiji Restoration to Democracy 0.5

Readings: Hoffman, "Taisho Democracy" I & II; Matsuo, "The Development of Democracy" (posted to T-Square); and Byas, *Government by Assassination*, pp. 17-91 (posted to T-Square); full-text download at: <http://archive.org/details/governmentbyassa008235mbp>

Week 5 – February 5 & 7 – From Democracy 0.5 to “Government by Assassination”
Readings: Woodall, *Growing Democracy*, Chapter 2 (posted to T-Square)

Map Quiz – February 7

Week 6 – February 12 & 14 – War, Occupation, and Democracy 1.0
Readings: Woodall, *Growing Democracy*, Chapters 3 & 4 (posted to T-Square)

Week 7 – Midterm Exam
Review for Midterm Exam– February 19
Midterm Exam – February 21

Week 8 – February 26 & 28 – From Single-party Rule to Coalition Government
Readings: Woodall, *Growing Democracy*, Chapter 5 (posted to T-Square); Woodall, “Japanese Political Finance and Its Dark Side” (posted to T-Square)

Week 9 – March 5 & 7 – Polymaking Actors I – Diet, Parties, and Elections
Readings: Kabashima & Steel, *Changing Politics in Japan*, pp. 1-60;

Week 10 – March 12 & 14 – Polymaking Actors II – The Executive Branch
Readings: Woodall, *Japan Under Construction*, Introduction & Chapter 1 (free e-book at <http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft5489n9zf/>)

Week 11 – Spring Break
March 19 & 21 – No class

Week 12 – March 26 & 28 – Polymaking Actors III – Civil Society
Readings: Woodall, *Japan Under Construction*, Chapters 2 & 3 (free e-book at <http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft5489n9zf/>); and Woodall, "Japan – Energy Efficiency Paragon, Green Growth Laggard" (posted to T-Square)

First Research Brief Due – April 2

Week 13 – April 2 & 4 – Policy I – Economic Policy: Duality & Energy Policy
Readings: Kabashima & Steel, *Changing Politics in Japan*, pp. 61-149

Week 14 – April 9 & 11 – Policy II – Social Policy: Environmental Protection
Readings: Reich, “Mobilizing for Environmental Policy in Italy and Japan” (posted to T-Square); Schreurs, “Environmental Policy in Germany, Japan, and the United States” (posted to T-Square)

Week 15 – April 16 & 18 – Policy III – Foreign Relations & National Security Policy

Readings: Kabashima & Steel, *Changing Politics in Japan*, pp. 150-153; Woodall, *Growing Democracy*, "Conclusion" (posted to T-Square)

Week 16 – April 23 – Lessons of the Japanese Experience

Readings: Review course notes and readings

Second Research Brief Due – April 25

Review for Final Exam – April 25

Final Exam – April 29 to May 3 – TBA