Sam Nunn School of International Affairs Fall Semester

Georgia Institute of Technology 2018

**International Affairs 3231**

**Government & Politics of Japan**

**COURSE SYLLABUS**

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**COURSE OBJECTIVES AND ORGANIZATION**

This course aims to explain why, how, and with what consequences Japan’s political system has evolved. An overarching aim of the course is to highlight lessons from the Japanese experience that may be emulated – or eschewed – by today’s developing and developed countries. Indeed, the world took note as Japan emerged as one of its richest countries – the first non-Western country to industrialize – and became a leader in technological innovation. Similarly, the deftness in which Japan rebuilt its shattered economy in the aftermath of the Pacific War and established a robust system of parliamentary democracy under an American-led military occupation could hold lessons for countries like Iraq and Afghanistan. Moreover, understanding Japan’s historical successes and failures provides context for anticipating the long-range consequences of March 2011’s devastating earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear crisis. Will the “3.11” disasters come to be seen as a critical juncture opening the door to dramatic institutional changes akin to those that followed the 1868 “Meiji Restoration” and the American-led military occupation? What is the present and future of Japanese democracy and the country’s role in global affairs, especially as pertains to United States-Japan relations under the Trump Administration? *There are no prerequisites for this introductory course, and no familiarity with Japan's language, history, or politics is presumed*.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

The success of this course depends upon active, informed student participation. In addition, course grading will be determined by performance on two examinations, and a 3-5 page writing assignment (movie critique). During the final weeks of the semester, students will be assigned to teams tasked with explaining and proposing policy solutions to a contentious domestic or foreign policy issue. Course grades will be weighted as follows:

* participation: 10 percent (includes attendance and active, informed participation)
* examination #1: 25 percent
* writing assignment (movie critique): 10 percent
* examination #2: 25 percent
* group project: 30 percent (includes in-class oral presentation and PPT slides)

**INSTITUTE POLICIES**

**Honor Code**: Academic honesty is required of all Georgia Tech students by the Institute’s honor code, the text of which is found at [www.honor.gatech.edu](http://www.honor.gatech.edu).

**Special Accommodations**: Students requesting academic accommodations based on a documented disability are required to register with the Access Disabled Assistance Program for Tech Students (ADAPTS) at <http://www.adapts.gatech.edu>.

**Diversity & Inclusion**: The Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts – of which the Nunn School is a constituent part – supports the Institute’s commitment to creating a campus free of discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status. We further affirm the importance of cultivating an intellectual climate that allows us to better understand the similarities and differences of those who constitute the Georgia Tech community, as well as the necessity of working against inequalities that may also manifest here as they do in broader society.

**LEARNING GOALS**

* Cultural, contextual, and ethical awareness.  Students will become more aware of the diversity of cultural and ethical systems in the world.  Includes the ability to identify, critically analyze, and apply distinguishing traits/perspectives/ formulations/ institutions in comparative or international empirical cases or issue areas.  May include ability to communicate in a foreign language.
* Students will come away with a basic understanding of the roles and functions – as well as the evolutionary pathways – of the key “institutions,” “processes,” and “policies” that characterize Japanese government and politics. In so doing, they will acquire sufficient understanding of these institutions and processes to enable them to think critically and independently about issues pertaining to Japanese politics and foreign relations.
* Students will apply social science theory and area studies best practices in *teamwork* to solve a current problem in the field of Japanese government and politics.
* Students will prepare compelling, evidence-based, arguments to defend their critical assessments and problem-solving proposals. These arguments will be presented in *written, oral, and audio-visual formats*.

**READINGS**

The textbook listed below is required. Other required readings will be posted to T-Square or can be accessed from the Georgia Tech Library’s *ejournals* portal.

Brian Woodall. *Growing Democracy in Japan: The Japan’s Parliamentary Cabinet System Since 1868*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2014.

Students wishing to pursue a particular topic in more depth should consult with the Instructor.

It is recommended that students regularly peruse an English-language Japanese newspaper to keep abreast of political and economic 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/](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/))

*Yomiuri Shinbun* (http://the-japan-news.com)

**SCHEDULE OF LECTURE TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS**  
Week 1: Course Mechanics and Overview

Date: August 21 & 23

Readings: Richard Solomon, “Why Japan Has No Donald Trump, *The Diplomat* (October 3, 2016); Sheila Smith and Charles McClean, “US-Japan Relations and the Trump Effect,” CSIS (January 2017); Tomohiro Osaki, “Abe and his Cabinet steer clear of war-linked Yasukuni Shrine,” *Japan Times* (August 15, 2017); and “U.S. returns small strip of land at Futenma air base,” *Japan Times* (July 31, 2017) (posted to T-Square)

Week 2: The Evolution of Japanese Democracy

Date: August 28 & 33

Readings: Brian Woodall, *Growing Democracy*: 1-30

Week 3: From Pax Tokugawa to the Meiji Restoration

Date: September 4 & 6

Readings: Thomas C. Smith, "Japan's Aristocratic Revolution" (posted to T-Square); Woodall, *Growing Democracy*: 31-57

Wee 4: From Meiji Restoration to “Taishō Democracy”

Date: September 11 & 13

Readings: Woodall, *Growing Democracy*: 57-82; Michael Hoffman, “The Taisho Era: When modernity ruled Japan’s masses,” *Japan Times*, July 29, 2012 (<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/life/2012/07/29/life/the-taisho-era-when-modernity-ruled-japans-masses/#.VdJtw1yppFI>); Michael Hoffman, “‘Taisho Democracy’ pays the ultimate price,” *Japan Times*, July 29, 2012 (http://www.japantimes.co.jp/life/2012/07/29/life/taisho-democracy-pays-the-ultimate-price/#.VdJus1yppFI)

Week 5: “Government by Assassination”

Date: September 18 & 20

Readings: Hugh Byas, *Government by Assassination*, pp. 17-91 (full-text download at <http://archive.org/details/governmentbyassa008235mbp>)

Week 6: Examination Review and Examination #1

Date: September 25 & 27

**Examination review – September 25**

**Examination #1 – September 27**

Week 7: Movie Viewing and the Pacific War

Date: October 3 (movie viewing) & October 5

Readings: TBD

**Movie Critique due: October 5**

Week 8: Democracy by the Sword

Date: October 11 (*October 9th = Fall Recess*)

Readings: Woodall, *Growing Democracy*: 83-114

Week 9: The “1955 System,” “Lost Decades,” and “Twisted Diets”

Date: October 16 & 18

Readings: Woodall, *Growing Democracy*: 115-166; Junnosuke Masumi, “The 1955 System in Japan and Its Subsequent Development,” *Asian Survey* 28, No. 3 (March 1988): 286-306 (accessible via GT Library’s *ejournals* portal)

Week 10: *Policymaking Actors* – Executive and Legislative Branches

Date: October 23 & 25

Readings: Woodall, *Growing Democracy*: 167-222; Brian Woodall, *Japan Under Construction*, “Introduction” (free e-book at <http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft5489n9zf/>)

Week 11: *Policymaking Actors –* Interest Groups and Civil Society

Date: October 30 & November 1

Readings: Woodall, *Growing Democracy*: 211-222; Woodall, *Japan Under Construction*, Chapter One and Chapter Two (free e-book at <http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft5489n9zf/>)

Week 12: *Policy-making – Institutions, Processes, and Outcomes*

Date: November 6 & 8

Readings: Woodall, *Japan Under Construction*, Chapter Three and Chapter Four (free e-book at <http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft5489n9zf/>); Brian Woodall, "Japan – Energy Efficiency Paragon, Green Growth Laggard" (posted to T-Square)

Week 13: Examination Review & Examination #2

Date: November 13 & 15

**Examination review – November 13**

**Examination #2 – November 15**

Week 14: Set-up for Group Project

Date: November 21 (*November 22 = Thanksgiving Recess*)

Readings: to be decided by group

Week 15: Group Meetings

Date: November 27 & 29

Readings: to be decided by group

Week 16: Group Presentations

Date: December 4

**Group PowerPoint Slides due: December 15**