

International Affairs 3231
Government & Politics of Japan

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CORE IMPACTS

This is a *Core IMPACTS* course that is part of the **Social Sciences** area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help students master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad **Orienting Question**:

- How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following **Learning Outcome**:

- Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social, or geographic relationships develop, persist, or change.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following **Career-Ready Competencies**:

- Intercultural competence
- Perspective-taking
- Persuasion

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND ORGANIZATION

This course aims to explain the political, economic, and social development of Japan. An overarching aim is to highlight lessons from the Japanese experience that might be beneficially emulated by other countries. The first non-Western country to industrialize, Japan managed to avoid being colonized, but its militaristic leaders were driven to subjugate a vast swath of East Asia into a Japan-dominated Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere. Afterward, a defeated Japan became the birthplace of the “developmental state” model, a state-led approach to capitalist economic growth. Although that model has evolved in response to domestic and international forces, its legacy continues to resonate. This is seen, for instance, in the country’s sometimes puzzling responses to the challenges of sustainable development, including its approach to disaster governance. Indeed, in some areas Japan stands as a shining success story, yet in other areas it lags far behind peer countries. An aim of this course is to make sense of this puzzling situation.

There are no prerequisites for this course, and no familiarity with Japan's language, history, or politics is presumed.

LEARNING GOALS

- Students will become more aware of the diversity of cultural and ethical systems in the world and be able to identify, critically analyze, and apply distinguishing traits/perspectives/ formulations/institutions in comparative cases or issue areas.
- Students will acquire a basic understanding of the core theories, paradigms, and models that comprise the theoretical core of comparative politics.
- Students will apply the comparative method to critically assess the core theories’ ability to explain political, economic, and social change.
- Students will apply the comparative method and best practices in teamwork to solve a current problem of comparative politics.
- Students will defend their critical assessments and problem-solving proposals through compelling, evidence-based, arguments in written, oral, and audio-visual formats.

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 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.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course grades will be determined by your performance on a combination of individual and group assignments. Course grades will be weighted as follows:

Individual work

- discussion post / peer review: 15 points (three posts / reviews; 5 points each)
- movie critique / peer review: 5 points
- midterm examination: 20 points
- anonymous peer assessment of other groups' oral presentations and policy briefs: 10 points

Group Work

- research design exercise: 10 points
- oral presentation: 20 points
- policy brief: 20

DISCUSSION TOPICS AND COMMON READINGS

The required textbook for this course is given below. Other required readings are available on the INTA 3231 Canvas or through the Georgia Tech Library's website.

- Ian Neary, *The State and Politics in Japan*, 2nd Edition. Cambridge, UK and Medford, MA: Polity, 2019. ISBN: 978-0-745-66047-9

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

LEARNING MODULES

Module 1

Lecture topics:

- January 7: Course Overview

- January 9: Course Requirements

Required readings:

- Woodall, Brian. "Democratization in East Asia," book chapter in *Routledge Handbook of Politics of Asia* (Shiping Hua, ed.), London: Routledge, 2018, pp. 15-25
- Neery (textbook), Introduction
- Paul Krugman, "What Happened to Japan?" *New York Times* (July 25, 2023); online at <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/25/opinion/japan-china-economy.html> John Nilsson-Wright and Jon Wallace, "Democracy in Japan," Chatham House (2022); online at <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2022/09/democracy-japan>

Module 2

Lecture topics:

- January 14: Political Development
- January 16: Economic Development

Required readings:

- Chalmers Johnson, "Japan: Who Governs? An Essay on Official Bureaucracy," *Journal of Japanese Studies*," Vol. 2 (No. 1, 1975), pp. 1-28.
- Brian Woodall, *Japan Under Construction: Corruption, Politics, and Public Works* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 1-23
- Brian Woodall, "The Development of Japan's Developmental State: Stages of Growth and the Social Costs of Energy and Export Promotion Policies" (book chapter in Shiping Hua and Ruihua Hu, eds., *East Asian Development Model: 21st Century Perspectives*; London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 101-120

Assignment: Discussion Post / Peer Review #1

Module 3

Lecture topics:

- January 21: Social Development
- January 23: Japan Before Perry

Required readings:

- Nakagawa Yatsuhiko, "Japan, the Welfare Super-Power," *Journal of Japanese Studies*, Winter, 1979, Vol. 5 (No. 1, Winter, 1979), pp. 5-51

- John Whitney Hall, “The Bakuhan System” in *The Cambridge History of Japan: Volume 4, Early Modern Japan* (John Whitney Hall, ed.), Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. 128-182.
- Neary textbook, chapter 1

Module 4

Lecture topics:

- January 28: Meiji Restoration
- January 30: Taishō Democracy

Required readings:

- Thomas C. Smith, “Japan’s Aristocratic Revolution,” *Yale Review*, Vol. 50 (1960-1), pp. 370-383
- Brian Woodall, *Growing Democracy in Japan: The Parliamentary Cabinet System Since 1868* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2014), pp. 31-82

Assignment: Discussion Post / Peer Review #2

Module 5

Lecture topics:

- February 4: Government by Assassination
- February 6: Pacific War

Required readings:

- Louise Young, “The Breakdown of Democracy in 1930s Japan,” chapter in *When Democracy Breaks: Studies in Democratic Erosion and Collapse, From Athens to the Present Day* (Archon Fung, David Moss, and Odd Arne Westad, eds.), London: Oxford University Press, 2023, pp. 1-35.
- Hugh Byas, *Government by Assassination* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1942), pp. 17-91 (*skim*) ([http://archive.org/details/governmentbyassa008235mbpLinks to an external site.](http://archive.org/details/governmentbyassa008235mbpLinks%20to%20an%20external%20site.))
- Eric Hammel, “Japan’s Road to War,” *WWII Quarterly*, Vol. 1 (No. 4, 2010), pp. 1-10.
- Gary J. Bass, “75 Years Later, Asia’s Wartime Memories Linger,” *New York Times*, December 21, 2023.

Assignment: Research Design Exercise

Module 6

Lecture topics:

- February 11: Occupation
- February 13: 1955 System

Required readings:

- Neary textbook, chapter 2
- Brian Woodall, *Growing Democracy in Japan: The Parliamentary Cabinet System Since 1868* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2014), pp. 83-141
- Junnosuke Masumi, "The 1955 System in Japan and Its Subsequent Development," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (March 1988), pp. 286-306

Assignment: Discussion Post / Peer Review #3

Module 7

Lecture topics:

- February 18: "Lost Decades" to Present
- February 20: Research Design Discussion

Required readings:

- Neary textbook, chapters 3, 4, and 14
- Brian Woodall, *Growing Democracy in Japan: The Parliamentary Cabinet System Since 1868* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2014), pp. 167-210

Assignment: Research Design Discussion

Module 8

Lecture topics:

- February 25: Diet, Parties, and Elections
- February 27: Executive Branch

Required readings:

- Neary textbook, chapters 5 & 6

- Brian Woodall, “Japanese Political Finance and Its Dark Side,” book chapter in Ronald J. Hrebener and Akira Nakamura, eds., *Parties and Politics in Contemporary Japan: Political Chaos and Stalemate in the 21st Century* (London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 56-79
- Brian Woodall, *Growing Democracy in Japan: The Parliamentary Cabinet System Since 1868* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2014), Introduction, pp. 1-30

Assignment: Movie Critique

Module 9

Lecture topics:

- March 4: Civil Society
- March 6: Disaster Governance

Required readings:

- Neary textbook, chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9
- Kathleen Tierney, “Disaster governance: social, political, and economic dimensions,” *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, Vol. 37 (2012), pp. 341–63
- Brian Woodall et al., “Institutional Resilience and Disaster Governance: How Countries Respond to Black Swan Events,” *Progress in Disaster Science*, Vol, 22 (2024), 100329, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pdisas.2024.100329>

Midterm Examination:

- March 11: Midterm Review
- March 13: Midterm Examination

Spring Break: March 17-21

Module 10

Lecture topics:

- March 25: Group Project Set-up
- March 27: Group Work

Assignments:

- Elevator Speech #1

Module 11

Lecture topics:

- April 1: Group Work
- April 3: Group Work

Assignments:

- Teammate Assessment #1

Module 12

Group work:

- April 8: Group Work
- April 10: Group Work

Assignments:

- Elevator Speech #2

Module 13

Group work:

- April 15: Group Work
- April 17: Group Work

Assignments:

- Teammate Assessment #2

Module 14

Group work:

- April 22: Practice Presentations

Assignments:

- Policy Brief (April 19)
- Oral Presentation (April 22)
- Anonymous Peer Assessment – Oral Presentations (due April 22)
- Anonymous Peer Assessment – Policy Briefs (due April 22)