

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 may be emulated with benefit by other countries. The first non-Western country to industrialize, Japan managed to avoid being colonized, but its militaristic leaders drew from the Western imperialist powers' playbook to subjugate a vast swath of East Asia into a Japan-dominated Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity 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. 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 state of affairs.

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 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.

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 oral presentations: 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 8: Course Requirements
- January 10: Course Overview

Required readings:

- 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>
- Japan's "Sustainable Development Report" in Jeffrey D. Sachs, Guillaume Lafortune, Grayson Fuller, and Eamon Drumm, *Sustainable Development Report 2023*

Module 2***Lecture topics:***

- January 15: Official Institute Holiday - No class
- January 17: Political 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.
- John Nilsson-Wright and Jon Wallace, "Democracy in Japan," Chatham House (2022); online at <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2022/09/democracy-japan>

Module 3***Lecture topics:***

- January 22: Economic Development
- January 24: Social Development

Required readings:

- 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 Shijing Hua and Ruihua Hu, eds., *East Asian Development Model: 21st Century Perspectives*; London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 101-120
- Nakagawa Yatsuhiko, "Japan, the Welfare Super-Power," *Journal of Japanese Studies*, Winter, 1979, Vol. 5 (No. 1, Winter, 1979), pp. 5-51.

Assignment: Discussion Post / Peer Review #1

Module 4**Lecture topics:**

- January 29: Japan Before Perry
- January 31: Meiji Restoration

Required readings:

- Neary textbook, chapter 1
- 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.
- Thomas C. Smith, "Japan's Aristocratic Revolution," *Yale Review*, Vol. 50 (1960-1), pp. 370-383

Module 5**Lecture topics:**

- February 5: Taishō Democracy
- February 7: Government by Assassination

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.>)

Assignment: Discussion Post / Peer Review #2

Module 6**Lecture topics:**

- February 12: Pacific War
- February 14: Occupation

Required readings:

- Eric Hammel, “Japan’s Road to War,” *WWII Quarterly*, Vol. 1 (No. 4, 2010), pp. 1-10.
- Neary textbook, chapter 2
- Gary J. Bass, “75 Years Later, Asia’s Wartime Memories Linger,” *New York Times*, December 21, 2023.
- Brian Woodall, *Growing Democracy in Japan: The Parliamentary Cabinet System Since 1868* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2014), Chapter 2 (pp. 83-141)

Assignment: Research Design Project

Module 7**Lecture topics:**

- February 19: 1955 System
- February 21: Lost Decades to Present

Required readings:

- Neary textbook, chapters 3, 4, and 14
- Junnosuke Masumi, “The 1955 System in Japan and Its Subsequent Development,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (March 1988): 286-306

Midterm Examination:

- February 26: Midterm Review
- February 28: Midterm Examination

Module 8**Lecture topics:**

- March 4: Diet, Parties, and Elections
- March 6: Executive Branch

Required readings:

- Neary textbook, chapters 5 & 6
- Brian Woodall, “Japanese Political Finance and Its Dark Side,” book chapter in Ronald J. Hrebennar 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), pp. 1-30

Module 9**Lecture topics:**

- March 11: Civil Society
- March 13: Japan Dilemmas

Required readings:

- Neary textbook, chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9
- Motoko Rich, “Japanese Politicians Mark War Anniversary at Contentious

Shrine,” *New York Times* (August 15, 2020).

- “Japan falls to record-low 125th in global gender gap ranking,” Kyodo News (June 21, 2023).
- Kelly Ng, “Japan population: One in 10 people now aged 80 or older,” BBC News (September 19, 2023).
- “Japan’s population drops by nearly 800,000 with falls in every prefecture for the first time,” *The Guardian* (July 23, 2023).

Assignment: Discussion Post / Peer Review #3

Spring break: March 18 & 20 – no class

Module 10

Lecture topics:

- March 25: SDG Challenges
- March 27: Energy Security

Required reading:

- Neary textbook, chapter 10, 11, 12, and 13
- John S. Duffield and Brian Woodall, “Japan's New Basic Energy Plan,” *Energy Policy*, Vol. 39 (June 2011), pp. 3741-3749.
- Brian Woodall, “Japan: Energy Efficiency Paragon, Green Growth Laggard,” book chapter in *Religion to Reality: Energy Systems Transformation for Sustainable Prosperity* (Mark Huberty and John Zysman, Editors). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013. Pp. 150-169.

Recommended reading:

- Jacques E.C. Hymans, “Losing Steam: Why Does Japan Produce So Little Geothermal Power?,” *Social Science Japan Journal*, Vol. 24 (No. 1, 2021), pp. 45–65.

Assignment: Movie / Documentary Critique

Module 11

Lecture topics:

- April 1: Disaster Governance
- April 3: Group Project Set-up

Required readings:

- Scott Dance, “How a deadly blizzard forced a snow-hardy city to reckon with disaster risks,” *Washington Post*, December 22, 2023.
- Kathleen Tierney, “Disaster governance: social, political, and economic dimensions,” *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, Vol. 37 (2012), pp. 341–63
- Patrizia Isabelle Duda et al., “Informal disaster governance,” *Politics and Governance*, Vol. 8 No. 4, 2020), pp. 375-385
- Brian Woodall et al., “Institutional Resilience and Disaster Governance How Countries Respond to Black Swan Events,” Preprint available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4442737>

Module 12

Group work:

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

Assignments:

- Status Report #1 (due April 13)

Module 13

Group work:

- April 15: Group Work
- April 17: Practice Presentations

Assignments:

- Status Report #2 (due April 20)

Module 14

Group work:

- April 22: Practice Presentations
- April 24: Oral Presentations

Assignments:

- Oral Presentation (April 24)
- Policy Brief (April 24)
- Anonymous Peer Assessment – Oral Presentations (due April 25)
- Anonymous Peer Assessment – Policy Briefs (due April 25)