Course Description:
This module aims to provide an introduction to Japanese politics and show how the study of Japanese politics can contribute to an understanding of broader issues in comparative government and comparative politics. In so doing, the students will obtain knowledge of how Japanese politics has developed and what has been key, referring to the relevant scholarly debates. Major themes to be covered include modern political history since 1945 and the structures and key actors of contemporary politics such as political parties, bureaucracies, and policy-making. The module offers opportunities to study a number of contemporary policy issues in depth, including industrial policy, regulatory policy, foreign and defence policy, and welfare policy among others. We will look at policy issues at a micro level and link them to broader political contexts of Japanese politics and beyond.

Approach:
Lectures are key part of this course. All students are strongly required to be present at all sessions of the lectures. I will try to offer opportunities to interact with students as interaction will significantly help students understand the issue. Students are expected to read a couple of suggested literature and requested to make presentations or engage in debate after Week 3.

Goal:
Students are expected to acquire the factual knowledge of modern Japanese politics, analytical thinking towards social issues, approaches to data and literature, and writing skills. Independent learning is very important: students are expected to independently analyse and understand the characteristics and nature of Japanese politics since 1945.

Textbooks:

Reference Books:
The literature specifically related to the topic of the week is suggested in the following course plan.

Course Plan:
1 Introduction
   Session 1 offers the overview of this lecture, referring to the key characteristics of Japanese politics.

2 Week 2: Occupation and the period until 1955
   Week 2 offers a brief overview of how Japanese politics has developed before 1955.
   (References)

3 Week 3: The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)
   As the key political party ruling Japan after 1955 with only a couple of breaks, the LDP is a significant political actor in Japan’s political theatre. This session examines the history and nature of the party, which has been a significant factor shaping Japanese politics and policy.
   (References)
   - McCargo (2013): 139-142.

4 Week 4: The Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) and its predecessors
   The DPJ has played an unusual role in Japanese politics. The 2009 government change prompted many observers to think it was the key actor reshaping Japanese politics. With its unstable governing and lack of expertise, the DPJ lost its previous popularity and lost the 2012 and 2014 general elections. Week 4 considers its impact and nature. From this session the students will engage in activities such as presentations.
   (References)

5 Week 5: Electoral system
   This session addresses Japan’s electoral system, which has been a key topic of debate among scholars exploring the recent political development. It particularly highlights the impact of the 1994 electoral reform. (References)

6 Week 6: Central government bureaucracy, local governments, and judiciary
   Central government bureaucracy has been a key topic of debate in Japanese politics. Week 6 contemplates its nature and function, together with local governments and judiciary. (References)
Week 7: Business sectors and civil society:
This session explores how Japan’s business sectors have developed; then it turns to civil society, a controversial sector among scholars.

(References)
- 伊藤光利（1995）‘1940年体制再構築と戦後財政経済. 東京: 東洋経済新報社’
- 飯尾（2006）「官邸主導型政策決定と自民党-コア・エグゼクティブの集権化」Leviathan, 38: 7-40.

Week 9: Until 1993: the LDP administration I.
From Week 9 the lecture reviews how Japanese politics has developed. Week 9 addresses the LDP administration before the 1993 government change, which offered a break to the LDP’s long reign since 1955.

(References)
- McCargo (2013): 139-147.
- Krauss/Pekkanen (2011).

Week 10: The Hosokawa government, return of the LDP in the 1990s: the LDP administration II.
Week 10 reviews the nature of the Hosokawa administration, the first non-LDP administration since 1955 and the revived LDP governments until Yoshirō Mori cabinets.

(References)
- Pempel (2010).

Week 11: The Koizumi administration and his successor: 2000-2009: the LDP administration III.
Week 11 examines the administration of Jun’ichirō Koizumi (2001-2005) and his successors.

(References)
- McCargo (2013): 151-152.
- Pempel (2010).

Week 12: Government change and the DPJ administration.
This session offers an account of the 2009 government change and the following DPJ government.

(References)
- McCargo (2013): 129-139.
- Kushida/Lipsy (2010).

Week 13: Second government change and the re-emergence of the LDP administration: the LDP administration III.
Week 13 considers the Shinzo Abe administration since 2012: its policies, structures, key actors, and nature.

(References)
- George Mulgan (2014).

Week 14: Conclusion: challenges to Japanese politics.
In pulling the previous sessions together, the final session examines the nature of contemporary Japanese politics.

(References)
• McCargo (2013): 213–221.

Other Activities in the course:
• Presentation: Two students will be assigned to make their respective presentations regarding the given topic. They will have a discussant, who will summarise the presentation and ask a couple of key questions, followed by others. The presenters are expected to exhibit the following in 10–15 minutes: (1) the nature of the chosen topic; (2) the presenters’ analysis of the topic based on robust reasoning; and (3) their own argument drawing on the analysis.
• Group presentation: The presentation will be offered by the groups of students.
• Debate: The students will form three groups; the first group will affirm the proposition, the second will negate the proposition, and the third group will judge which side wins. Each side has two short sessions (approx. 3–5 min) sessions presenting their arguments. Then the judging group will set out the verdict.
• Poster making: The groups of students will make posters regarding the chosen topics and explain to others their posters. Students will succinctly show the nature of the topic, their analysis based on reasoning, and possible claims based on the analysis.

Lecturer’s Comments to Students:
Message: Japanese politics exemplifies the unusual nature of Japan and its society. Analysing this issue offers you a skill to figure out not only politics but also what students will confront in the future, including their future colleagues, workplaces (e.g. private firms), and other societal groups.

Method of Evaluation:
Assessment:
3,000 word essay: 50%
Attendance: 25%
Activities in the lecture including presentations: 25%

Essay questions:
Select one of the following titles. The submission deadline will be the last week of the course; the exact date will be informed in the lecture. The word limit of 3,000 words does not include references, foot/endnotes, and the title.
1. What can we learn from Japanese politics?
2. What are the key characteristics of Japanese politics? What points have changed and what points have been retained?
3. What is the nature of the LDP? What impact has it offered on Japanese politics?
4. What were the nature of the DPJ administration?
5. Compare the Hosokawa administration with the DPJ administration and discuss their implications to Japanese politics.
6. ‘Bureaucracy controls Japanese politics’; evaluate this statement.
7. Discuss the nature of the Koizumi administration drawing on one of the following approaches: pluralist/statist/rational choice.
8. Compare and contrast the Koizumi administration, the DPJ administration, and the Abe administration.
9. Will Japan have government change again?

Questions/Comments:
Students can ask questions to the lecturer by e-mail and in face-to-face sessions. In addition, the lecturer plans to offer the office hour in which students can ask questions on their essays, the contents of the lecture, and the literature.