

Keio University Syllabus and Timetable

JAPANESE POLITICS

Subtitle	Advanced
Lecturer(s)	MOGAKI, MASAHIRO
Credit(s)	2
Academic Year/Semester	2026 Spring
Day/Period	Mon.5
Campus	Mita
Classroom	435
Class Format	Face-to-face classes (conducted mainly in-person)
Registration Number	79872
Faculty/Graduate School	INTERNATIONAL CENTER
Year Level	2, 3, 4
Grade Type	S, A, B, C, D
Course Description	A course to aim to learn an introductory Japanese politics and examine how the study of Japanese politics can contribute to an understanding of broader issues in comparative government and comparative politics.
K-Number	CIN-CO-00233-212-06

[▼ Detail](#)

Course Contents/Objectives/Teaching Method/Intended Learning Outcome

This course 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 course 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. This is an advanced course, with comparatively higher requirements.

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.

Course Taught by Faculty Member with Professional Experience

Applicable

The lecturer has an extensive experience in engaging in politics, policy-making and policy implementation in both the public and private sector. The lecturer explains the nature of political issues in the class sessions, referring to previous experiences as well as key literature.

Active Learning Methods [Description](#)

Presentations
Discussions, Debates
Group work

Preparatory Study

Students are expected to read a couple of suggested literature and requested to make presentations or engage in debate after Week 3.

Course Plan

Lesson 1

Introduction.

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

(References)

- Gaunder (2017): 1–8.

Lesson 2

Week 2: Occupation and the period until 1955.

Week 2 offers a brief overview of how Japanese politics has developed before 1955.

(References)

- Gaunder (2017): 9–30.
- McCargo (2013): 18–42.
- Neary (2019): 3–48.
- Stockwin (2008): 48–63.
- Rosenbluth, F. M. and Thies, M. F. (2010) *Japan transformed: political change and economic restructuring*. Princeton, NJ/Woodstock, Oxfordshire, UK: Princeton UP: 32–52.

Lesson 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.

From this session the students will engage in activities such as presentations.

(References)

- Gaunder (2017): 34–37, 50–53, 83–89, 135–148.
- McCargo (2013): 139–142.
- Neary (2019): 49–65.
- Stockwin (2008): 179–195.
- Krauss, E. S. and Pekkanen, R. J. (2011) *The Rise and Fall of Japan's LDP*. Ithaca, NY/London: Cornell UP.
- Pempel, T. J. (2010) 'Between Pork and Productivity: The Collapse of the Liberal Democratic Party', *The Journal of Japanese Studies*, 36, (2): 227–254.
- George Mulgan, A. (2014) "'Money Politics" in Japan: Allegations of financial impropriety have a long and sordid history in Japanese politics', 26 November 2014, *The Diplomat* [online]. Available from: <http://thediplomat.com/2014/11/money-politics-in-japan/> [Accessed 8 January 2017].
- Maeda, K. (2010) 'Factors behind the Historic Defeat of Japan's Liberal Democratic Party in 2009', *Asian Survey*,

50, (5): 888–907.

- 猪口孝、岩井奉信（1987）族議員の研究－自民党政権

Lesson 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. (References)

- Gaunder (2017): 34–37, 53–67.
- McCargo (2013): 130–136.
- Stockwin (2008): 195–197, 199–201.
- Kushida, E. K. and Lipsky, P. Y. (eds) (2010) *Japan Under the DPJ: The Politics of Transition and Governance*. Stanford: Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center.
- George Mulgan, A. (2015) *Ozawa Ichirō and Japanese politics: old versus new*. London/NY: Routledge.
- Rosenbluth/Thies (2010): 101–104, 186–192.
- 日本再建イニシアチブ（2013）民主党政権 失敗の検証（中公新書）．東京：中央公論新社．

Lesson 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)

- Gaunder (2017): 31–34, 68–82.
- McCargo (2013): 105–108.
- Neary (2019): 96–111.
- Stockwin (2008): 156–178.
- Rosenbluth/Thies (2010): 95–122.

Lesson 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)

- Gaunder (2017): 37–43, 110–121.
 - McCargo (2013): 110–128.
 - Neary (2019): 112–145.
 - Stockwin (2008): 148–153, 237–238.
 - Muramatsu, M., Iqbal, F., and Kume, I., (eds) (2002) *Local Government Development in Post-War Japan*. Oxford: Oxford UP.
 - Vogel, S. K. (1996) *Freer Markets, More Rules: Regulatory Reform in Advanced Industrial Countries*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP.
 - Wright, M. (2002) *Japan's Fiscal Crisis: The Ministry of Finance and the Politics of Public Spending, 1975–2000*. New York: Oxford UP.
 - 清水真人（2015）財務省と政治（中公新書）．東京：中央公論新社．
 - 金井利之（2007）自治制度（行政学叢書）．東京：東京大学出版会．
- Also, see Johnson (1982) [Week 8], 飯尾（2007）．

Lesson 7

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)

- Gaunder (2017): 122–134.
- McCargo (2013): 38–75, 157–181.
- Neary (2019): 146–161, 185–199, 227–247.
- Stockwin (2008): 153–154.
- Beason, R. and Weinstein, D. E. (1996) 'Growth, Economies of Scale, and Targeting in Japan (1965-1990)',

Review of Economics and Statistics, 78, (2): 289–295.

- Gao, B. (1997) *Economic ideology and Japanese industrial policy: Developmentalism from 1931 to 1965*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- Noble, G. W. (1988) 'The Japanese Industrial Policy Debate', in S. Haggard and C. Moon (eds), *Pacific Dynamics: The International Politics of Industrial Change*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press: 53–95.
- Pempel, T. J. (1998) *Regime Shift: Comparative Dynamics of the Japanese Political Economy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP.
- Schaeede, U. (2008) *Choose and Focus: Japanese Business Strategies for the 21st Century*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP.
- Vogel, S. K. (2006) *Japan Remodeled: How Government and Industry are Reforming Japanese Capitalism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP.
- Yamamura, K. (1967) *Economic Policy in Postwar Japan*. Berkeley/Lo

Lesson 8

Week 8: Background: politics and the state.

Week 8 explains the major schools addressing the nature of politics and the state, referring to Japanese cases. (References)

- Calder, K. E. (1993) *Strategic capitalism: private business and public purpose in Japanese industrial finance*. Princeton: Princeton UP.
- Dunleavy, P. and Rhodes, R. A. W. (1990) 'Core Executive Studies in Britain', *Public Administration*, 68, Spring: 3–28.
- Elgie, R. (2011) 'Core executive studies two decades on', *Public Administration*, 89, (1), 64–77.
- George Mulgan, A. (2005) *Japan's Interventionist State: The role of the MAFF*. Oxon/New York/Canada: Routledge.
- Gownder, J. P. and Pekkanen, R. (1996) 'The End of Political Science? Rational Choice Analyses in Studies of Japanese Politics', *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 22, (2): 363–384.
- Grix, J. (2010) *The Foundations of Research*. Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hay, C., Lister, M., and Marsh, D. (eds) (2006) *The State: Theories and Issues*, *Political Analysis*. Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan: 1–20.
- Johnson, C. (1982) *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925–1975*. Stanford: Stanford UP.
- Kato, J. (1994) *The Problem of Bureaucratic Ratio*

Lesson 9

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)

- Gaunder (2017): 89–99.
- McCargo (2013): 139–147.
- Neary (2019): 65–72.
- Stockwin (2008): 63–81.
- Krauss/Pekkanen (2011).
- Rosenbluth/Thies (2010): 53–71.

Lesson 10

Week 10: The Hosokawa government, return of the LDP in the 1990: 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)

- Gaunder (2017): 99–101.
- McCargo (2013): 145–148.
- Neary (2019): 73–78.
- Stockwin (2008): 82–100.
- Pempel, T. J. (1997) 'Regime Shift: Japanese Politics in a Changing World Economy', *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 23, (2): 333–361.
- Shinoda, T. (2013) *Contemporary Japanese politics: institutional changes and power shifts*. New York: Columbia UP: 55–75.

Lesson 11

Week 11: The Koizumi administration and his successor: 2000–2009: the LDP administration II.

Week 11 examines the administration of Jun'ichiro Koizumi (2001–2005) and his successors.

(References)

- Gaunder (2017): 102–105.
- McCargo (2013): 151–152.
- Neary (2019): 78–84.
- Stockwin (2008): 101–134.
- Pempel (2010).
- Steinmo, S. (2010) *The Evolution of Modern States*. New York: Cambridge UP: 136–146.

Lesson 12

Week 12: 2009 government change and the DPJ administration.

Week 12 offers an account of the 2009 government change and the following DPJ government.

(References)

- Gaunder (2017): 105.
- McCargo (2013): 129–139.
- Neary (2019): 84–88.
- Kushida/Lipscy (2010).
- Rosenbluth, F. M. (2011) 'Japan in 2010: Messy Politics but Healthier Democracy', *Asian Survey*, 51, (1): 41–53.
- Rosenbluth, F. M. (2011) 'Japan in 2011: Cataclysmic Crisis and Chronic Deflation', *Asian Survey*, 52, (1): 15–27.
- Rosenbluth/Thies (2010): 186–192.
- Lipscy, P. Y. and Scheiner, E. (2012) 'Japan Under the DPJ: The Paradox of Political Change Without Policy Change', *Journal of East Asian Studies*, 12: 311–322.
- Shinoda (2013): 153–214.

Lesson 13

Week 13: Second government change and the re-emergence of the LDP administration: the LDP administration III.

Week 13 considers the second LDP administration since 2012: its policies, structures, key actors, and nature.

(References)

- Gaunder (2017): 105–109, 146–147.
 - Neary (2019): 89–95.
 - Pekkanen, R., Reed, S. R., and Scheiner, E. (eds) (2013) *Japan Decides 2012: The Japanese General Election*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.
 - Pekkanen, R., Reed, S. R., and Scheiner, E. (eds) (2016) *Japan Decides 2014: The Japanese General Election*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.
 - George Mulgan (2014).
 - George Mulgan, Aurelia (2018) *The Abe Administration and the Rise of the Prime Ministerial Executive*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- [Security policy]
- Cabinet Secretariat (2014) 'Cabinet Decision on Development of Seamless Security Legislation to Ensure Japan's Survival and Protect its People' [online]. Tokyo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Available from: https://www.mofa.go.jp/fp/nsp/page23e_000273.html [Accessed 11 January 2025].

Lesson 14

Week 14: Conclusion: challenges to Japanese politics.

In pulling the previous sessions together, the final session examines the nature of contemporary Japanese politics.

(References)

- Gaunder (2017): 163–170.
- McCargo (2013): 213–221.
- Neary (2019): 248–253.
- Stockwin (2008): 265–272.
- MOF (Ministry of Finance, Japan) (2025) 'Japanese Public Finance Fact Sheet' (April 2025) [online]. Tokyo: MOF. Available from: <https://www.mof.go.jp/english/policy/budget/budget/fy2025/02.pdf> [Accessed 11 January 2026].

Other

Additional session for essay writing

This course offers an optional additional session that offers a basic instruction of how students can write an academic document.

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.
- **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.

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 includes 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?

Generative AI Policy for Classes

Students can use AI to examine the detail of the issues raised in the class. They can also use AI to search for good literature and proofread their document. However, students can not use AI to set up their own research and research related documents such as the essay. As a university course, this course seeks to develop students' ability to consider, analyse, and formulate their own original account.

Textbooks

- Gaunder, A. (2017) *Japanese Politics and Government*. London: Routledge.
- McCargo, Duncan (2013) *Contemporary Japan (Contemporary States and Societies)*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Mogaki, M. (2017) 'Governance, Japan', in Farazmand, A. (Ed.), *Global Encyclopedia of Public Administration, Public Policy, and Governance*. Berlin: Springer.
- Neary, Ian J. (2019) *The State and Politics in Japan, Second Edition*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Stockwin, J. A. A. (2008) *Governing Japan: Divided Politics in a Resurgent Economy [4th Edition]*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.

Reference Books

The literature specifically related to the topic of the week is suggested in the course plan.

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. This course is offered at Mita Campus and utilises CANVAS resources.

Question/Comments

Students can ask questions to the lecturer by e-mail, Zoom, etc. They can also make an appointment with the lecturer for the feedback session, in which students can ask questions on their essays, the contents of the lecture, literature, and other issues related to this course.