

# 23010 JAPANESE POLITICS I

## INTRODUCTION TO JAPANESE POLITICS

**INSTRUCTOR:** Robert Aspinall

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course introduces students to some of the main features of Japanese politics. As the background to each topic is examined, students are encouraged to think critically about the issues raised and about the methodologies employed by political scientists in their efforts to analyze and account for events and developments. Students are also encouraged to carry out their own research into political issues. As part of their course assessment, students are required to select two topics from those covered in weeks 4 to 13 and make an oral presentation in class on one and write a report on the other. Please note that auditing is permitted for this course.

### **COURSE SCHEDULE**

1. Introduction: Approaches to Japanese politics
2. Historical background (1): Pre-war Japan, war, and the occupation
3. Historical background (2): The “1955 system” and high economic growth
4. The Liberal Democratic Party: The governing party of Japan
5. Opposition and minor parties
6. The “new party boom” and realignment in the 1990s
7. The election system
8. The prime minister, the cabinet, and the Diet
9. The bureaucracy and interest groups
10. Local and regional politics
11. Defense and security policy
12. Japan’s foreign policy
13. The budget: Economic and financial policy
14. Conclusion: The future of Japanese politics

### **TEXTS**

*Textbook:* None

Materials, references, and reading lists are provided.

### **ASSESSMENT**

Presentation 30%; Term paper 30%; Final examination 40%