
OPEN COURSES

In addition to the lecture and seminar courses offered by the Center, students may also register for selected courses in the University's regular undergraduate program during the fall semester and gain first-hand experience of studying side-by-side with Japanese students.

23040 POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES OF JAPAN

INSTRUCTOR: Takakazu Yamagishi

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class is cross-offered by the CJS and the Department of British and American Studies. Conducted in English, the main aim of this course is to learn about and debate the political and social issues of Japan, such as the emperor system, the Constitution, civil society, and social policy. After we read the literature on these issues, we conduct debates on controversial questions. CJS students are strongly encouraged to make use of their diverse backgrounds and bring their own perspectives into class.

CJS students are expected to make at least one presentation (if possible, in Japanese) about what he or she is interested in about Japan. Students pick a newspaper article about Japanese society or politics and have three minutes to talk followed by seven minutes for discussion. CJS students may practice their presentation in Japanese. In addition, CJS students are expected to make a group presentation with Japanese students at least once in the semester. Finally, during the last six weeks, CJS students conduct debates three times with Japanese students.

No prior knowledge of Japanese history, society, and politics is required, but students do need to be interested in learning about Japan and studying with their Japanese counterparts. Auditing is not permitted. Please feel free to ask questions by email.

COURSE SCHEDULE

1. Class introduction
2. Basics of Japanese history
3. Edo Japan
Walthall, Japan, Ch. 5 (pp. 94-119)
4. Japan in Turmoil
Walthall, Japan, Ch. 6 (pp. 120-134)
5. The Meiji Transformation
Walthall, Japan, Ch. 7 (pp. 135-153)
6. Rise of Modern Japan
Walthall, Japan, Ch. 8 (pp. 154-181)
7. War and Aftermath
Walthall, Japan, Ch. 9 (pp. 182-198)
8. Contemporary Japan
Walthall, Japan, Ch. 10 (pp. 199-213)
9. Debate Round 1 Prep
10. Debate Round 1
 - Q1. Should the prime minister go to Yasukuni Shrine?
 - Q2. Should Japan maintain the emperor system?
 - Q3. Should Japan apologize to "comfort women" in other Asian countries?
11. Debate Round 2 Prep
12. Debate Round 2

- Q1. Should Japan revise the Constitution to enable it to send troops abroad?
- Q2. Should Japan see the United States as its most important ally?
- Q3. Was the American occupation good for Japan?
- 13. Debate Round 3 Prep
- 14. Debate Round 3
 - Q1. Are bureaucrats good for the Japanese people?
 - Q2. Should the Japanese pension system be privatized?
 - Q3. Should Japan adopt the federal system (Doshūsei)?

TEXTS

Textbook: Anne Walthall, *Japan: A Cultural, Social, and Political History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2006)

Supplementary Materials

Examples of online newspapers in English about Japanese politics:

Daily Yomiuri: (www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy)

Asahi Shimbun (www.asahi.com/english)

Nikkei Net (<http://www.nni.nikkei.co.jp/>)

ASSESSMENT

Attendance 40%; Presentation 20%; Discussion participation 20%; Debate performance 20%