**Theories and Issues in Contemporary Japanese Politics**

**Fall 2018**

**GSIS International Area Studies (Japan)**

Instructor: Sukeui SOHN

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Time & Venue: Wednesday, 9:30 am – 12:20 pm, Bldg.140 Room 202

Office Hour: By appointment

**Course Description & Objectives**

The purpose of this course is to explore the theories and issues of contemporary Japanese politics. The class is designed to develop critical assessments on the issues related to contemporary Japanese politics by comparing various perspectives on a specific topic each week. We will be reading both classic literatures and recent publications. The topics to be discussed in the class will range from the system of LDP’s one-party dominance, political engineering of economic growth, the political and economic crises of the 1990s, domestic politics of regional contentions, to recent rise of rightist conservatism.

**Requirements & Evaluation**

Attendance & participation 10%

Presentation & discussion 20%

Midterm essay 30%

Final research paper 40%

Attendance & Participation

All students are required to attend class and participate in lively discussions. Missing more than one-third of the classes will result in immediate “F” for this course.

Presentation & Discussion

At every session, students are requested to make individual, resume-based presentations concerning the contexts of the reading materials, based on which the class will carry out discussions.

Midterm Essay

Midterm essay (or book review assignment) will be scheduled mid-semester. The instructor will provide with more details during class.

Final Research Paper

All students are required to turn in a final research paper at the end of the semester (10-12 pages, double-spaced, 12 pt Times New Roman font). You may choose any topic discussed during the semester. This paper should be “critical” and “analytical” research paper with strong supporting evidence and **proper academic citations**. Plagiarism will result in immediate zero point for this assignment.

**Overall Course Schedule**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Date** | **Topic** | **Note** |
| **Week 1** | Sep. 5 | Course Introduction |  |
| **Week 2** | Sep. 12 | Legacy of Prewar Regime and the Establishment of the 1955 System |  |
| **Week 3** | Sep. 19 | Institutions of LDP’s One-Party Dominance 1:  Electoral system, party management, and vote mobilization |  |
| **Week 4** | Sep. 26 | Chuseok Holiday | No class |
| **Week 5** | Oct. 3 | National Foundation Day | No class |
| **Week 6** | Oct. 10 | Institutions of One-Party Dominance 2:  State intervention and political engineering of economic growth |  |
| **Week 7** | Oct. 17 | External Policy Under the Cold War Regime |  |
| **Week 8** | Oct. 24 | Japan’s Postwar Democracy |  |
| **Week 9** | Oct. 31 | Midterm Essay Due  (12 pm) | Online submission |
| **Week 10** | Nov. 7 | Regime Transformation in the 1990s: Economic Slowdown and Political Crises |  |
| **Week 11** | Nov. 14 | Politics of Political Reforms and Institutional Changes |  |
| **Week 12** | Nov. 21 | LDP’s Internal Transformation under Coalition Government |  |
| **Week 13** | Nov. 28 | Power Alteration: Rise and Fall of the DPJ |  |
| **Week 14** | Dec. 5 | Japan and East Asia: Domestic Politics of Regional Contentions |  |
| **Week 15** | Dec. 12 | Overall Discussion: Post-2012 Politics and Japan’s Rightward Tilt |  |
| **Week 16** | Dec. 19 | Final Research Paper Due  (12 pm) | Online submission |

**Course Schedule & Reading Assignments**

**(Final list of reading assignments will be provided at the first session. A few book chapters or journal articles will be assigned each week.)**

**Week 1 Course Introduction**

**Week 2 The Legacy of Prewar Regime and the Establishment of the 1955 System**

Dower, John. *Ways of Forgetting, Ways of Remembering: Japan in the Modern World*.

Garon, Sheldon. *Molding Japanese Minds: The State in Everyday Life.*

**Week 3 Institutions of LDP’s One-Party Dominance 1: Electoral system, party management, and vote mobilization**

Curtis, Gerald. *Election Campaigning, Japanese Style*

Curtis, Gerald. *Japanese Way of Politics*

**Week 4 Chuseok Holiday (No Class)**

**Week 5 National Foundation Day (No Class)**

**Week 6 Institutions of One-Party Dominance 2: State intervention and political engineering of economic growth**

Johnson, Charlmers. *MITI and the Japanese Miracle*

Calder, Kent. *Crisis and Compensation*

**Week 7**  **External Policy Under the Cold War Regime**

Schaller, Michael. *Altered States: The United States and Japan since the Occupation.*

Rozman, Gilbert. 2008. “Internationalism and Asianism in Japanese Strategic Thought from Meiji to Heisei.” *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 9 (2): 209-232.

**Week 8 Japan’s Postwar Democracy**

Sheiner, Ethan. *Democracy without Competition in Japan*

Ruoff, Kenneth. *People’s Emperor: Democracy and the Japanese Monarchy, 1945-1995.*

**Week 9 Midterm Exam**

**Week 10** **Regime Transformation in the 1990s: Economic Slowdown and Political Crises**

Pempel, T.J. *Regime Shift: Comparative Dynamics of Japanese Political Economy*

Rosenbluth, Frances and Michael Thies. *Japan Transformed: Political Change and Economic Restructuring.*

**Week 11 Politics of Political Reforms and Institutional Changes**

Curtis, Gerald. *Logic of Japanese Politics*

Krauss, Ellis and Robert Pekkanen. *The Rise and Fall of Japan’s LDP: Political Party Organizations as Historical Institutions.*

**Week 12 LDP’s Internal Transformation under Coalition Government**

Shinoda, Tomohito. *Contemporary Japanese Politics: Institutional Changes and Power Shifts.*

**Week 13 Power Alteration: Rise and Fall of the DPJ**

Kushida, Kenji and Phillip Lipscy. *Japan Under the DPJ: Politics of Transition and Governance.*

**Week 14 Japan and East Asia: Domestic Politics of Regional Contentions**

Lind, Jennifer. 2008. *Sorry State: Apologies in International Politics*.

Takahashi, Tetsuya. 2008. “Legacies of Empire: the Yasukuni Shrine Controversy.” In Breenm John ed. *Yasukuni, the War Dead and the Struggle for Japan’s Past*. New York: Columbia University Press.

**Week 15 Overall Discussion: Post-2012 Politics and Japan’s Rightward Tilt**

TBA

**Week 16 Final Paper Due: December 19, 12 pm**