

JAPANESE POLITICS AND SOCIETY

Political Science 3346

2023 SMU-in-Japan Summer International Studies Program

M–F 11:00am–12:40pm, Kwansei Gakuin University, Japan

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Office hours:
By appointment

Course Description and Objectives

This course offers a general introduction to the major historical, political, and social trends of contemporary Japan that affect the future of Japan, East Asia, and the world including the United States. Unlike the courses that merely focus on economic development, political institutions, and elite politics, this course focuses on the response of businesses and governments to the globalized world. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- (1) understand contemporary history of Japanese politics, society, economy, business, and culture since World War II;
- (2) analyze continuity, change, and challenges in various aspects of Japanese politics and society; and
- (3) critically evaluate the responses of the Japanese businesses, governments, and various actors in the Japanese politics and society to the major challenges facing Japan.

No prior knowledge of Japanese politics or history will be assumed.

Course Requirements

1. Attendance and participation (including three reading memo assignments) (30% of a student's course grade): Attendance at lecture and participation in discussion are mandatory. The readings vary in length and difficulty but average about 70 pages per day. You are expected to attend all the lectures and do the required readings. Come to class **prepared and ready to participate** in discussing the material assigned in the readings. Most importantly, *students are required to turn in a **reading memo** by **emailing** it to the instructor.* An unexcused absence will adversely affect your course grade, as will being present but unprepared to participate, or participating without being prepared.

*After four unexcused absences, I may give an FA (F for attendance) to your course grade. An excused absence is almost exclusively restricted to religious reasons, certain university activities, documented medical conditions, or documented family emergencies. Absences for religious reasons or for university extracurricular activities require communication with me at the **beginning** of the session. It is **your** responsibility to make arrangements with me **prior** to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work.*

Ultimately your attendance and participation grade turns on **my** impression of how seriously you take this course. It is **your** responsibility to take this course seriously and let me know

that. How? Attend class; be prepared for class—read the assignments for understanding, be ready to ask and answer questions, take an informed role in discussions, and especially write a good reading memo; **arrive early** to class; remain for the entire class; *be attentive in class without distracting me or your classmates with cell phones, text messages, side conversations, bathroom trips, coming-and-going, and so forth*; complete assignments when due; and demonstrate your understanding on the papers and other assignments. Laptops, cell phones, smart phones, and any other *electronic devices may not be used in class*—**not even for note-taking**.

The course is designed, and will be conducted, like a graduate seminar. How well this course achieves its goals will depend on students' participation. Students are expected to do the assigned reading **before** class; to have read **actively**, comparing what they are reading with what they already know through other readings in this class or other classes to join class discussion.

In each class, **every** student is expected to give a brief (1–2 minutes) presentation of their initial impressions of the readings, along with any questions they wish to raise for the day's discussion.

2. Take-home midterm (30%): The take-home midterm will be made available on June 19 (Monday) and due June 26 (Monday). The exam is open book and open notes and will require 2,000 words (typed, double-spaced, 12-point font) of writing. The essays will be evaluated on the basis of: demonstrated mastery of the assigned readings; skill in exposing nuances of similarity and difference in various defensible positions; cogency, clarity, precision and organization of presentation; and relevance of evidence marshaled to *support your argument(s)*. No extensions will be granted except in the case of a serious illness or a death in the family. **Please plan to finish the assignment prior to the due date, and leave adequate time to proofread and to work out any computer or printer problems that may arise.**
3. Final paper (40%: 10% for presentation and 30% for paper): The major task for the course will be to write a policy paper which would give an advice to the Japanese government. Late in the summer term you will present and defend your findings to the class. A research paper on the subject will be due on July 17 (Monday) by email.

A *written brief* concisely summarizing the argument you will make in your presentation must be sent to the instructor no later than 5pm one day before your presentation. It should be a maximum of one page (single-spaced), and can be written in bullet points, paragraphs, or in any other style. It will not be graded, but if it is late or missing, your presentation will be marked down 20%.

Presentation should be five minutes in length, proving background on the issue, a review and assessment of the past policies taken by governments, and most importantly your recommendations. Following the presentation, there will be three minutes for questions from the audience and general discussion. Your grade on this assignment will reflect both the quality of your presentation and your answers to audience questions.

Papers should be ten pages (double-spaced, twelve-point font, one-inch margin). They should be similar in content to your presentation, but less time spent on background information. The papers should also take into account as much as possible the issues raised during your presentation. You may find it helpful to recruit a classmate to serve as a note taker during your presentation to ensure that you do not forget about any points that are raised.

Each of you must meet with me for 15 minutes in the first week of the session. Sign up for an appointment time during the first day in class. Be punctual.

Disability Accommodations

Students who need academic accommodations for a disability must first register with Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS). Students can call 214-768-1470 or visit smu.edu/DASS to begin the process. Once they are registered and approved, students then submit a DASS Accommodation Letter through the electronic portal, *DASS Link*, and then communicate directly with each of their instructors to make appropriate arrangements. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, but rather require advance notice in order to implement.

Religious Observance

Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence. Click [here](#) for a list of holidays.

Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities

Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled university extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments that were missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements for make-up work with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examinations or other missed assignments. (See current [Catalog](#) under heading of “Academic Records/Excused Absences.”)

Books and Readings

The following books should be purchased in advance and you should bring them to Japan. Readings marked with an asterisk (*) will be available electronically. There may be changes in the readings and assignments below.

Ulrike Schaede, *The Business Reinvention of Japan: How to Make Sense of the New Japan and Why It Matters* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2020).

Mireya Solís, *Dilemmas of a Trading Nation: Japan and the United States in the Evolving Asia-Pacific Order* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2017).

Schedule and Reading Assignments

Readings provide background on topics covered in class lectures and discussions, so read the assignment **before** the class for which they are assigned. Since the course will make frequent reference to current events, you should make a habit of *reading respectable online news on a regular basis* and pay attention to the events in Japan and East Asia.

1. Course Introduction (Tue, June 13)

2. Domestic Politics of Japanese Foreign Policy (Wed, June 14)

* Hiroki Takeuchi and Keely McNeme, “The Domestic Political Economy of Japan’s New Geoeconomic Strategy,” *Journal of East Asian Studies* 23 (March 2023): pp. 1–21.

* Mireya Solís, “The Underappreciated Power: Japan After Abe,” *Foreign Affairs* 99(6) (November/December 2020): pp. 123–132.

* Required video – SMU Tower Center Sun & Star Webinar: “Japan’s Geoeconomic Strategy” (with Mireya Solís), November 11, 2021. (<https://blog.smu.edu/towercenter/2021/11/16/sun-star-japans-geoeconomic-strategy/>)

3. The Business Reinvention of Japan (1): The Setting and the Background (Thu, June 15)

Schaede, chapters 1–3 (pp. 1–67).

4. The Business Reinvention of Japan (2): Aggregate Niche Strategy (Fri, June 16)

Schaede, chapter 4–6 (pp. 68–136)

5. The Business Reinvention of Japan (3): Finance, Culture, and Labor (Mon, June 19)

Schaede, chapters 7–9 (pp. 137–202)

6. Review (Tue, June 20)

7–8. Global Value Chains in the Asia-Pacific (Wed & Thu, June 21 & 22)

* Richard Baldwin, *The Great Convergence: Information Technology and the New Globalization* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016): pp. 79–110

* Fukunari Kimura, “How Have Production Networks Changed Development Strategies in Asia?” in Deborah K. Elms and Patrick Low, *Global Value Chains in a Changing World* (Geneva: WTO Publications, 2013): pp. 361–383.

The take-home midterm distributed on June 19 and due June 26 at 5pm by email.

9–10. Toyota Field Trip (Fri & Sat, June 23 & 24)

11. Domestic Politics of Trade Policy (1): Introduction and Actors (Mon, June 26)

Solís, chapters 1–2 (pp. 1–35)

12. Domestic Politics of Trade Policy (2): Legitimacy and Strategy (Tue, June 27)

Solís, chapters 3–5 (pp. 36–85)

13. Domestic Politics of Trade Policy (3): Dilemmas and Trade-Offs (Wed, June 28)

Solís, chapters 6–7 (pp. 86–127)

14. Domestic Politics of Trade Policy (4): New Japanese Trade Policy (Thu, June 29)

Solís, chapters 8–9 (pp. 128–173)

15. Domestic Politics of Trade Policy (5): Trade and International Relations (Fri, June 30)

Solís, chapters 10–11 (pp. 174 – 223)

16. Review (Mon, July 3)

17–18. Japan Going Forward: The Digital Transformation (Tue & Wed, July 4 & 5)

* Ulrike Schaede and Kay Shimizu, *The Digital Transformation and Japan's Political Economy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2022): entire (77 pages).

19. Discussion for Field Trip to Matsuyama (Thu, July 6)

20–21. Students' Presentations (Mon & Tue, July 10 & 11)