

**POLITICS IN JAPAN (In Person)**  
**Global Cultures Flag**  
**GOV 321M (#38245)/ ANS 321M (#32745)**  
**University of Texas at Austin**  
**Fall 2023**  
**TTH: 3:30-5:00, UTC 3.134**

**Instructor: Dr. Patricia L. Maclachlan**

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Office Hours (In person): Tues, 1:00-3:00 pm; Thurs, 9:30-10:30, or by appointment

Use Calendly to reserve a 20-minute slot:

[https://calendly.com/pmaclachlan\\_office/office-hours](https://calendly.com/pmaclachlan_office/office-hours)

Teaching Assistant: Joel Yew

Office Hours: TBA

**Course Description:** This upper division course introduces students to major themes in the domestic politics of modern Japan, with an emphasis on the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present. After contextualizing the course through an analysis of former Prime Minister Abe Shinzō 2022 assassination, we explore key events and institutions in Japan's pre-WWII and Occupation-era history; postwar party politics and the secrets of the Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) long-term electoral dominance; Japan's economic "miracle" and evolving government-business relationship; the challenges of contemporary political-economic reform; and perspectives on politics from Japanese women and other politically marginalized groups. We analyze these and related themes from theoretical, historical, and comparative perspectives.

**Global Cultures Flag:** Politics in Japan is designed to increase student familiarity with cultural groups outside the U.S. We therefore pay close attention to the cultural and institutional foundations of Japanese politics, and with reference to comparable Western and other Asian experiences.

**Prerequisites:** 6 semester hours of lower division Government courses. No prior knowledge of Japan is required.

**Required Texts:** You don't have to purchase anything! All required readings will be posted under Modules on the Canvas site for this course.

Assignments:

1. Quiz (In class, via Canvas, Aug. 31) 10%  
 This brief quiz will test your understanding of the lectures and readings covered to date. It will consist mostly of multiple choice & True/False questions plus a few questions requiring short written responses. It should take no more than 40 minutes to complete.
  
2. Exam #1 (In class, via Canvas, Oct. 10) 25%  
 Exam divided into 3 parts. Part I consists of 25 multiple choice & True/False questions. Part II consists of short questions requiring very brief written responses. Part III will present you with 3 questions; you must answer 2 of them, devoting a substantive paragraph to each one.
  
3. Writing Assignment (due 11:59 pm, Fri., Nov. 10): 35%  
 (a) You will be asked to write a short (4-5 pages) essay on a topic assigned by me. Your response must incorporate material from the lectures and assigned readings.  
  
 (b) In lieu of the exam, you may write a brief (6-8 pages) research paper on a topic decided in face-to-face consultation with me by **Sept. 28**. Students who choose this option must follow a sequence of steps, including the submission of an abstract, paper outline, and annotated bibliography. Since this is a more challenging assignment than option (a), students who complete it will receive 5 bonus points for the assignment. Paper due at same time as option (a).
  
4. Exam #2 (In class, via Canvas, Nov. 30) 30%  
 This *cumulative* exam will follow a format similar to that of Exam #1.

Grade Scale:

Letter Grade	GPA	Percentage Score
A	4.0	94-100%
A-	3.67	90-93
B+	3.33	87-89
B	3.0	84-86
B-	2.67	80-83
C+	2.33	77-79
C	2.0	74-76
C-	1.67	70-73
D+	1.33	67-69
D	1.0	64-66
D-	.67	60-63
F	0	59 & below

**Class Guidelines**

Attendance and discussions: Although there are no formal attendance or discussion grades in this class, a large portion of the course material will be conveyed via lectures and discussions. I therefore strongly encourage you to be both *present* and *engaged*.

- Be bold during class discussion! But please don't dominate!
- Students who make exceptional contributions to discussions—particularly those that draw on relevant readings—are eligible to receive extra bonus points on the final exam.

Class etiquette:

- Please arrive for class on time. If you must arrive late or leave early, you should inform me shortly before the relevant class starts.
- Please be respectful in your email messages to me. During the week, you should expect a response within 24-36 hours; if you don't hear from me within that window, feel free to contact me again. If you contact me over the weekend, expect a response on Monday.
- Please do not call me by my first name.
- Please be respectful of your fellow students during class discussions—even when disagree with them.

Communications: The Canvas Announcements and email functions will be my primary mechanisms for communicating with you.

Exams will be timed and administered in class via Canvas. You must take the exams on their designated days.

Grade disputes: If you have reason to suspect a mistake in the grading of an exam or written assignment, send our TA a written explanation of the issue within one week of receiving your grade and, if applicable, *after* reviewing relevant answer keys and instructor feedback.

Laptop and cellphone policy: Scientific research has proved that college students perform better without the distractions of laptops and cell phones during lectures and discussions. **So, I ask that you put these devices away during class and take notes by hand.** You will, however, need your laptop for the quiz and exams.

Late penalties: All assignments must be completed on schedule. Students with documented illnesses may be exempted from this rule. Late written submissions will be penalized 5% per day beginning one hour after the deadline.

Policy on Covid-19: This course will meet **in person**. Please don't come to class if you feel ill or suspect that you've been exposed to Covid; I and our TA will help you catch up and access class notes from other students. In the event of a Covid outbreak on campus, I will encourage you to wear a well-fitting mask during class. For information about Covid-19 testing and assistance, consult the University Health Services website: <https://www.healthyhorns.utexas.edu/>

PowerPoint Presentations will be posted on Canvas prior to relevant lectures. These are intended to outline and supplement the lectures. **To do well, you must take notes during lectures and discussions.**

Readings: To get the most out of the readings and the lectures, required readings should be completed *before* we meet—and in the order in which they appear in the syllabus. Note that exams and written assignments are designed to reward students who thoroughly engage the reading material.

You have the right to miss class for religious purposes. But I encourage you to keep our TA informed of such absences.

Students with disabilities are welcome to request appropriate accommodations. Please contact the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement for more information: <https://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/about> And be sure to speak to me early in the semester to discuss your needs.

Students guilty of academic misconduct (e.g., cheating on an exam or plagiarizing a paper) will receive a "0" for the assignment in question. No exceptions. **\*\*\*Please note that the use of ChatGPT and related platforms is strictly forbidden in this class.** Students should familiarize themselves with the following tutorial on what plagiarism is and how it can be avoided: <https://guides.lib.utexas.edu/c.php?g=539686&p=8083280>

## **Lecture Schedule**

### **Unit I: Introduction**

Aug. 22: *Course Intro*

- No readings

Aug. 24: *The Assassination of Abe Shinzō: What It Means for Japanese Politics*

- Tobias Harris. "The Postwar Japan that Abe Built." *The New York Times*, July 9, 2022.
- Koichi Nakano. "Shinzo Abe Failed to Rearm Japan. Let's Keep It That Way." *The New York Times*, July 20, 2022.

Aug. 29: *Institutions: What Are They and Why Do They Matter?*

- Hugh Heclo. "Thinking Institutionally." In R. A. W. Rhodes, Sarah A. Binder and Bert A. Rockman, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*: New York: Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 731-42.
- Tiffany May. "Japanese Student Forced to Dye Hair Black Wins, and Loses, in Court." *The New York Times*, February 19, 2021.
- Hikari Hida. "Discreetly, the Young in Japan Chip Away at a Taboo on Tattoos." *The New York Times*, April 23, 2022.
- Mokoto Rich and Ben Dooley. "Japan's Secret to Taming the Coronavirus: Peer Pressure." *The New York Times*, July 2, 2022.

Aug. 31: *Quiz (In person. Bring your laptop to class!)*

## Unit II: Postwar Japanese Politics in Historical & Institutional Context

Sept. 5: *A Capsule History of the Prewar Political System*

- Masao Maruyama. "Theory and Psychology of Ultra-Nationalism." In *Thought and Behavior in Modern Japanese Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963, pp. 1-23.

Sept. 7, 12 & 14: *Remaking Japan: The Occupation Era (1945-52)*

- Herbert Passin. "The Occupation: Some Reflections." *Daedalus* 119, no. 3 (Summer 1990): 107-129.
- Kenneth Pyle. "The Making of Postwar Japan: A Speculative Essay." *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 46, no. 1 (Winter 2020): 113-43.
- Online resources:
  - The Constitution of Japan. <https://www.crjapan.org/constitution-japan>
  - Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). "Japan's Postwar Constitution." <https://cfr.org/japan-constitution/japans-postwar-constitution>

## Unit III: Party Politics & Elections

Sept. 19 & 21: *The Formal Institutions of Postwar Japanese Politics*

- Steven R. Reed. "Japanese Electoral Systems Since 1947." In Robert J. Pekkanen and Saadia M. Pakkenan, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Japanese Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2022, pp. 41-55.

Sept. 26 & 28: *Explaining LDP Dominance & Weak Opposition*

- Gerald L. Curtis. *The Logic of Japanese Politics: Leaders, Institutions and the Limits of Change*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999, Introduction, Chapters 1 & 2 (pp. 1-97).

- Chalmers Johnson. "Tanaka Kakuei, Structural Corruption, and the Advent of Machine Politics in Japan." *Journal of Japanese Studies* 12, no. 1 (Winter 1986): 1-28.

Oct. 3: *The 1994 Electoral Reforms*

- Curtis. *The Logic of Japanese Politics*, Chapter 4 (pp. 137-70).
- Review Reed, "Japanese Electoral Systems Since 1947."

Oct. 5: *Discussion Session*

Oct. 10: *Exam #1 (In class, via Canvas. Bring your laptop!)*

#### **Unit IV: The (Sometimes Dramatic) Evolution of the Postwar Japanese Economy**

Oct. 12: *A Capsule History of the Postwar Political Economy*

- No readings

Oct. 17 & 19: *The Developmental State and Industrial Policy: Past & Present*

- Frank K. Upham. "The Man Who Would Import: A Cautionary Tale About Bucking the System in Japan." *Journal of Japanese Studies* 17, no. 2 (Summer 1991): 323-343.
- Gregory W. Noble. "METI's Miraculous Comeback and the Uncertain Future of Japanese Industrial Policy. In Robert J. Pekkanen and Saadia M. Pakkenan, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Japanese Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2022, pp. 353-375.

Oct. 24: *Postal Privatization and the Challenges of Reform*

- Patricia L. Maclachlan. "'Storming the Castle': The Battle for Postal Reform in Japan." *Social Science Japan Journal* 9, no. 1 (2006): 1-18.

Oct. 26 & 31: Assessing Abenomics

- Patricia L. Maclachlan and Kay Shimizu. "The Farm Lobby and Agricultural Policy in Japan." In Robert J. Pekkanen and Saadia M. Pakkenan, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Japanese Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2022, pp. 415-431.

Nov. 2: The Political-Economy of Immigration

- Michael Strausz. "Immigration and Democracy in Japan." In Robert J. Pekkanen and Saadia M. Pakkenan, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Japanese Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2022, pp. 471-489.

### **Unit V: Women in Japanese Politics**

Nov. 7: A Capsule History of Marginalized Groups in Japanese Politics

- No readings

Nov. 9 & 14: Women in the Political and Business Worlds

**Nov. 10: Writing assignment due at 11:59 pm**

- Gill Steel and Sherry Martin. "Gender and Politics in Japan." In Robert J. Pekkanen and Saadia M. Pakkenan, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Japanese Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2022, pp. 281-298.
- Nobuko Nagase. "Abe's Womenomics Policy: Did It Reduce the Gender Gap in Management?" In Takeo Hoshi and Phillip Y. Lipscy, eds., *The Political Economy of the Abe Government and Abenomics Reforms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021, pp. 310-56.

Nov. 16: The Politics of Reproductive Rights

- Tiana Norgren. "Abortion Before Birth Control: The Interest Group Politics Behind Postwar Japanese Reproduction Policy." *Journal of Japanese Studies* 24, no. 1 (Winter 1998): 59-94.



- Magdalena Osumi. "Abortion Legal and Apolitical in Japan, but Cost and Consent Present Barriers." *The Japan Times*, June 28, 2022.

Nov. 21 & 23: Thanksgiving Break: No Classes

Nov. 28: Discussion Session

Nov. 30: Exam #2 (In class, via Canvas. Bring your laptop!)

### **Some Online Resources for Current Events in Japan**

<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/> (English edition of Asahi Shimbun. Limited access)

<https://www.cfr.org/blog/asia-unbound> (Blog on current events in East Asia by scholars at the Council on Foreign Relations. Includes postings on Japan. Open access.)

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/> (The Japan Times. Limited access. Back issues can be accessed via our library website: [www.lib.utexas.edu](http://www.lib.utexas.edu) → Find, Borrow, Request → Databases → J → Japan Times Archives)

<http://thediplomat.com> (The Diplomat: online news magazine covering current events in East Asia, including Japan. Limited access)

<http://www.eastasiaforum.org> (East Asia Forum: writings on Japan and other East Asian countries. Open access)

<http://web-japan.org/links/index.html> (provides links to government websites and English-language newspapers)

<https://japan.kantei.go.jp/> (The Prime Minister and his Cabinet)

<http://newslet.iss.u-tokyo.ac.jp/> (Social Science Japan Newsletter, from the University of Tokyo)

<https://guides.nccjapan.org/homepage> (NCC: North America Coordinating Council on Japanese Library Resources. Includes useful tips for research on Japan.)

<http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/eastasia> (the website for UT's Center for East Asian Studies. Check for list of upcoming events on Japan and useful research resources)