



CÖSB50: Contemporary Japanese Society, 7.5 Credits

Fall Semester 2021

2021-11-02 – 2020-12-01

Venue: In class and Zoom

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Office hours: By appointment, via Zoom

This outline is provisional, and subject to change, as the situation changes.

Course Content

This course examines contemporary Japanese society, focusing on issues such as politics, nationalism, pop culture, demographic change, gender relations, and environment. We go beyond media stereotypes and internet clichés to get a deeper understanding of what Japan is and where it's going. The focus is on post-Cold War Japan, with special emphasis on the period after the earthquake, the tsunami, and the nuclear accident in 2011. Apart from discussing a number of critical issues, we also highlight the interrelationship of these issues and problems. In order to understand, for example, the issue of Japan as an aging society with low fertility, it is necessary to understand Japanese debates about immigration, gender, and hi-tech robotics.

In the course we also address more conventional issues affecting society. The topics discussed include the success of the Liberal Democratic Party that has led the country since 1945 and Japan's role and status in an increasingly uncertain East Asian region and on the global arena.

Venue:

The course will consist of lectures in class at the Centre for East and South East Asia Studies as well as on Zoom.

Mode of teaching and examination

The course is a mixture lectures and seminars. The course includes 1-3 compulsory seminars.

The assessment is based on a written, take-home assignment (7.5 credits)

Marking Scale: Fail, E, D, C, B, A.

The highest grade is A and the lowest passing grade is E. The grade for a non-passing result is Fail.

Readings

The syllabus consists of required readings. Some additional readings may be suggested throughout the course, but these are not compulsory. Keeping up with the reading is crucial for the overall understanding of the material and participation in class discussions. Reading beyond the course is encouraged, and a list of sources and media outlets is provided.

Written Assignments

Each student will write one final paper (2500-3000 words).

Re-examination

An opportunity for re-examination will be offered after the end of the course.

A second reexamination will be arranged at a later date.

Cheating and Plagiarism

The purpose of the final paper is to train the student in their ability to work independently with the course literature. We believe that reflective writings facilitate student learning.

The final paper should also be considered a learning event in itself. Assignments involve elements of responsibility and trust. The student's work must be original and a result of her/his own analytical skills and intellectual efforts.

All cited sources must be referenced clearly. Cutting and pasting from the Internet is not permitted, although Internet sources, given academic in nature (Wikipedia does not count), can be cited if clearly referenced. If a student hands in an assignment that to a significant extent consists of material cut and pasted from the Internet or quotes texts authored by others without references, such behavior is considered **intentional deception**. Copying from other students,

helping someone to cheat or letting a fellow student copy your texts are other examples of **intentional deception**.

If a student intentionally tries to deceive the examiner she/he will be reported to Lund University's Disciplinary Board and will be subject to disciplinary action.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of the course the student shall be able to:

Knowledge and Understanding

- account for issues of society and politics in Japan from a perspective of contemporary history
- account for the development in different social and political areas in Japan such as the environment, immigration, aging, gender, and other current affairs

Competence and Skills

- Identify and analyse current affairs in present-day Japanese society from a perspective of contemporary history
- identify and analyse how different issues and problems are related and mutually influential
- critically analyse current affairs and different views of how Japanese society has developed
- collect, evaluate and use relevant sources for a written analysis of a specific topical issue concerning Japanese society

Judgement and Approach

- analyse and critically assess a key issue in Japanese society

Course Outline

2 November, 10-12 (on site) – Lecture 1: Japan becomes a nation-state

Required readings: Neary 2019 (pp. 3-26), Kingston 2019 (Leheny, pp. 285-296), Sugimoto 2011 (see Compendium on Canvas)

2 November, 13-15 (on site) – Lecture 2: From authoritarian empire to liberal democracy

Required readings: Kingston 2019 (Stockwin, pp. 3-14; Ogawa, pp. 47-58), Neary 2019 (pp. 27-72)

3 November, 10-12 (on site) – Lecture 3: The rise of the Liberal Democratic Party

Required readings: Neary 2019 (pp.73-95), Kingston 2019 (Mock, pp. 243-260), Stockwin & Ampiah 2017 (pp. 13-54)

8 November, 13-15 (Zoom) – Lecture 4: Political opposition in Japan

Required readings: Stockwin & Ampiah (pp. 55-74), Neary 2019 (pp. 96-132), Kushida & Lipsy 2013, O’Shea 2014

11 November, 13-15 (Zoom) – Lecture 5: Nationalism and the ‘Shinto Right’

Required readings: Stockwin & Ampiah (pp. 75-96), Mizohata 2016, Deans 2007, Larsson 2017, Postel-Vinay 2017

16 November, 13-15 (Zoom) – Lecture 6: Japan’s lost decades

Required readings: Stockwin & Ampiah (pp. 97-116), Kingston 2019 (Mulgan, pp. 15-30; Aspinall, pp. 232-242), Lechevalier & Montfort 2018

18 November, 13-15 (Zoom) – Lecture 7: Immigration or robots?

Required readings: Kingston 2019 (Kingston, pp. 185-197; Cleveland, 210-219), Stockwin & Ampiah (pp. 159-178), Schwacz 2018, Wright 2019

25 November, 13-15 (on site) – Lecture 8: The politics of gender in Japan

Required readings: Kingston 2019 (Htun, pp. 198-209), Neary 2019 (pp. 213-226), Macnaughton 2015, Dalton 2017, Cook 2013

26 November, 10-12 (on site) – Lecture 9: Environmental issues after Fukushima

Required readings: Neary 2019 (pp. 146-161; 185-212), Kingston 2019 (Aldrich, pp. 75-87; Kingston, 103-115; Dewit, pp. 116-130; Dudden, pp. 172-182)

26 November, 13-15 (on site) – Lecture 10: Japan in the world

Required readings: Kingston 2019 (Saaler, pp. 133-144; Dujarric & Takenaka, pp. 274-284), Stockwin & Ampiah (pp. 201-248), Leheny 2015, O’Shea & Maslow 2020

Literature for the course

Books

Kingston, Jeff (ed). 2019. *Critical Issues in Contemporary Japan*, London: Routledge. 2nd Edition

Neary, Ian. 2019. *The State and Politics in Japan*, Cambridge: Polity Press. 2nd Edition

Stockwin, Arthur & Kweku Ampiah. 2019. *Rethinking Japan: The Politics of Contested Nationalism*, Washington D.C.: Lexington Books.

Compendium

Sugimoto, Yoshio 2011. ‘The Japan Phenomenon and the Social Sciences’, *An Introduction to Japanese Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, *Introduction* pp. 1-36.

Articles (available for download)

Cook, Emma E. 2013. ‘Expectations of Failure: Maturity and Masculinity for Freeters in Contemporary Japan.’ *Social Science Japan Journal* 16(1) Pp 29–43.

Dalton, Emma (2017) ‘Womenomics, ‘equality’ and Abe’s neo-liberal strategy to make Japanese woman shine’ *Social Science Japan Journal* 20(1): 95-105.

Deans, Phil. “Diminishing Returns? Prime Minister Koizumi’s Visits to the Yasukuni Shrine in the Context of East Asian Nationalisms.” *East Asia* 24:3 (2007), pp. 269-94.

Kushida, Kenji E. and Lipsy, Phillip Y. 2013. 'The Rise and Fall of the Democratic Party of Japan' in *Japan under the DPJ: The Politics of Transition and Governance*, Stanford: Asia-Pacific Research Centre.

Larsson, Ernils. "Jinja Honchō and the Politics of Constitutional Reform in Japan." *Japan Review*, No. 30 (2017), Special Issue Formations of the Secular in Japan, pp. 227-252.

Lechevalier, Sebastian, and Monfort, Briec. 2018. 'Abenomics: has it worked? Will it ultimately fail?' *Japan Forum*, 30:2, 277-302.

Leheny, David (2015) 'Naruto's Limits: What can soft power actually achieve?' *Nippon.com*, 20 January 2015. Available online at: <https://www.nippon.com/en/in-depth/a03902/>

Macnaughtan, Helen (2015) 'Womenomics for Japan: is the Abe policy for gendered employment viable in an era of precarity?' *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 13 (12 /1). Available online at: <http://eprints.soas.ac.uk/19702/1/HM%20womenomics%20APJ%20Final%20March%202015.pdf>

Mizohata, Sachie. "Nippon Kaigi: Empire, Contradiction, and Japan's Future." *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 14.21.2 (November 2016), pp. 1–19. Available online at: <http://apjpf.org/2016/21/Mizohata.html>.

O'Shea, Paul & Maslow, Sebastian (2020) "Making the alliance even greater": (Mis-) managing U.S.-Japan relations in the age of Trump, *Asian Security*, DOI: 10.1080/14799855.2020.1838486

O'Shea, Paul. 2014. 'Overestimating the 'Power Shift': The US role in the failure of the Democratic Party of Japan's 'Asia Pivot'.' *Asian Perspective* 38(3). p.435-459

Postel-Vinay, Karoline. 2017. 'The Global Rightist Turn, Nationalism and Japan' *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, 15(10), <https://apjpf.org/-Karoline-Postel-Vinay/5035/article.pdf>

Schwarcz, Emese (2018). "Making sense of Japan's new immigration policy", *The Diplomat*, November 30. Available online at: <https://thediplomat.com/2018/11/making-sense-of-japans-new-immigration-policy/>

Wright, James (2019) "Robots vs migrants? Reconfiguring the future of Japanese institutional eldercare", *Critical Asian Studies*, 51:3, pp. 331-354.