
course time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00-12:20

classroom: Scharbauer 2008

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response time: I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours during the week, and within 48 hours during weekends and holidays.

Final Research Paper Due Date

For non-degree candidates (i.e., everyone except graduating seniors), final research papers are due on Tuesday, **December 13 at 1:30pm**. For degree candidates (graduating seniors), final research papers are due on Monday, **December 12 at 1:30pm**.

Course Description

On July 8 of this year, just two days before Japanese voters were to go to the polls to vote in a House of Councilor election, former Prime Minister Shinzō Abe was assassinated while making a campaign speech in Nara, a city just south of Kyoto. Prime Minister Abe was shot by a man named Tetsuya Yamagami using a homemade gun. This event made international news, but much reporting on the assassination and its broader context included statements like this: "that is how they do things because they are Japanese, and that is their culture." The assumption in this kind of statement is that, from the perspective of non-Japanese people, Japan is a mysterious, exotic, and inscrutable place with a homogenous and uniform culture.

We will use the analytic tools of political science to critically examine that assumption in two ways. First, we will learn to think about Japanese people as often responding to institutional rules in a way that makes sense once we understand those rules. Second, we will learn to think about Japanese culture as a series of sometimes contradictory practices, ideas, and norms that individuals—even Japanese individuals—often chafe against. Ultimately, we will strive to understand how Japanese politics and society work, and we will use this understanding to deepen our sense of how politics and societies function more generally. And in the future, when something newsworthy happens in Japan (hopefully something more positive than the assassination of a former Prime Minister), you will be able to use the knowledge that you gained in this class to help your peers, employers, friends, and family put that event into a useful context.

Required Texts / Materials

You are required to have the following textbook for the duration of the class.

Neary, Ian. 2019. *The State and Politics in Japan*, 2nd Edition. Wiley.

Both electronic and hard copies will work, but please make sure to get the second edition, because things keep changing in Japanese politics! This book is in the

[bookstore](#), and you can also order it from online book sellers (the paperback is fine). If the cost of buying or renting this text is too much for you, please contact me as soon as you can to discuss alternatives.

All other required readings are available on the course's D2L page. I encourage you to bring the book or to print up that day's reading and bring it to class. If you have run out of free prints from TCU and/or don't have another way to print, please come to my office!

Course Policies and Requirements

Assignments

Reading discussion questions (5% of final grade): Every day with an assigned reading, students are required to post a discussion question about the reading on the relevant threaded discussion on D2L. Discussion questions are due at 9am on the morning that we discuss that reading. Late discussion questions will receive no credit.

Satisfactory discussion questions will earn you a 100 for that day. A discussion question is satisfactory when it demonstrates that you have done the reading and thought about it a bit. Satisfactory questions might be about the overall theme of the reading, about a specific example or quote from the reading, about the implications of the findings and/or methods, etc. Anything is on the table, as long as it is thoughtful, based on the reading, and demonstrates you have thought critically about the issues raised by the reading and the course. If you find yourself struggling to understand the reading, you are always welcome to come to my office hours or make an appointment!

If discussion questions suggest that many of you are not doing the assigned reading, I will give pop quizzes on the readings that will be averaged into this grade. On some days, you may have short homework or in-class assignments that will be averaged into this grade.

You can skip up to two days of posting questions without penalty, but after that, late submission of questions and failure to submit questions at all will result in a grade of zero for that day.

Current events postings (5% of final grade): One of the purposes of this class is to develop informed opinions about current events in Japanese politics. In addition to the course readings, I expect you to regularly (at least twice per week) read over one of the news sources linked to the course's D2L site. Moreover, at least six times over the course of the semester, I expect you to write a short (one paragraph) post on the news discussion boards on D2L that does three things:

- 1) Includes a hyperlink to a recent, credible news story about Japanese politics (if someone else has already linked to a particular story, choose another one).
- 2) Briefly (in 1-2 sentences) summarizes the key elements of the story.
- 3) Briefly (in 1-2 sentences) links the story to something that we have discussed or read about in class.

You are also welcome to make observations and/or ask discussion questions or clarifying questions about the news posting, and to post responses to the articles that your classmates post.

Current events postings are due by 9am on the day of class. You can post as many times as you want, but only one posting of a new article per student per week will be counted for credit. I encourage all of you to read one another's postings and reply to them!

For each day that a student fills out an appropriate current event posting, that student will get full credit (a 100).

In-class reflections (5% of final grade): At the end of each class session, students will have a few minutes to write one to three sentences on one of these questions:

1. What is something that you learned today?
2. What is the muddiest point for you from today's class?
3. What is something that we touched on today that you want to learn more about?

If students miss a class, they should log in to D2L before the next class to give a brief explanation of why they missed class. These explanations might include "I was sick," "my sister got married," "I was having some family issues," etc. I respect your privacy, so I do not need details in your explanations (no need to tell me about what kind of illness or doctor's appointment, for example).

For each day that a student fills out an appropriate reflection on the class or explanation for why they missed class, that student will get full credit (a 100). Failure to complete a day's prompt will result in a grade of 0 for that day.

Two analysis papers on course themes (each worth 17% of final grade): Throughout the course, I will distribute four sets of prompts for short analysis papers on course themes. Each of these sets of prompts will ask students to write a short paper that analyzes course materials (and current events too). *Students are required to answer **two** of these prompts*. These papers will be due on at **11:00am** on **September 20**, **October 20**, **November 3**, and **November 29**. Students may only complete two of these papers for credit. If students submit more than two papers, I will only grade the first two, although I will offer feedback on all four.

Quick tips for writing good analysis papers

Do the course readings carefully and read several Japanese politics-related news articles per week. Have a clear argument and visit my office hours to discuss it.

Final research paper (39% of final grade): Students will complete a research project regarding a topic in Japanese politics that interests them. Students are required to turn in a rough draft of their topic and thesis statement by **September 22**. The topic and thesis statement is worth 1% of the final course grade, and it will be graded on a credit/no credit basis, meaning if you turn in an acceptable topic and thesis, you will get

a 1% boost on your final grade. The rest of the research paper is worth 38% of the final course grade.

Quick tips for writing a good research paper
 I strongly encourage students to speak with me about their research paper topics in my office hours. I really enjoy helping student find topics to research that they are interested in! I also invite students to submit partial or complete drafts of research papers any time before the last class (Tuesday, December 6 at 11am). I will read whatever you submit and give you feedback that will help you improve your paper.

The final version of the research paper should be no more than 3,000 words, and it will be due on **Tuesday, December 13 at 1:30pm** (or Monday, December 12 at 1:30pm for graduating seniors). Specific assignments for the research paper and the topic and thesis statement will be distributed early in the semester.

Research presentation (12% of final grade): Students will be required to present their research findings to the class on either November 29, December 1, or December 6. I will distribute a specific assignment and presentation schedule early in the semester

Grading

Grades are determined on a 100-point scale as follows:

A: 93.45 and above	B: 82.45-86.44	C: 72.45-76.44	D: 62.45-66.44
A-: 89.45-93.44	B-: 79.45-82.44	C-: 69.45-72.44	D-: 59.45-62.44
B+: 86.45-89.44	C+: 76.45-79.44	D+: 66.45-69.44	F: 59.44 and below

Grade Breakdown

Assignment	Percentage of final grade
Reading discussion questions	5%
Current events postings	5%
In-class reflections	5%
Analysis papers (17% each)	34%
Research paper (38% paper, 1% thesis and topic)	39%
Research presentation	12%

If you feel that you have been graded unfairly on any course assignment, please wait 24 hours after the assignment is returned and then contact me with a typed statement about why you believe you were graded unfairly. This statement must provide substantive reasons why you believe that you were graded unfairly. The appeal process must be started one week after the material was returned.

Extra Credit

If I decide to establish extra credit opportunities, the specifics will be announced in class, posted on D2L, and/or emailed out to all students enrolled in the class. So, come to class, check D2L, and check your TCU email regularly.

Late Work

In general, late assignments lose 10 points (out of 100) per 24 hours late. So, if a paper is due at 2:00pm on Tuesday and you turn it in at 3:00, you will lose 10 points. And if you turn it in after 2:00pm on Wednesday, you will lose 20 points, (and after 2:00 on Thursday, you will lose 30 points... etc.). However, if you miss or are late in submitting any assignment because of an Official University Absence, an illness, or a personal or family emergency, please communicate with me as soon as you can we can discuss rescheduling your work. You don't have to tell me the nature of the illness or emergency; just let me know that you are dealing with an illness or an emergency and we can discuss an alternate deadline for your work.

Office Hours

I encourage students to take advantage of my office hours in order to ask questions about the course materials or to chat about issues related to the course or political science more generally. While you are free to drop by without an appointment, if you want to make sure that I will be available right when you drop by, please feel free to sign up for an appointment on D2L. If you prefer to meet over Zoom, please let me know and I will send you a link. If I am not able to hold in-person office hours at any point, I will email the class and temporarily move office hours to Zoom. If you have classes or other obligations during my office hours and would like to meet with me, please email me to make an appointment.

PowerPoint Slides

Most days in class I will have PowerPoint slides that have three purposes:

1. The slides are meant to help you organize your notes, by showing you what we are discussing and when.
2. The slides might include quotes and/or questions that we will discuss in class.
3. The slides might include photographs, maps, animations, and other types of images to help illuminate class concepts.

The slides are not a transcript of everything that I plan to say in class; they are meant to help you take notes. You will be able to download slides before class (I will have them online a few minutes before class starts) and they will stay up for the whole semester. If you miss a class, you should download the slides, but you should also borrow notes from a classmate. Once you have looked over the notes that you borrowed, feel free to ask me about any points you want clarification on.

Technology Policy

Students wishing to use computers, tablets, or smartphones to take notes in class are requested to use those devices only for class related purposes. I know how tempting it can be to use an electronic device for Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Ravelry (the knitting social networking site), Instagram, TikTok, games, and other fun distractions, but if I catch a student doing so, that student will no longer be permitted to bring his or her electronic device to class. Remember that your primary responsibility at TCU is to learn. If you don't trust yourself to avoid online distractions, I encourage you

to take notes with a pen or pencil. If I catch you using an electronic device for non-class related purposes during class, you will lose permission to use that device in class for the rest of the semester. Students wishing to make audio or video recordings of classes are required to see me to discuss acceptable use of those recordings and to sign a contract indicating that you will use those recordings responsibly. In the absence of written permission, you are not permitted to make audio or video recordings of classes.

TCU Policies

This course will be conducted in accordance with all relevant TCU policies. For specific language, please see the syllabus appendix on the course's D2L site. The syllabus appendix includes the following policies: Academic Misconduct, Anti-Discrimination and Title IX Information, TCU Policy for Religious Observations & Holidays, and Student Access and Accommodation.

Daily Schedule

Date	Theme and assigned reading
23-Aug	<i>Introduction</i> No assigned reading.
25-Aug	<i>Japanese politics today</i> Yoda, Hiroko. 2022. "Shinzo Abe's Assassin and Japan's Complicated Spirituality." <i>The New Yorker</i> , July 26. Spaeth, Ryu. 2020. "How <i>the New Yorker</i> Fell Into the 'Weird Japan' Trap." <i>The New Republic</i> , December 17.
Unit 1: Japan Before 1952	
30-Aug	<i>The Meiji Restoration and the birth of modern Japan</i> Neary textbook, begin chapter 1 and stop at p. 21.
1-Sep	<i>The march to war</i> Dower, John W. 1986. <i>War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War</i> . New York: Pantheon Books, pp. 180-200. Neary textbook, finish chapter 1.
6-Sep	<i>Occupation</i> Neary textbook, Chapter 2. Dower, John W. 1999. <i>Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II</i> . New York: Norton, pp. 33-64.
8-Sep	<i>Writing and talking about your research</i> Akerman, Erin. 2010. "'Analyze This': Writing in the Social Sciences." In <i>They Say / I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing</i> , edited by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, 175-192. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.

Date	Theme and assigned reading
	Unit 2: Government in Postwar, Post-Occupation Japan
13-Sep	<i>The rise and fall of the 1955 system</i> Neary textbook, Chapter 3.
15-Sep	<u>CLASS IS CANCELLED</u>
20-Sep	<i>From Hosokawa to Abe</i> Neary Chapter 4.
22-Sep	<i>The surprising persistence of LDP</i> Reed, Steven R. 2022. "Patronage and Predominance: How the LDP Maintains Its Hold on Power." <i>Social Science Japan Journal</i> 25 (1):83-100.
27-Sep	<i>The Diet (a parliamentary body whose English name begs for puns)</i> Neary textbook, Chapter 5.
29-Sep	<i>Japan's unchanging constitution</i> McElwain, Kenneth Mori, Shusei Eshima, and Christian G Winkler. 2021. "The proposer or the proposal? An experimental analysis of constitutional beliefs." <i>Japanese Journal of Political Science</i> 22 (1):15-39.
4-Oct	<i>The Bureaucracy</i> Neary textbook, Chapter 6.
6-Oct	<u>FALL BREAK</u>
11-Oct	<i>Local government and non-state actors</i> Neary textbook, Chapter 7 & 8.
	Unit 3: Identity and Politics in Japan
13-Oct	<i>Japan's "untouchables"</i> Neary, Ian. 2020. "From the (end of) Dōwa policies to (the start of) an anti-discrimination policy?" <i>Japan Forum</i> 32 (2):209-219.
18-Oct	<u>CLASS IS CANCELLED</u>
20-Oct	<i>Gender and politics in Japan</i> Assigned reading to be announced.
25-Oct	Zainichi Koreans Chung, Erin Aeran. 2010. "Negotiating Korean Identity in Japan." In <i>Immigration and Citizenship in Japan</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 82-114.

Date	Theme and assigned reading
27-Oct	<i>Nationalism</i> Smith, Nathaniel M. 2018. "Fights on the Right: Social Citizenship, Ethnicity, and Postwar Cohorts of the Japanese Activist Right." <i>Social Science Japan Journal</i> 21 (2):235-257.
1-Nov	<i>Okinawa and indigenous identities</i> Johnson, Akemi. 2019. "Miyo." In <i>Night in the American Village: Women in the Shadow of the US Military Bases in Okinawa</i> . New York: The New Press.
Unit 4: Policy Challenges in Japan Today	
3-Nov	<i>Governing Japan's economy</i> Neary textbook, Chapter 10.
8-Nov	<i>Environmental policy</i> Neary textbook, Chapter 11.
10-Nov	<i>Human rights</i> Neary textbook, Chapter 13.
15-Nov	<i>Immigration and Emigration</i> Strausz, Michael. 2021. "Immigration and Democracy in Japan." In <i>The Oxford Handbook of Japanese Politics</i> , edited by Robert J. Pekkanen and Saadia M. Pekkanen. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
17-Nov	<i>Public health and vaccines in Japan</i> Gordon, Andrew, and Michael R Reich. 2021. "The Puzzle of Vaccine Hesitancy in Japan." <i>The Journal of Japanese Studies</i> 47 (2):411-436.
22-Nov- 24-Nov	<u>THANKSGIVING BREAK</u>
29-Nov	<i>Student research presentations</i> No assigned reading.
1-Dec	<i>Student research presentations</i> No assigned reading.
6-Dec	<i>Student research presentations</i> No assigned reading.