This course is designed to introduce students to contemporary Japanese Political Economy. We will discuss several important issues of Japanese political economy, such as the government role in economic growth, political participation, party politics, in a comparative framework and try to understand them theoretically. The course is taught one day/week in a three-hour session, which consists of the debate/presentation part and the lecture part. We are going to have a debate on the issue related to the lecture given previous week. Students are expected to participate in the debate in addition to the class discussion actively.

Jan 19 –April 13 (No Class on March 2)
Evaluation is based on class participation (30%), midterm and final exams (30% and 40% respectively).

Week 1: How to Make Sense of Japan
Part 1:
Please present one observation of Japan which impresses you as uniquely Japanese, and try to explain that phenomena culturally, rationally, institutionally, or whatever. Students are expected to make a brief presentation on this topic.
* Reed, Stephen, Making Common Sense of Japan (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993), chapters 1 and 2.

Part 2: Politics and Market Lecture
*Joseph Stiglitz, Economics of the Public Sector, chapters 3-5.
cf. N.G.Mankiw, Principles of Economics
THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL UNDERSTANDING

Week 2: Politics and Market
Part 1: DEBATE: Culture or Rationality? How to make sense of Japan
Part 2: Government Success and Failure Lecture

Week 3: Political Development
Part 1: Modern Nation Building
Part 2: Democracy in Japan

POLITICAL SYSTEM

Week 4: Political Participation
Part 1: DEBATE: Can the government promote economic growth?
Part 2: Voter turnout in Japan has been almost continuously declined over time. How can we explain this decline? What’s wrong?
  * Ferejohn and Fiorina, “The paradox of not voting” *APSR* vol.68.
  cf. Rafael López Pintor, Maria Gratschew and Kate Sullivan “Voter Turnout Rates from a Comparative Perspective” [http://www.idea.int/](http://www.idea.int/)

Week 5: Election System and Japanese Politics
Part 1: PRESENTATION: Why do rural voters turn out more often in Japan?
Part 2: Election Systems in Japan: Old and New

**Week 6: Political Leadership**

Part 1: PRESENTATION: Withering Radical Parties in Japan? or Mid-Term Exam

Part 2: Weak leadership in Japan?
http://scholar.harvard.edu/levitsky/files/1.1linz.pdf


**Week 7: Bureaucracy and Politicians**

Part 1: DEBATE: Leadership in Japan, Change or Continuity?

Part 2: Are politicians able to control bureaucracies?

**Week 8: Civil Society**

Part 1: DEBATE: Political appointee and bureaucracy? Do we need more political appointees?

Part 2: Lecture
Week 9: Democratization and Economic Growth
Part 1: DEBATE: Trust in Japan: Reality or Myth?
Part 2: Lecture
*Ansell & Samuels, Inequality and Democratization (Cambridge UP, 2014), TBA.

Policies and PRACTICES

Week 10: Economic Crisis – Japan and the World
Part 1: DEBATE: Is China following the Japanese path?
Part 2: LECTURE Why was Japan so slow in responding to the post-bubble economic recession? Is it cultural or what?

Week 11: Japanese Welfare State and its future
Part 1: DEBATE: Should Japan liberalize the financial market further? Or should we regulate the financial sector?
*Rajan and Zingales, Saving Capitalism from the Capitalists. Chapters 1
and 2.

Part 2: Lecture
*Rosenbluth & Thies, Japan Transformed, chapters 5 & 7.

Week 12: Conclusion or Speculation
Part 1: DISCUSSION: Is Japan Changing?
Part 2: Final Exam