

**POLITICAL CONTROVERSIES IN JAPAN:
HISTORY BEHIND THE HEADLINES**

Kyoto Consortium for Japanese Studies
Spring 2017
(Monday-Wednesday 2:55-4:25 pm)

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OBJECTIVES

It is a measure of Japan's contemporary prominence in international affairs that major media outlets provide frequent news coverage of Japanese foreign affairs and domestic politics. This is especially true when the issues are controversial, such as the following:

- Prime Minister Abe's Diet bill to permit Japanese Self-Defense Forces to provide military support for multilateral peacekeeping missions abroad;
- Attempts by the Japanese and Korean governments to resolve the "Comfort Women" issue;
- Competing Japanese and Chinese claims to sovereignty over the Senkaku (Diaoyu in Chinese) Islands in the South China Sea;
- Local opposition to plans to build a new American military base in Okinawa Prefecture;
- Domestic opposition to the government's nuclear energy policy and its plan to restart the country's nuclear reactors in the wake of the 2011 Fukushima Disaster;
- Allegations that the Abe government is taking steps to censor the Japanese media and increase surveillance of the population in the name of national security;
- Allegations that the Abe government is taking steps to restrict coverage of the Asia-Pacific War (World War Two) in Japanese school textbooks

While the depth and quality of media coverage varies, even the best reporters rarely delve into the longer histories of these controversial issues. Therefore, one goal of this course is to examine the historical background to these controversies, and the ways in which history continues to influence these debates and policy outcomes. A second goal of the course is to deepen students' general knowledge of modern Japanese history since the late nineteenth century.

CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION

Five broadly defined contemporary topics will be addressed in this course. While each topic will be treated separately in order that they may be discussed in depth, we will also discover how they intersect and overlap in important ways, and with American foreign policy toward Japan and East Asia.

Part One provides a chronological overview of modern Japanese history from the mid-19th century to the present, which will serve as background for our topical study of the contemporary political issues in Parts Two through Six.

Part Two, "History and Memory," examines some of the unresolved debates between Japan, China and Korea emanating from Japanese imperialism and the Asia-Pacific War (1931-1945). What light can history shed on the origins of that conflict? On Japan's wartime policies and conduct in the Asian theater, including the Nanjing Massacre and the use of "comfort women" and forced labor? Why do Chinese, Koreans, and even many Japanese object to visits by prominent Japanese politicians to Yasukuni Shrine, and criticize Japanese school textbooks over their treatments of Japanese imperialism and the war?

Part Three, “Islands,” takes up two different territorial disputes that pit the Japanese government against two East Asian neighbors—China and Korea—and a third with Okinawa Prefecture over the presence of US military bases there. All three have roots in the Meiji Period (1868-1912), when Japan moved to counter Western imperialism through its own policies of territorial expansion. And all three have been exacerbated by memories of the Asia-Pacific War and by Japan’s postwar security alliance with the United States.

Part Four, “Constitutional Revisionism,” examines the origins of Japan’s “postwar Constitution” under the aegis of the American-led Occupation (September 1945-May 1952), public attitudes toward the Constitution in the decades since, and attempts by the conservative Liberal Democratic Party since its founding in 1955 to revise its provisions governing the military, universal human rights, protection of individual rights, freedom of the press, and democratic education.

Part Five examines social attitudes and government policies toward “Minorities and Migration,” which have continued to evolve in the face of anticipated labor shortages resulting from Japan’s declining birth rate and rapidly aging population. What is the current status of historically marginalized groups such as the *burakumin* and *zainichi chosenshin*? What is the government’s position regarding foreign laborers and displaced refugees?

Part Six, “Nuclear Power,” takes up the debate over the future of nuclear energy in the wake of the March 2011 Fukushima Disaster. A fuller understanding requires an examination of the longer movement to eliminate nuclear weapons stemming from the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, on one hand, and the postwar construction of 54 nuclear power plants on the other.

FORMAT

Most class meetings will feature student-led discussions based on assigned readings, occasionally supplemented with brief “historical background presentations” by the professor. Four field trips in Kyoto and Osaka are planned, two of which will take place on Saturdays. Field trips will rely on informal commentary instead of structured lectures, so it is essential that students complete the assigned reading before each trip. The final graded project will consist of in-class debates and a related paper.

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING POLICY

1. **READING ASSIGNMENTS.** The following book is required for the course. Copies are available for purchase through KCJS:

Christopher Goto-Jones, *Modern Japan: A Very Short Introduction* (ISBN: 978-0199235698)

Some of the other required readings will be distributed in pdf format for you to read on a computer and/or print out on your own. The remainder can be accessed through the online website: *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* (apjpf.org/). Weekly reading assignments are listed below (see “Class Schedule”). Interested students can supplement these readings with optional Japanese-language source materials in consultation with the professor.

2. **ATTENDANCE** counts for 10% of the course grade. Regular attendance at all scheduled class meetings and fieldtrips is required. Unexcused absences will lower your attendance grade, as follows: 1 = 92/A; 2=87/B+; 3= 77/C+; 4 = 65/D; 5 = F.

Once class has started, please turn off and put away cell phones, and refrain from exiting and re-entering the classroom to use the restroom.

3. PARTICIPATION is a vital component of this course: active student involvement in discussions and other planned activities is essential to its success. Students and the professor will be learning from each other's interpretations of the material. Therefore, it is essential that you have all reading assignments prepared on time (see "Class Schedule" below for due dates).

You will be graded on four types of class participation:

- (a) Oral comments and questions during class discussions and field trips count for 10% of the course grade.
- (b) One oral presentation as discussion facilitator, based on an original news article that you introduce to the class, counts for 5% of the course grade.
- (c) One oral presentation as discussion facilitator, based on an assigned reading, counts for 5% of the course grade.
- (d) Participation in an in-class debate counts for 15% of the course grade

4. WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Detailed guidelines for each of the following writing assignments will be distributed separately.

- (a) One short (2-3 pages) report on "Comparing the 1889 and 1947 Constitutions" is due in class on January 18 in order to facilitate discussion of this important topic. It counts for 5% of the course grade.
- (b) One Reaction Paper (2-3 pages) based on an assigned reading, which will serve as the basis for your presentation as discussion facilitator (see 3c. above), counts for 5% of the course grade. Due dates vary.
- (c) One Field Trips Report (5 pages) counts for 10% of the course grade. It is due in class on March 22.
- (d) One Debate Paper (7 pages), based on the same topic as your in-class debate, counts for 15% of the grade. It is due on April 14.

Policy on Late Assignment Submissions. Papers will be penalized one letter grade for each day they are late.

5. EXAM

A Mid-Term Exam will take place in class on February 22. The exam counts for 20% of the course grade.

Academic Honesty. Plagiarism—the deliberate act of taking the words, ideas, data, illustrative material or statements of someone else, without full and proper acknowledgement, and presenting them as one's own—is a serious offense. It is your responsibility to become familiar with the details of how plagiarism is to be avoided, and the proper forms for quoting, summarizing, and paraphrasing, which

are presented in books such as the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Please see the instructor if you have any questions.

Accommodating Students with Disabilities. If you are a student with a disability and have a DS-certified ‘Accommodation Letter’ please come to my office to confirm your accommodation needs. If you believe that you have a disability that requires accommodation, you can contact your home school's Disability Services or Columbia's Disability Services at disability@columbia.edu. The Office of Global Programs (OGP) can also assist you to connect with Columbia's Disability Services.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Part I. Introduction and Historical Overview

- January 11 (1) Course Overview
Reading: Tessa Morris-Suzuki, “The Past is not Dead”(pdf)
- January 16 Historical Overview I: Chasing Modernity in the Age of Imperialism
In-class film showing: *The Meiji Revolution*
Reading: Christopher Goto-Jones: *Modern Japan*, pp. 1-61; text of the 1889 Meiji Constitution (<http://www.ndl.go.jp/constitution/e/etc/c02.html>)
- January 18 Historical Overview II: War, Defeat, Occupation and Postwar Reinvention
“Comparing the 1889 and 1947 Constitutions” report due in class
Reading: Christopher Goto-Jones: *Modern Japan*, pp. 62-123; text of the 1947 Constitution
(http://japan.kantei.go.jp/constitution_and_government_of_japan/constitution_e.html)
- January 23 Historical Overview III: Beyond “Postwar”
Reading: Christopher Goto-Jones: *Modern Japan*, pp. 124-150

Part II. History and Memory

- January 25 Remembering Japan’s “Holy War”: Oppressor or Liberator? (I)
Field Trip to Ryozen Gokoku Jinja
Reading: John Dower, “Japan’s Beautiful Modern War”(pdf)
- January 30 Remembering Japan’s “Holy War”: Oppressor or Liberator? (II)
Field Trip to Kyoto Museum for World Peace
Reading: John Dower, “An Aptitude for being Unloved: War and Memory in Japan” (pdf)
- February 1 Atomic Bombings
Reading: John Dower, “The Bombed: Hiroshimas and Nagasakis in Japanese Memory” (pdf); Toyonaga Keisaburo, “Colonialism and Atom Bombs: About Survivors of Hiroshima Living in Korea” (pdf)

- February 6 “Comfort Women”
Reading: Chungmoo Choi, “The Politics of War Memories Toward Healing” (pdf); Tessa Morris-Suzuki, “Addressing Japan’s ‘Comfort Women’ Issue from an Academic Standpoint” (<http://apjff.org/2014/12/9/Tessa-Morris-Suzuki/4081/article.html>)
- February 8 NO CLASS
- February 11 **(Saturday) Field Trip to Osaka International Peace Center**
Challenges to Reconciliation
Reading: Akiko Takenaka, “Japanese Memories of the Asia-Pacific War” (<http://apjff.org/2016/20/Takenaka.html>) ; Akiko Hashimoto, “Nationalism, Pacifism and Reconciliation” (<http://apjff.org/2016/20/Hashimoto.html>)

Part III. Islands

- February 13-15 Okinawa
Reading: Ishihara Masaie, “Memories of War and Okinawa” (pdf); David Obermiller, “Dreaming Ryukyu: Shifting and Contested Identities in Okinawa” (pdf); Gavan McCormack, “Japan’s Problematic Prefecture—Okinawa and the U.S.-Japan Relationship” (<http://apjff.org/2016/17/McCormack.html>)
- February 20 Senkaku/Diaoyu and Takeshima/Dokdo Territorial Disputes
Reading: Kimie Hara, “Okinawa, Taiwan and the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands in United States-Japan-China Relations” (<http://apjff.org/2015/13/28/Kimie-Hara/4341.html>); Yong-ho Ch’oe, “Japan’s 1905 Incorporation of Dokdo/Takeshima: A Historical Perspective” (<http://apjff.org/2015/13/8/Yong-ho-Choe/4290.html>)
- February 22 **Mid-Term Exam**
- Feb 27-Mar 1 NO CLASSES (Spring Break)

Part IV. Constitutional Revisionism

- March 6 (1:10 -2:40 pm) Guest Presentation by Professor Ken Ruoff
- March 6 Nationalism and Constitutional Revisionism (I)
Reading: David McNeill, “Nippon Kaigi and the Radical Conservative Project to Take Back Japan” (<http://apjff.org/-David-McNeill/4409>)
- March 8 Nationalism and Constitutional Revisionism (II)
Reading: Lawrence Repeta, “Japan’s Democracy at Risk” (<http://apjff.org/2013/11/28/Lawrence-Repeta/3969/article.html>)
- March 13 The Battle Over Article Nine
Reading: Muto Ichiyo, “Retaking Japan: The Abe Administration’s Campaign to Overturn the Postwar Constitution” (<http://apjff.org/2016/13/Muto.html>); Craig Martin, “Jus ad Bellum Implications of Japan’s New National Security Laws” (<http://apjff.org/2016/10/Martin.html>)

March 15 NO CLASS

Part V. Minorities and Migration

- March 18 **(Saturday) Field Trip to Osaka Human Rights Museum**
 “Indigenous Minorities”: Burakumin
 Reading: Daniel Botsman, “The Return of the Outcast(e) Map: Kobe, Cartography and the Problem of Discrimination in Modern Japan” (<http://apjff.org/2016/18/Botsman.html>); Tomohiro Yoshimura, “Historical Significance and Contemporary Role of the Osaka Human Rights Museum” (pdf)
- March 20 NO CLASS (National Holiday)
- March 22 Koreans in Japan
Field Trip Report due in class
 Reading: Sonia Ryang, “The Rise and Fall of Chongryun—From Chosenjin to Zainichi and Beyond” (<http://apjff.org/2016/15/Ryang.html>); Chikako Kashiwazaki, “The Foreigner Category for Koreans in Japan: Opportunities and Constraints” (pdf)
- March 27 Immigration Angst
 Reading: Jeff Kingston, “Demographic Dilemmas, Women and Immigration” (pdf)

Part VI. Nuclear Power

- March 29 Selling the Public on Nuclear Power
 Reading: Daniel Aldrich, “Revisiting the Limits of Flexible and Adaptive Institutions” (pdf)
- April 3 The Fukushima Disaster
 Reading: excerpts from *Fukushima Radiation: Will You Still Say No Crime was Committed?* (Kindle)
- April 5 Government Retrenchment and Popular Resistance
 Reading: Jeff Kingston, “Japan’s Nuclear Village: Power and Resistance” (pdf); Norma Field, “From Fukushima: To Despair Properly, to Find the Next Step” (<http://apjff.org/2016/17/Field.html>)
- April 10 **Student Debate**
- April 12 **Student Debate**
- April 14 **Debate Papers due in the Professor’s Office or Mailbox by 4:00 pm**