

Japan and the International Politics of Asia

Fall semester 2024

Instructor: Haruko Satoh, Osaka School of International Public Policy, Osaka University
hsatoh65@osipp.osaka-u.ac.jp / makotochan.satoh@gmail.com

Course Overview

Japan has long interacted and identified with a world of Western design as the only modern state to emerge from Asia in the nineteenth century. In the 150 years history of modernising, Japan cultivated a national thought and identity that stressed Japan as *sui generis* among the Western Others. In recent decades, this familiar world has begun to change and relations with Asian countries have become increasingly important due to the rise of other countries, from China, South Korea, India to some of the Southeast Asian states. Yet, these relations with neighbouring states, especially China and Korea, remain strained because of the past when Japan acted as a colonial power.

This course offers an understanding of changes in modern Japan's international role and behaviour from a global history perspective and as a *problematique* in international relations theory, through the examination of some of the contentious diplomatic issues, such as the "history problem", Yasukuni Shrine controversy, the "comfort women" issue, and challenges related to Japan's security alliance with the United States, as well as the more positive aspects of post-war Japan in the international arena, such as being a major development donor and supporter of UN-centred world of peacebuilding and human security. These issues will be treated as manifestations of nation-state identity issues, with roots in Japan's transition between pre-war and post-war states. In doing so, the course will be mindful of two reference points: (1) changes and continuities between pre-war and post-war Japanese states; and (2) changes and continuities in the international system, from the pre-1945 world, Cold War period to the present post-Cold War world.

Grading requirement: Discussion (20%); 1 mid-term short essay (750 words; 30%); 1 final paper (3,000 word; 5-%).