

KCJS 2027 Spring Term

Course title: Japan and East Asian Regional Environmental Issues

Term taught: Spring 2027

Class days/times: Tuesday & Thursday (13:10-14:40)

Classroom location: TBC

Course format: Seminar

Number of points for the course: 4 Points

Instructor: Aysun UYAR MAKIBAYASHI

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Office hours: Monday 13:00-14:00 or appointment by email

Course Description

This course aims to provide students with a basic understanding of global and regional environmental politics while focusing on Japan's approach to environmental and sustainability-related issues in East Asia. The perspectives of international relations will be utilized while analyzing the actors and the recent regimes of global environmental issues in East Asia. After a brief introduction about the politics of global environmental issues, Japan's stance vis a vis the recent global and regional environmental regimes will be scrutinized through comparative case studies, group discussions, group projects, and presentations. Kyoto has an important place within the history of environmental change agenda since the first global climate regime (Kyoto Protocol) was initiated in Kyoto in 1997. There will be field trips to important governmental institutions, research institutions, education facilities, and civil society initiatives about environment to understand and analyze the position of Kyoto within the recent agenda of global and regional environmental politics.

Course Outcomes

Students are expected to advance their understanding on the discourse of global and regional environmental politics while taking a rather critical approach to the recent discussions of global environmental change and looking at Japan in terms of its involvement with this agenda. They are also expected to raise their awareness about regional peculiarities and potentials on how to cope with the changing agenda of environment- and sustainability-related issues.

Course Materials

There is a list of required and further reading materials. Further readings and additional resources will be provided during each class. There will also be data slides and video presentations as supplementary class materials.

Required reading materials:

Conca, K. and G. Dabelko (eds.). 2020. *Green Planet Blues: Critical Perspectives on Global Environmental Politics*. Oxon: Routledge, 6th ed. ISBN: 978-0813350936.
Karan, Pradyumna, P. 2005. *Japan in the 21st Century: Environment, Economy, and Society*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky. ISBN: 978-0813191188.

Further readings:

Brazil, Mark. 2022. *Japan: The Natural History of an Asian Archipelago*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. ISBN: 978-0691175065.

Internet Resources:

Asian Development Bank: <https://www.adb.org/what-we-do/topics/environment>

NIES (National Institute for Environmental Studies, Japan):

<https://www.nies.go.jp/program/pasia-e.html>

UNEP (United National Environment Programme):

<https://www.unep.org/regions/asia-and-pacific>

World Bank: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/eap/brief/climate-and-development-in-east-asia-and-pacific-region>

*More internet resources will be introduced during the term.

Course requirements and evaluation

Attendance: Daily attendance is mandatory. It is also a general manner not to be late to the class. So, please don't enter the classroom if you are more than 15 minutes late. In case you might be late or absent from a class, please notify your instructor as soon as possible.

Participation: 10% (Class attendance does not mean class participation. Students are expected to attend each class and actively participate in class debates. There are many topics and issues to cover in this course. For this reason, it is very important to read the assigned materials and get prepared before each class.)

Group project and presentation: 20% (Students are expected to set a group and present on a topic of interest (related with the course topic and to be assigned during the course) to improve their comprehension about the main topics.)

Mid-term essay: 20% (A mid-term in an essay format is set to evaluate how students are following and responding to the class discussions, lectures, and reading materials.)

Final essay: 30% (Final paper will reflect on students' overall understanding of Japan in the middle of global and regional environmental change issues and how Japan is situating itself vis a vis other regional actors and international institutions.)

Field trip report: 20% (We will have two or three field trips depending on the schedule of our course. Students will write a short report on one of the field trips by focusing on the purpose, plan, topic, and any lessons we learn during our trips.)

Schedule of the Semester

Part I: Global and regional environmental politics

Week 1

Course introduction (*Global and regional environmental politics (Humanity and nature, humanity in nature)*)

Assignment: Conca and Dabelko Ch.1, 2, 3

Theories and approaches in global and regional environmental politics (*Introduction of group topics*)

Assignment: Karan Ch.1

Week 2

Actors of global and regional environmental politics

Assignment: Conca and Dabelko Ch.6, 7

Institutions of global and regional environmental politics (*Selection of group topics*)

Assignment: Conca and Dabelko Ch.11; Karan Ch.2

Part II: East Asian regional environmental politics

Week 3

Japan in East Asian regional environmental politics (*Group setting*)

Assignment: Karan Ch.4, 5

Week 4

Field trip 1 (*Kyoto City Hall, Office of Environmental Policy, TBC*)

Week 5

China in East Asian regional environmental politics

Assignment: Conca and Dabelko Ch.8; Karan Ch.7

Week 6

South Korea in East Asian regional environmental politics

(*Finalize presentation topics and dates & Mid-term essay*)

Assignment: Karan Ch.8

Part III: East Asian regional environmental issues

Week 7

Globalization, sustainability (SDGs), and development

Assignment: Conca and Dabelko Ch. 16, 17, 18, 19

Week 8

Field trip 2 (RIHN, TBC)

Week 9

Climate change and environmental security

Assignment: Conca and Dabelko Ch.4, 13, 14, 15; Karan Ch.13

Week 10

Biodiversity, energy, and food

Assignment: Conca and Dabelko Ch.27, 28; Karan Ch.14

Week 11

Group presentations

Group presentations and class discussion

Week 12

Field trip 3 (TBC) & (Field-trip report submission)

FINAL

Final essay

Note: This syllabus might be subject to changes and/or revisions.

Course policies

Course format: The course is structured in a seminar format with introductory lectures, group projects, and debates. There are weekly reading materials and supplementary materials like academic articles, data slides, and video presentations. Students are strongly encouraged to participate in class discussions with questions and critical comments on main topics.

Field trip: There will be field trips to important governmental institutions, research institutions, education facilities, and civil society initiatives about environment to understand and analyze the position of Kyoto within the recent agenda of global and regional environmental politics. We will have two or three field trips depending on the schedule of our course. Students will write a short report on one of the field trips by focusing on the purpose, plan, topic, and any lessons we learn during our trips.

Classroom policy: As the general language of the course is English, dictionaries can be used during the class. Nevertheless, use of any mobile phones/devices/computers without class purposes is strictly forbidden. Drinks are allowed but eating is not welcomed in the classroom.

“As members of an academic community, each one of us bears the responsibility to participate in scholarly discourse and research in a manner characterized by intellectual honesty and scholarly integrity. Collaborative scholarship requires the study of other scholars' work, the free discussion of such work, and the explicit acknowledgement of those ideas in any work that inform our own. This exchange of ideas relies upon a mutual trust that sources, opinions, facts, and insights will be

properly noted and carefully credited. In practical terms, this means that, as students, all work submitted in this course, whether in draft or final form, must be your own. You must be responsible for the full citations of others' ideas in all of your research papers and projects; you must be scrupulously honest when taking your examinations; you must always submit your own work and not that of another student, scholar, or internet agent. Any breach of this intellectual responsibility is a breach of faith with the rest of our academic community. It undermines our shared intellectual culture, and it cannot be tolerated.”KCJS

“The use of ChatGPT or any other AI tools for course assignments (with the exception of artificial neural networks like DeepL for machine translations, duly cited) is tantamount to plagiarism. Any cases of plagiarism or cheating will be reported to Columbia Undergraduate Global Engagement and the academic advisor at your home institution and are subject to the code of academic conduct there. In such cases, your final grade will be determined by your home institution and not by KCJS.” KCJS

Accommodation policy:

“If you are a student with a disability and have a Disability Services-certified ‘Accommodation Letter’ from your home institution, please send me this letter before the first day of class to confirm your accommodation needs. If you believe that you might have a disability that requires accommodation and do not have an accommodations letter, you should contact the Center for Undergraduate Global Engagement at Columbia University (uge@columbia.edu).” KCJS