Overview
This is an upper-division course on Japanese Politics. You do not have to know anything about Japan, and some background in political science would be helpful but is not necessary. The course is designed to give you a general understanding about the main features of contemporary Japanese politics and a more specialized understanding of a topic of your choice.

While the focus of this course is Japan, an important theme will be international comparison. We will be investigating the dynamics of Japan’s political institutions, but we will be doing so with an eye toward broader comparisons with other advanced industrialized countries. Therefore, we will be asking questions like: “How is Japan different from other industrialized countries? “How is Japan similar?” “Is Japan becoming more or less like other countries?”

Another theme that will be emphasized is change over time. This course is centered on different areas of policymaking, and in each case we will be examining the ways that political, economic, and social actors interact to construct policy. In each issue area we will be discussing how the policymaking process and the policy itself has changed over time. So, we will also be asking questions like: “How has Japan’s foreign policy changed over time?” “What is the importance of international forces on Japanese policy?” “What domestic actors drive policy change?”

Japanese politics is experiencing a period of dramatic institutional and cultural change. Long characterized by the dominance of elite politics, Japanese citizens are starting to make their voices heard in a myriad of ways. This course will encounter the elite level of politics, but focus more especially on the exceptional dynamism occurring “outside the center” of politics in Japan in a variety of policy areas.

Objectives
There are five primary learning goals for this class:
- Understand the how government and politics works in Japan
- Develop a comparative perspective when analyzing politics around the world
- Expand independent research skills
- Improve oral presentation skills
- Improve academic writing skills

Expectations
This is an upper-division seminar, so I expect a high level of student involvement in the course. The course will involve in-class discussions of the reading, a take home midterm, and an independent research paper with an oral presentation about that research. I expect each student to come prepared and to participate actively in class discussions.
Grading
There are four components of your final grade: participation, quizzes, a take-home midterm exam, and a final research paper and presentation. This is a writing intensive course, and we will be focusing on writing throughout the course and will put considerable emphasis on improving writing skills.

Participation:
Students are expected to come prepared to class each session. This means having read and thought about the reading material. The success of this course depends in large part on student willingness to engage in the material and push our conversations up to a higher level. As part of the participation grade, students will also be required to contribute to a group presentation about “Japan in the news” one time during the semester.

Quizzes:
There will be 5 “pop” quizzes over the course of the semester. The purpose of these quizzes is to make sure that you keep up with the reading and to help prepare you for the larger take-home assignments. I will count the top four quizzes. No make-up quizzes will be given.

Public event write ups: I highly encourage you to attend public events (lectures, films, exhibits, etc.) on campus that have to do with Japanese politics. If you go to one of these events and submit a one-page write up that summarizes the event/lecture (puzzle, argument, evidence) and asks three questions, I will grade your write up. Each public event write up will count as ½ a quiz, so if you write up two events, together they replace one quiz grade.

Midterm Exam:
The midterm exam will cover the broad conceptual material in the first half of the course. It will be a take home exam. Grades will be reduced by 1/3 (e.g. from A- to B+) for every 24hrs or part thereof that the exam is late.

Research Paper
You will complete an independent research paper on the topic of your choice related to Japanese politics. The paper must be 18-20 pages long and use at least ten different academic sources (books, journal articles, primary sources; other sources such as newspaper articles, magazine articles, blogs, etc. can be used but don’t count toward the ten). About a month before the paper is due you will hand in a thesis statement, outline, and a preliminary bibliography. Throughout the semester you will be meeting in “research groups” and participate online with peers conducting research on similar topics in order to discuss your progress, share resources, and circulate drafts. In the final week you will present your research to your peers in an academic conference format of themed panels. You will also conduct peer reviews of rough drafts of the paper before handing it in at the beginning of exam week.

I am not tolerant of cheating or plagiarism. See the Student Handbook’s section on the Honor System for an explanation of student responsibilities, the process involved in prosecuting an Honor System violation, and an essay on plagiarism. http://www.wesleyan.edu/studenthandbook/3_honorsystem.ctl. I take the Honor System very seriously and will take any violations to the Honor Board. I will give you all the tools you need to do well on all of your assignments throughout the semester, so there should be
no need for unacceptable assistance. If you have questions about the appropriate way to use or cite a source, please do not hesitate to ask me before you hand in your paper.

**Breakdown of grade:**
The breakdown of the course grade is as follows:

- **Participation**
  - In class discussion: 10%
  - Quizzes: 10%
- **Take-home Midterm**: 35%
- **Final Project**
  - Oral Presentation: 5%
  - Paper: 40%

**Grade Complaints:**
Grade complaints will not be entertained until 24 hours after the exam/assignment is returned to you or more than two weeks after the exam/assignment has been returned. If you have a question concerning the grade you have received:

1) Wait 24 hours.
2) Write out an explanation of your question, including the reasons why you think your grade should be changed.
3) Submit your written complaint/question to me, and make an appointment to meet either during my office hours or at some other time.

**A Final Note**
I hope that you will look to me as a resource. I highly encourage you to take advantage of my office hours to stop by and talk about issues raised in the course, or other questions you have. I am very open to feedback about the course, and would appreciate you sharing any thoughts you might have for improvement earlier rather than later in the semester. I am very excited about this course on Japanese politics, and I hope that we can all have an interesting and productive semester!

*I reserve the right to change this syllabus without notice.*
**Reading Schedule**

**Section 1: History and Structure of Postwar Japanese Government and Politics**
- What are the origins of Japan’s postwar political system?
- What is late development?
- How did it effect Japan’s political development?
- Who governs Japan?

Jan. 26  
*Introduction*

Jan. 31  
*Origins of Modern Japanese Politics*  
Mary Alice Haddad, *Building Democracy in Japan* (Intro, Ch. 3; proofs pdf)

Feb. 2  
*The 1990s and the Remaking of the 1955-system*  

Feb. 7  
*Executive Branch: Central Bureaucracy*  

Feb. 9  
*Legislative Branch: Party System and the LDP*  

**Turn in Paper Topic—The “Puzzle” You Want to Answer—and List 3 sources.**

Feb. 14  
*Judiciary*  

**Japan in the News #1**
Section 2: Voices from Outside of the Center

- What is the relationship between policymakers in Tokyo and those outside?
- How are policymakers held accountable?
- How are public voices heard?

Feb. 16  Local Government

Feb. 21  Media and policymaking

Feb. 23  Civil Society

MIDTERM DUE FRIDAY February 24th at 12:00 Noon

Section 2: International Politics—Trade and Security

- What is industrial policy?
- How did the economic miracle turn into an economic bubble?
- Where is the dynamism in Japan’s economy today?
- What are the key issues in Japan’s foreign policy? How have they changed?

Feb. 28  Economic Policy
Ulrike Schaede, Choose and Focus (Cornell 2008) Intro and Ch. 1.

Optional Reading:
- Walter Hatch and Kozo Yamamura, Asia in Japan’s Embrace (Cambridge 1996).
Mar. 1  

Security Policy  

Optional Reading:  

Japan in the News #2  

Mar. 6  

Coping with China  

Optional Reading:  

Mar. 8  

*Joining the Trans-Pacific Partnership: In-class simulation!*  
Mireya Solis,  

Mar.9-26  

**SPRING BREAK!!!!**  

Section 3: Grassroots Democratization in Japan and Contemporary Politics  
- How did Japan Democratize?  
- What is the relationship between citizens and the state?  
- How has state-society relations changed over time?
Mar. 27  Haddad *Building Democracy in Japan*, Ch. 1, 2.

**Optional Readings**

Mar. 29  *Traditional Civil Society Groups*
Haddad *Building Democracy in Japan* ch. 4

**Optional Readings**

**Japan in the News #3**

Apr. 3  *New-Style Civil Society Groups*
Haddad *Building Democracy in Japan* ch. 5

**Optional Readings**
- Jennifer Chan ed. *Another Japan is Possible* (Stanford, 2008)
- Isa Ducke, *Civil Society and the Internet in Japan* (Routledge, 2007).

Apr. 5  *Religion and politics in East Asia; joint with EAST201: Meet at FEAS*
Rieko Kage, *Civic Engagement in Postwar Japan* (Cambridge 2011), ch. 6

**Optional Reading**
- See-Jae Lee, “Social Education for Environment and Environmental NGO in Korea” working paper.
Section 4: Environmental Politics

- What are the key characteristics of environmental politics in Japan
- How do citizens get involved?
- How has their involvement changed over time?


Optional Reading:

Section 5: Social Policy

- How are they meeting contemporary social and political challenges?
- How are these issues being handled?
- How are these issues challenging/transforming the political structure?

Apr. 12 Social Welfare and Income Disparity
Social Science Japan Newsletter no. 35, Articles by Honda, Ishida, and Sato; pp. 3-15.

Optional Reading

Japan in the News #4

Apr. 17 Minority Issues

Optional Reading

Apr. 19  Gender
Haddad ch. 6

Optional Reading:
• Robin LeBlanc Bicycle Citizens (California, 1999) and The Art of the Gut (California, 2009)

Apr. 24  The Future of Japanese Politics—Japan after 3-11
Haddad ch. 7

Japan in the News #5

Apr. 26  Presentations
May 1  Presentations
May 3  Presentations
May 8  Wrapping up

Rough Draft posted to moodle group by May 2 at Noon —Peer Reviews in Class

Final Paper Due: Thursday May 17 by 12:00 noon.