Government 285: Losers of World War Two

Professors Sarah Elise Wiliarty
Office: PAC 409
Phone: 685-2996
Email: swiliarty@wesleyan.edu
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Office hours: Thursday, 2-4pm

Class meetings: TTh 10:30-11:50; PAC 422

Course Summary
This course explores the experiences of Germany and Japan in the postwar era. Both countries faced the dual challenge of making political transitions to democratic government and recovering from the economic ruin of World War Two. Germany and Japan both were occupied and rebuilt by the United States, and both were blamed for the devastation of the war. How did Germany and Japan respond to being cast as worldwide villains? How strong are the democracies that developed? Are there similar reasons for the economic success followed by economic difficulty that both countries have experienced during the postwar period? This course explores these questions by comparing German and Japanese culture, history, and institutions.

Student Learning Outcomes
After completing this course students will have a greater understanding of the following:

- The way values and beliefs influence politics (the cultural dimensions of politics)
- The effects of “the rules of the game” on politics (the institutional dimensions of politics)
- Political analysis through writing. Specifically, the student will refine their ability to devise a clear thesis sentence, analyze various scholarly arguments, consider and refute counterarguments, and properly cite sources.

Course Requirements
25% First paper (due Feb. 20th)
25% Second paper (due April 3rd)
35% Final
15% Participation

Readings
The readings for this course contain conflicting interpretations of both theory and history. It is important that you read actively and critically. There is no single accepted “truth” in most of the topics we explore. Your job is to learn to identify, and then to compare and evaluate competing arguments.
The readings for this course complement the lectures; neither can substitute for the other. You will learn the most from this class if you do the reading on each topic before coming to lecture.

**Exam**
The final will cover readings and class materials. The focus of the exam will be on broad questions and concepts.

**Participation**
This course will have a mixed lecture/discussion format. It is therefore critical that you come to class having done the readings and prepared to talk about the material. Because discussion is critical to the course, attendance is required. Students are allowed two absences. Absences exceeding two will result in a deduction of your participation grade. Attendance alone, however, does not guarantee a good participation grade. You must also actively contribute to class discussion and I will keep track of who has spoken. Smaller assignments, such as short answers to study questions or pop quizzes, will also count towards your participation grade. Frequent absences from class will result in your participation grade counting for significantly more than 15%.
CLASS TOPICS
The Postwar Settlement

January 22  Introduction

January 27  Postwar Settlement: Democracy


Jan 29  Postwar Settlement: Economics


February 3  The Military and rearmament


February 5  Political Parties


February 10  Political Culture and Coping with the Fascist Past


February 12  Regional Politics and Coping with the Fascist past:


Postwar Politics, Culture, Political Economy

February 17  Institutions of Democracy in Germany


February 19  Institutions of Democracy in Japan


February 24  Political Culture


February 26  **Economic Miracle in Germany and Japan**


March 3  **Stresses on Growth in Germany and Japan**


March 5  **Economic Slowdown in Germany and Japan**


**SPRING BREAK!**

March 24  **Electoral Politics: Germany**


March 26  **Electoral Politics: Japan**


**Current Challenges**

March 31  **Nuclear power in Germany**


April 2  **Joint Class with Southwestern University**

April 7  **Nuclear power in Japan**


Kingston, Jeff. 2012. The Politics of Disaster, Nuclear Crisis and Recovery. In *Natural Disaster and Nuclear Crisis in Japan: Response*

April 9  **Immigration in Germany**


April 14  | **Immigration in Japan**


April 16  | **Women and the Economy in Germany and Japan**


April 21  | **Women and Politics in Germany and Japan**


April 23  | **Joint class meeting with Southwestern University**
April 28  

**Leadership in Germany**


April 30  

**Leadership in Japan**


May 5  

**Prognosis / Conclusion**

