Syllabus
PS 44
JAPANESE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS:
CONFLICT AND CONSENSUS
Spring Term 2000

Prof. Ted Gilman
Political Science Dept., Union College
Office Hours: Friday 1:30-3:30 p.m.
and by appointment.

This course provides an overview of political structure, process, and policy in contemporary Japan. It begins with a brief historical narrative of postwar politics, and proceeds to discussions of Japanese culture and society, electoral politics, decision-making structures and processes, foreign affairs and political economy. It is based on lectures and discussions, with plenty of time for questions and answers.

Thematically, we will focus on the issues of conflict and consensus in Japan. The Japanese are often portrayed as group-oriented people who shun conflict and individualism. Is this image correct? We will study numerous examples of conflict and consensus in Japanese political and social relations.

There are three types of readings in this course: books, reserve materials, and electronic resources. Six books are assigned nearly in their entirety and are available in paperback. They are listed here by the short-form title used in the reading list.


All other readings, those marked with an asterisk (*), will be left on reserve in the library. All assigned readings are required. They should be completed prior to the start of class on the assigned day.
Electronic resources will be an integral part of this course. All students must have an email account. There are many useful and interesting resources available through the Internet, and I will periodically send you relevant items which I treat as required reading. Furthermore, I will introduce you to some useful resources for your written assignments available on the WorldWide Web.

Daily news from Japan will be an important part of this course. Since no American daily newspapers provide consistent and sufficient coverage of Japanese politics, I require you to check the web sites of the major Japanese daily newspapers to keep up on Japanese current events. The URLs are:

http://www.asahi.com/english/english.html
http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/
http://www.mainichi.co.jp/

Again, keeping up on current events in Japan is required reading! Make these sites part of your daily routine. Another site to visit for good Japanese politics information is:

http://www.people.Virginia.EDU/~ljs2k/webtext.html

Grading for this course will be based on an in-class midterm examination, a group presentation and paper project, a take-home final examination (10-15 pages), and bi-weekly email to be submitted by the students to the instructor. The email assignments are as follows: Each week you must submit questions before the first class of the week and short summary essays after the second class of the week. The questions should address issues in the readings, online resources, or current Japanese political events and affairs. Two to four questions and comments must be submitted via email to the instructor no later than noon on Monday. The essays (no more than one page in length) should summarize the main points of the previous three class lectures and discussions. Summary essays are due by Saturday at noon. These submissions will be used to construct class discussion. The grading percentages are as follows:

- Weekly email submissions: 10%
- Class participation: 10%
- In-class midterm examination: 25%
- Group project: 20%
- Take-home final examination: 35%

Finally, I want to emphasize the fact that this class is an interactive exercise. The more you participate, the better it will be. Japan is a controversial topic that affords plenty of material for good discussion. Dig in!

**Boring Bureaucratic Stuff**

All work must be completed in order to pass this course. No makeup or extra credit work will be allowed. No alternate final examination time will be offered. Attendance matters. For every unexcused absence, you will lose one-third of a grade off your final grade. Come to class.
SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Week 1. (3/27 & 3/29)

Aisatsu (Greetings and Introduction)
The Japanese System


Get acquainted with the Japanese newspapers listed above.

Week 2. (4/3 & 4/5)

Japan Before WWII
The Postwar Political Soap Opera

Parties, Chapters 1-3

Week 3. (4/10 & 4/12)

Cultural Explanations and Beyond


Week 4. (4/17 & 4/19)

Japan's Minorities

Minorities, Chapters 3-7.

Week 5. (4/24 & 4/26)

Protest Politics
Value Change
How People Vote


Week 6.  (5/1 & 5/3)
Women and Politics
The Politics of Futility: Opposition Parties


*Parties,* Chapters 6-8

Week 7.  (5/8 & 5/10)
The Politics of Success: The LDP
Japan’s New Political Parties


*Parties,* Chapters 4-5

Week 8.  (5/15 & 5/17)
The Government and the Economic Miracle


Week 9.  (5/22 & 5/24)
Foreign Policy
US-Japan Relations


**Week 10. (5/29 & 5/31)**

**Japan’s New International Role?**