The Political Economy of Japan

WWS 464/POL365 (Fall 2006)
Tuesday 1:30-4:20, Robertson 029

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Office hours: Thursday 10-12 am

Course description

This course examines the Japanese model that was long admired for creating a growth “miracle” but has been challenged by over a decade of economic stagnation. What were the political and economic conditions that allowed Japan to emerge as the first non-Western state to industrialize and become a major economic power? How has Japan responded to the constraints and opportunities of the world economy? Why did the model fail in the nineties and will recent reforms succeed? The course investigates policy lessons from Japan’s experience. Focus will be on evaluating institutions that regulate government-society relations.

Course requirements

Precept participation: 25 percent
Take-home Midterm I: 15 percent
Take-home Midterm II: 15 percent
Term paper: 45 percent

Participation in seminar discussion includes regular engagement with discussion and one short presentation during the semester (format will be discussed during introduction session). The two midterms will be short exams. Midterm 1 will cover materials from weeks 1-6. Questions will be distributed October 24 and exams are due by noon Oct. 27. Midterm 2 will cover materials from weeks 7-12. Questions distributed Dec. 12, exams due by noon Dec. 15. Term papers will encourage independent research that looks more deeply at a question raised in the course and presents a policy recommendation about a “lesson” from the Japanese experience. The paper should concisely present the problem, background material on pros and cons from Japan, and your opinion about the applicability of the lesson for other countries. 8 pages maximum length (double-spaced), plus bibliography listing sources. You should consult with me on choice of topic by Nov. 9. The paper is due by noon January 16.
Course books available for purchase at U-Store and on reserve at Stokes Library:


All other readings are available through the course blackboard website on e-reserves. Please contact my assistant Philomena Fischer (pfischer@Princeton.EDU) if you notice any problems with the reading availability.

• **Week 1 (Sept. 19) Introduction: Overview of the Japanese Model** weekly reading pages total: 45

  Several copies of the book are on reserve and the entire book is recommended reading.

• **Week 2 (Sept. 26) Historical Roots of Industrial Policy** weekly reading pages total: 125


• **Week 3 (Oct. 3) The Developmental State** weekly reading pages total: 292


**Week 4 (Oct. 10) The 1955 System and One-party Political Dominance**
weekly reading pages total: 218


**Week 5 (Oct. 17) Big Business and Labor**
weekly reading pages total: 117


**Week 6 (Oct. 24) Society and Weak Sectors**
weekly reading pages total: 188


• **Week 7 (Nov. 7) FOREIGN PRESSURE FOR TRADE LIBERALIZATION**
  weekly reading pages total: 251


• **Week 8 (Nov. 14) THE FOREIGN POLICY OF AN ECONOMIC SUPERPOWER**
  weekly reading pages total: 150


• **Week 9 (Nov. 21) REVERSAL OF FORTUNE AND ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN**
  weekly reading pages total: 118


**Week 10 (Nov. 28) Reforming the Model**

weekly reading pages total: 159

Guest lecture on Japan’s banking crisis and reforms by Hideaki Suzuki, senior official of the Japanese Ministry of Finance and Visiting Fellow at Princeton.


**Week 11 (Dec. 5) Political change in the 1990s**

weekly reading pages total: 167


• **Week 12 (Dec. 12) New Lessons from Japan**

weekly reading pages total: 111


