Few societies generate as much envy and misunderstanding as does Japan. A century ago, few westerners were much concerned about Japan and those that were thought the Japanese a quaint people who lived in paper houses, ate raw fish, and beheaded people at will. In the 1980's, almost every European and North American talked about the "lessons of Japan" and looked enviously at the Japanese "economic miracle." Many politicians went so far as to argue that Japan juggernaut represented one of the greatest sources of threat to the West. In 1999, Japan represents a different sort of threat: its economy has stalled, its financial institutions seem in disarray, and its actions are said to deepen the "crisis" that is sweeping across Southeast Asia.

How has a society changed so rapidly, and why is it seen in such contradictory ways by outsiders? Very few outsiders comprehend the complex nature of Japanese society or understand the workings of Japanese politics. At best, most vacillate between views that on the one hand see Japan as an Asian version of a western industrial democracy and on the other hand insist that Japan remains a hopelessly parochial and isolated society uninterested in western international mores.

This seminar will examine modern Japan by focusing on social patterns, government institutions, and political activity. The course will examine the politics of modern Japan, study the institutions that shape these politics, evaluate the interrelationship of economic and political activity, and look at Japan's changing role in Asia and the world.

Requirements

- A mid-term take-home paper/question (30%);
- 20-25 page research paper and participation in the class group project (50%);
- Active participation in class discussions and completion of the assigned readings before class (20%);

Reading Assignments

Sep 14 INTRODUCTION

PART I: TRADITIONAL JAPANESE POLITICS

Sep 16 TRADITIONAL JAPANESE POLITICS (1)

White and Barnett, *Comparing Cultures*, Ch. 1 (handout)

Morton, *Japan: History and Culture*, Ch. 1-8

Pempel, *Regime Shift*, Preface and pp. 1-16

Sep 21 TRADITIONAL JAPANESE POLITICS (2)

Morton, *Japan: History and Culture*, Ch. 9-12

*The Nobility of Failure* (handout)

Pempel, *Regime Shift*, Ch. 1
Sep 23 JAPANESE POLITICAL CULTURE (1)
   Perrin, *Giving Up the Gun*


Sep 28 JAPANESE POLITICAL CULTURE (2)
   *The 47 Ronin Story* (on reserve)

   Okimoto, *Inside the Japanese System*, pp. 15-24 (handout)

Sep 30 MODERNIZATION AND INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION
   Morton, *Japan: History and Culture*, Ch. 13-15

   *The Nobility of Failure* (handout)


Oct 5 COMPETITION AND WAR

II. POST-WAR JAPANESE GOVERNMENT

Oct 7 WAR'S AFTERMATH
   Hersey, *Hiroshima* (on reserve)

   Hachiya, *Hiroshima Diary* (handout)


Oct 12 POST-WAR INSTITUTIONS
   Pempel, *Regime Shift*, Ch. 1 (again)

   Okimoto, *Inside the Japanese System*, pp. 103-135, 139-143 (handout)


   Gibney, *Unlocking the Bureaucrats Kingdom*, Ch. 1, 2, 3

   Dazai, *The Setting Sun* (on reserve)

Oct 14 THE 'ECONOMIC MIRACLE'
   Pempel, *Regime Shift*, Ch. 2

   Okimoto, *Inside the Japanese System*, pp. 70-79, 144-69 (handout)


Oct 19 THE CONSERVATIVE ERA
   Pempel, *Regime Shift*, Ch. 3

Mishima, *Sailor Who Fell From Grace With the Sea* (reserve)

Oct 21 JAPANESE POLITICS IN THE 1990's (1)

Pempel, *Regime Shift*, Ch. 4

Gibney, *Unlocking the Bureaucrats Kingdom*, Ch. 5, 6

*(Take Home question/paper due)*

Oct 26 JAPANESE POLITICS IN THE 1990's (2)

Pempel, *Regime Shift*, Ch. 5

Gibney, *Unlocking the Bureaucrats Kingdom*, Ch. 7, 14

Oct 28 JAPANESE POLITICS IN THE 1990's (3)

Pempel, Regime Shift, Ch. 6

Gibney, Unlocking the Bureaucrats Kingdom, Conclusion by Hollerman

Mishima, The Sound of Waves (on reserve)

Nov 2 JAPAN AND THE WORLD

Pempel, *Regime Shift*, Conclusion

Ezra Vogel, "*Japan as Number One in Asia*" (handout)

**III. TASK FORCE REPORTS: EMERGING FROM THE CRISIS**

Nov 4 DEBATING PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES

Nov 9 DEBATING PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES

Nov 11 DEBATING PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES

Nov 16 DEBATING PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES

Nov 22 *(ALL WORK DUE)*