Course Description

Political economy defies easy definition, but its focus is the relationship between political and economic processes. Some political economists study state policies used to stimulate economic growth and regulate trade. For many, however, political economy indicates an explicit historically- and culturally-informed critique of capitalism that sees society as divided into classes. Because of this connection to social class, many scholars in the social sciences emphasize the social aspects of political economy, by situating politics and the economy, broadly defined, within society. This focus on society separates political economy from "pure" economics by arguing that we are not context-less, rational economic beings. We all are embedded in social networks that influence our economic decisions. In this sense, Japanese political economy studies the ways that Japanese politics and the economy impact and reflect upon society.

This course concentrates on the political economy of postwar Japan. Standard discourses of this era describe an economic miracle, the bubble bursting, and the "lost decades" that brings us to today. This course avoids studying Japan merely as an economic machine, and instead asks what constitutes the economic and how the economy operates at different geographic scales, from the global to the household and the individual. We will pay particular attention to the construction state, immigration debates, globalization, and the feminization of the Japanese workplace.

Learning Outcomes: some are content-specific, while others are general skills that will help you as a future citizen, employee, scholar, community organizer, etc.

By the end of the semester you should be able to:

- Explain the main contours of Japan’s postwar political economy (remember and recall details)
- Utilize (both verbally and in writing) concepts specific to Japan’s political economy (apply context-specific knowledge)
- Contribute to the module Wiki project (synthesize knowledge, create new scholarship)
- Plan a seminar meeting (organization skills)
- Teach concepts to others (teaching and planning skills)
- Organize a group discussion and encourage everyone to participate (group dynamics)
- Express your ideas clearly and with evidence, both verbally and in writing (develop communication skills, including persuasion)
- Analyze a novel, film, or other form of popular media using ideas from class (incorporate academic knowledge in everyday life)

Expectations

- Respect the opinions of others.
- Arrive on time.
- Turn off your cell phone.
- Leave your laptop at home (exceptions for serious note-takers).

Readings

There is one required text. Copies are available in the NUS bookstore, online, or in RBR. Access all other readings through the NUS libraries website or in IVLE (see reading schedule below). Please go paperless if you can.


Plagiarism

NUS has clear, strict guidelines regarding what constitutes plagiarism. I will not tolerate any form of plagiarism, and you will submit your final paper to Turnitin.com to avoid any confusion. If you have questions, please view this webpage or ask me for clarification: http://www.nus.edu.sg/registrar/adminpolicy/acceptance.html#NUSHonourCode

Student marks will be based on the following:

50% Class facilitation: lead or co-lead two class sessions during the semester. We will determine the schedule at the first meeting. Each session involves five parts:
1) First, after completing your readings (plus supplementary readings if as you deem necessary), submit a preview of the scholarship. Imagine summarizing the scholarship for a busy boss, or for yourself when studying for comprehensive exams (PhD). Provide a general overview that will help others understand the context and arguments being made. If you have works from various authors, how do these ideas relate to each other? How do these readings relate to the previous facilitator’s summary (see below #4)? Try to provide guideposts that others should look for when reading. This could be questions that we might address in our meeting, or supplementary readings, videos, or podcasts that will help contextualize the work. You also could provide a note-taking aid as an attachment, such as an outline or table with blanks that the reader can fill in while reading. There is no word count expected, but around 2 pages (1000 words) of summary, plus any note-taking aids should be sufficient. Be creative. Consider this practice for future opportunities to run meetings. Submit your summary and other materials to the module wiki no later than 5:00pm on the Sunday before your class. Please title the new topic like this (e.g. Week 2_Preview_Your Name). (10% total; 5% each session)

2) Next, submit a lesson plan to Dr. McMorran no later than 5:00pm on the Tuesday before your class. Include what topics you will cover, what activities we will do, and how much time each aspect will take. Also, clearly indicate the learning outcomes you have for the meeting. Plan for two hours of activity. (10% total; 5% each session)

3) Run the class meeting – present key points, facilitate discussion, and make links to past theories and class sessions. You will be expected to have a command of the major debates addressed in your session. Also, it takes skill to design a discussion, keep it flowing, and make sure everyone has a chance to (and does) talk. Be creative. Use visual aids (slides, whiteboard, video, songs). (10% total; 5% each session)

4) Write a meeting summary. Note the major themes, controversies, and unresolved issues. Submit the summary to the module Wiki no later than 5:00pm on the Saturday immediately after your session. Please title the new topic like this (e.g. Week 2_Summary_Your Name). (10% total; 5% each session)

5) Finally, create at least two and edit at least one Wiki pages on a debate or key term addressed. Use the Wiki to combine writing, readings, and external links that will help future learners better understand a particular point or key term. By the end of the semester, we should have a comprehensive database on Japanese Political Economy that we will be proud to share with future students. Over the course of the semester, you can refine your Wikis to include new ideas. You may create as many Wiki pages as you like, and I will look favorably on extra effort when marking at the end of the semester. (10% total)

*Please do not be late with your preview and summary. Your classmates depend on your timely submissions, and I will take off points.

10% In-class and online discussion/participation. Let’s create an active learning community in which everyone freely offers insights in class and in the IVLE discussion forum. This will be an opportunity for you to synthesize ideas from readings. I will assess you on the quality of your arguments (supported with evidence or logic) and the originality and applicability of your thoughts. Class participation is required; however, IVLE participation provides evidence of an extended engagement with the material and will be especially beneficial for those who hesitate to speak during class.

40% Research paper. 5000-6000 words (maximum, including references). Analyze a character from a contemporary novel, manga, film, or other media through the ideas from the module. I will assess you on the clarity of your argument and writing style (including grammar and usage), your incorporation of insights from the module, and your originality. This will be an opportunity to transfer academic knowledge to the non-academic world, hopefully providing a model for how you can make use of this module in your future. Part of your grade depends on participation in a peer review process. More details to follow.

Other important info

Wiki login link: http://wiki.nus.edu.sg/dashboard.action

Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic Description</th>
<th>Homework/Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/6</td>
<td>Course introduction</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2) (Gao 2009). “2009 Gao Postwar Jpns Economy”  
3) (Sugimoto 2010), pp. 219-248. “2010 Sugimoto Collusion and Competition”  
4) (Pempel 2010) – Access online  
  Come to class prepared to answer questions in Wiki. |
| 3/0  | Chinese New Year | Read on your own – individual consultations upon request |
3) (Waley 2005) - Access online  
4) (Onishi 2006), “2006 NYTimes - Village writes epitaph”  
|-----------|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Week 1/3 | The Leisure State | 1) (Robertson 1988). Access online - JSTOR only  
3) (McMorran 2008). In Tourism Geographies - Access online  
2) (Sugimoto 2010), pp. 88-123. “2010 Sugimoto Forms of Work”  
3) (Fu 2011), pp. 17-39. “2012 Fu Haken 2”  
4) (Gregory 2009), 497-498. “DHG_Neoliberalism”  
5) Optional: (Hook and Takeda 2007). Access online |
| Week 6/3 | No class | NUS break |
| Week 1/3 | Globalization The Economy of Social Reproduction | 1) (Kurotani 2005). Chapters 1-3 |
| Week 2/2 | Immigration Feminization of Labor | 1) (Faier 2009), pp. 35-79. “2009 Faier Sites”  
2) (Onuki 2009). Access online  
3) (Shipper 2005). Access online  
4) (Tabuchi 2009). “2009 Tabuchi Nikkei return”  
6) (Tabuchi 2011) “2011 Tabuchi Immigrants”  
7) Optional: (Morris-Suzuki 2006). Access online |
| Week 2/3 | Alternative Political Economy | 1) Alternative readings about PE, TBD |
| Week 3/4 | Projects | 1) Share ideas (notes, outline, or draft – something in writing) for final paper. |
Readings


