

PLS 100 Introduction to Politics

3rd and 4th quarters, Freshman

Instructor	YOKOI MASANOBU
Style of Class	Lecture
Number of Credits	2
Day and Period	Monday, Period 3

Course Description

The Diet and Cabinet under the Constitution of Japan have been criticized for not sufficiently fulfilling their expected functions in comparison to the UK, which exemplifies the parliamentary cabinet system, or the US, which is based on a presidential system with a tripartite separation of powers. However, in reality, the functions and roles fulfilled by the legislative and executive branches of governments have differences which stem from each country's respective history and culture, and the relationship between the branches is not always the same.

This course will introduce students to various arguments pertaining to the functions of, and relationship between, the legislative and executive branches of major developed nations—such as the US presidential system, UK parliamentary cabinet system, and the continental European parliamentary cabinet systems of countries like Germany—from the perspective of comparative politics. The course will provide an overview of the characteristics and problems of the legislative and executive branches in Japan which appear in such arguments, with a focus on the relationship between branches. Based on this, the course aims to deepen students' understanding of political systems against the backdrops of the respective country or region's history and political culture, while fostering students' critical and logical thinking skills and providing them with a broad range of knowledge pertaining to the problems that surround Japan's modern system of government.

Course Objectives

Students will:

- (1) learn about the basic principles and structures of the governments of developed nations such as Japan, and examine the actual processes of those functions, and
- (2) gain basic knowledge to understand the characteristics and problems of Japan's current system of government, and solidify their own thoughts on those features and problems.

Expected Outcomes

- (1) acquire the broad basic and specialized knowledge and skills needed to explore the features and issues of systems of government of different countries and regions from a variety of angles
- (2) learn the basic analytical framework for political science, to deepen the understanding of political phenomena
- (3) be able to develop critical and logical thinking skills and gain broad knowledge regarding the problems that surround modern Japan's legislature, executive branch, and party politics

Prerequisites

Introduction to Global and Community Studies

Class Materials

- (1) Oyama Reiko, *Nihon no kokkai* (The Diet of Japan), Iwanami Shoten, 2011.
- (2) Iio Jun, *Nihon no Seiji Kozo* (The structure of the Japanese government), Chuokoron-Shinsha, 2007.
- (3) Kawato Sadafumi, *Giinnaikakusei* (Parliamentary Government), University of Tokyo Press, 2015.
- (4) Masuyama Mikitaka, *Rippo to kenryoku bunritsu* (Legislative Power and Democracy), University of Tokyo Press, 2015.
- (5) Fukumoto Kentaro, *Nihon no kokkai seiji* (Diet politics of Japan), University of Tokyo Press, 2000.
- (6) Kawato Sadafumi, *Nihon no kokkai seido to seito seiji* (Japanese Diet and Party Politics), University of Tokyo Press, 2005.
- (7) Ito Mitsutoshi (ed.), *Seiji kateiron* (Political process theory), Yuhikaku, 2000.
- (8) Yamaguchi Jiro, *Naikaku seido* (Cabinet system), University of Tokyo Press, 2007.

- (9) Machidori Satoshi, *Shusyo seiji no seido bunseki* (The Japanese Premiership: An Institutional Analysis of the Power Relations), Chikura Publishing, 2012.
- (10) Webb, Paul & Poguntke, Thomas, *The Presidentialization of Politics: A Comparative Study of Modern Democracies*, Minerva Shobo, 2005.
- (11) Imamura Hiroshi, *Kyodai kokka kenryoku no bunsan to togo* (Separation and Integration of Gigantic State Power), Toshindo, 1997.
- (12) Kobori Masahiro, *Uesutominutaa moderu no henyo* (The Transformation of the Westminster Model). Horitsu Bunka Sha, 2012.

Course Method

This course will be in a lecture format. Lectures will follow the textbooks for the most part, but as the course will cover a wide range of problems, printouts will also be passed out as needed. The instructor will also explain various problems covered in the reference materials listed above, so students should read these in addition to the textbooks. Other materials such as videos related to the lectures will be used to the extent possible in order to deepen students' understanding with a broad range of materials.

Evaluation/Assessment

Grades will be based mainly on the final written exam, but students may also be asked to write one-page response papers of what they learned in the lecture and submit it at the start of the following class meeting. Question and answer sessions on the response papers will also be carried out in class.

Grading

- 10% Response papers
10% Participation in question and answer sessions
80% Final exam

Course Schedule

Week 1: History of arguments surrounding the principles of pre-modern systems of government

This lecture will provide an overview of the history of arguments pertaining to government systems based on sovereignty after the bourgeois revolutions in Europe.

Week 2: Background of popular democracy and critiques of parliamentarism

Students will learn about the development of parliamentary democracy connected with the expansion of suffrage in the US and Europe after the 19th century, and the background of critiques of the corresponding changes in parliamentarism.

Week 3: Critiques of parliamentarism before World War II

In this lecture, students will consider the critiques by political theorists such as Carl Schmitt about the gaps between the ideals of classical parliamentarism and the reality of 20th century parliamentarism, and its significance.

Week 4: Development of comparative politics after World War II

This lecture will trace the history of recent positivist comparative politics theories.

Week 5: Comparison of the US presidential system and the UK parliamentary cabinet system

Students will learn about theories of political scientists such as Nelson W. Polsby which contrast the US presidential system and the UK parliamentary cabinet system.

Week 6: Comparison of the UK parliamentary cabinet system and continental European parliamentary cabinet systems

In this lecture, students will consider the differences between the UK parliamentary cabinet system and continental European parliamentary systems, and their significance for Japan's parliamentary cabinet system.

Week 7: Features of the system of government under the Constitution of the Empire of Japan from the perspective of comparative politics

This lecture will cover the basic characteristics of the system of government under the Constitution of the Empire of Japan, which was established based on Prussian models, and trace how it changed up to the 1930s.

Week 8: Institutional changes in the system of government resulting from the occupation of Japan and the enactment of the Constitution of Japan

Students will consider the impact that the US occupation of Japan and the enactment of the Constitution of Japan had on Japan's system of government, looking at what changed and what stayed the same compared to before the war.

Week 9: Relationship between executive and legislative bodies immediately after the war in terms of the system and the reality

In this lecture, students will learn about the realities of managing the Diet up until the formation of the Liberal Democratic Party in 1955, the relationship between the Diet and the Cabinet, and between politicians and bureaucrats in the Cabinet.

Week 10: Overview of the establishment of a dominant-party system and critiques of cabinet and parliamentary governments (1)

Students will learn about the critique of the "hollowing out" of the Diet and the decline of the political leadership of the Cabinet accompanying the prolonged reign of the Liberal Democratic Party, and consider its significance.

Week 11: Overview of the establishment of a dominant-party system and critiques of cabinet and parliamentary governments (2)

Students will learn about the critique of the "hollowing out" of the Diet and the decline of the political leadership of the Cabinet accompanying the prolonged reign of the Liberal Democratic Party, and consider its significance.

Week 12: Collapse of the dominant-party system and the impact of parliamentary and executive reforms

Students will learn about the impact the changes in the political party system after the change of administration in 1993 had on actual Cabinet policy-making and Diet deliberations.

Week 13: Reforms to vitalize Diet deliberations and strengthen Cabinet functions (1)

This lecture will examine the details of reforms to vitalize Diet deliberations and strengthen Cabinet functions, focusing on the revision of the Diet Act and the Cabinet Act and the reorganization of government ministries and agencies in the 1990s, the background thought to be required for such reforms, and the result of the reforms.

Week 14: Reforms to vitalize Diet deliberations and strengthen Cabinet functions (2)

This lecture will examine the details of reforms to vitalize Diet deliberations and strengthen Cabinet functions, focusing on the revision of the Diet Act and the Cabinet Act and the reorganization of government ministries and agencies in the 1990s, the background thought to be required for such reforms, and the result of the reforms.

Week 15: Features of Japan's modern system of government from the perspective of comparative politics and a review of the entire course

Students will learn and give their own assessments of the features of the system and actual functions of Japan's current parliamentary cabinet system from the perspective of comparative politics.

Week 16: Final exam

Preparation and Follow-up

Before each class meeting, carefully read the appropriate sections in the textbooks and reference materials, and prepare any questions you may have to ask the instructor when you come to class. When assigned a response paper, it must be submitted at the start of the next class meeting. Also, be prepared to answer any questions the instructor may have about your response paper.