PS 389: Topics in Comparative Politics
Foreign Policy in the US & Japan
Spring 2014

Class Location: Hickman Hall Room 211
Class Time: Monday/Wednesday, 5:35 – 6:55 pm

Instructor: Doug Jones, djones@polisci.rutgers.edu
Office Hours: TBA

Teaching Assistant: Judith Foo, foo.judith@gmail.com

Course Overview:

Note: The second segment of this course will be held in Summer 2014. The summer course will feature a three-week study abroad experience in Japan (dates to be announced in early spring). Students enrolled in the spring semester are encouraged to apply for the summer program (applications are due to Rutgers Study Abroad by April 1, 2014). Students enrolled in this course will be given priority in the application process, provided they maintain adequate academic progress in the spring.

What are the similarities and differences in foreign policy creation and implementation in the US and Japan? What institutional, economic, and historical factors shape each country’s relationship with other countries and the international community as a whole? This course will explore these dynamics, beginning with the theoretical foundations of foreign policy analysis and moving into an overview of US foreign policy around the world. Students will finish the course by examining a specific foreign policy case study of their choice through an extensive research paper.

During the spring semester, we will be joined for four weeks (February 10 to March 8) by students from Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto, Japan. During their stay, the Ritsumeikan students will join us in lectures to gain a clearer understanding of American foreign policy. Much of this learning will occur through in-class presentations by Rutgers students, which will launch discussions that seek to apply the theoretical background in foreign policy we have begun to study to actual examples of US foreign policy towards various states and international actors.

In addition to our class work, we will also take a number of field trips to local, state, and national organizations that impact foreign policy in the United States. Students will be strongly encouraged to accompany the class on all field trips, although attendance issues will be judged on a case-by-case basis. More information on the field trips, including their dates, will be available at the start of Spring semester, but we expect to have an overnight visit to Washington, DC and two day trips to New York in addition to potential visits in the New Brunswick area.
Class Requirements for Rutgers Students:

All grades are out of 1000 points total

Research Paper: 400 points
Each student will prepare a 12-15 page research paper on an issue related to their chosen subtopic of civil society (examples below). Students will consult with the instructor on topics and will present drafts of their papers to their classmates for feedback.

Group Presentation: 300 points
Students will be broken into research teams, centered around one of the three topics of civil society below. Student teams will also develop survey questions for a survey on civil society that will be distributed to Rutgers students.

Participation: 200 points
This class will involve a great deal of discussion, so active participation is a must.

Ritsumeikan Buddy: 100 points
Students will partner with a Japanese student and will be expected to meet for at least an hour per week on conversation skills, class material, and cultural matters.

Class Requirements for Ritsumeikan Students:

Class Participation: 200 points
Ritsumeikan students are expected to attend all class meetings and field trips.

Recitation Participation: 100 points
Ritsumeikan students will attend recitations with the undergraduate teaching assistant one per week while they are at Rutgers. These recitation sections will provide Ritsumeikan students with opportunities to practice their English comprehension skills and will prepare students for our field trips. Each student is expected to provide one question related to each field trip.

Field Trip Essay Responses: 300 points
Each student will write a short essay of 1-2 pages on one of our field trips. The student will be asked to reflect on what he or she has learned about civil society organizations through participating in the field trip.

Survey Research and Translations: 200 points
Rutgers student teams will create a survey on civil society which they and the Ritsumeikan students will distribute at Rutgers. We will then analyze the preliminary results in class. In addition, Ritsumeikan students will translate the survey into Japanese so the class can administer it in Japan this summer.
Rutgers Buddy: 100 points
Students will partner with a Rutgers student from class and will be expected to meet for at least an hour per week on conversation skills, class material, and cultural matters.

Attendance & Classroom Behavior

Attendance at all class meetings is mandatory. Attending field trips is optional but highly suggested. (Field trips require no cost besides food for some meals.) If you are unable to attend the Washington, DC field trip, please let me know immediately because this affects our hotel reservations. Excused absences will be granted for religious observances, serious medical situations, funerals and bereavement, court appearances, and intercollegiate athletic events. I ask that you inform me by e-mail that you will not be in class, if possible, and you must provide documentation for the absences to be considered excused.

Coming to class is not enough, however – I expect each student to prepare for class by reading the assigned readings, and to engage in class discussion. It goes without saying that other activities, such as using cell phones or having private conversations, belong outside of class.

Academic Integrity

Honesty and trust are at the center of any good learning environment. Instances of cheating, attempting to portray someone else’s work as your own, and other forms of academic dishonesty outlined in the University’s policies at http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-at-rutgers will merit an immediate grade of zero for that assignment and may be referred to the university administration.

In addition, 30% of your grade comes from group work. Academic integrity demands that all members of a group contribute equally to the project, since all members of the group are graded equally. If you have concerns about this policy, please see me.

Students with Disabilities

This course meets standard University policies and provisions with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy. Students with documented disabilities from the University who are in need of certain academic accommodations should notify me as soon as possible. Information on disability support can be found at http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/. All information will be kept strictly confidential.