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## Research on Japanese Social Institutional Change

### Syllabus

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**Module**

Institutions and Organizations in Japan (AEAS 1)

**Lecturer**

Vitali Heidt

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**Time & Place**

Thursday, 16:15 – 17:45

LE 736

(alternative LB 338, depending on the class size)

**Office Hours**

Thursday, 09:00 – 10:00

LE 727

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**Course description**

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The course accompanies the course “Institutions and Organizations in Japan” (hereafter “Institutions”). In this seminar we will focus mainly on methodological, technical and practical issues of social scientific research on Japan. Participants will develop research competence in the fields of sociology/political science of Japan by becoming acquainted with various methods of information gathering (general and Japan-specific) and processing, as well as research techniques. In addition, you will apply these skills practically by conducting small research exercises in class or as assignments. We will also discuss methodological issues based on your work in the “Institutions” class.

Upon successful completion, seminar participants will be able to conduct research in the field of social science and in using a variety of international and Japanese sources on social and political development in Japan. Participants will also receive support for dealing with methodological issues related to their module research paper. Research exercises are geared toward the successful completion of the research paper and guide the participants through the various steps of academic paper-writing.

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**Requirements**

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Participants are required to conduct research independently in the context of several small research exercises. Research strategies and results will be reviewed and discussed in class.

Participants are required to:

- attend the course regularly,
- prepare, read and discuss the required texts,
- complete practice exercises/assignments,
- prepare and submit a literature review (in preparation of the term paper).

## Grading

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Students will be evaluated on the basis of their assignments, active participation in discussions, on their presentation and leading one of the discussions, preparation of literature, and for the final research paper. 30% of the module grade is determined by participation and assignments in the “Research” seminar. Coursework (attendance, presentation, discussion, assignments) in the “Institutions” seminar count for another 30% of the final module grade. The research paper counts for 40% of the module grade.

Institutions	30 %
Research	30 %
Paper	40 %
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Final Grade	100 %

The evaluation is based on both course-specific exercises and participation, and a research paper prepared for the module as a whole.

## Course material

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All readings for the course are posted on Moodle (together with the material for the “Institutions” class) and students are expected to download and print the course materials themselves as appropriate and be prepared for class.

The password for the Moodle course is: **IOJ17**

## “Research”

### Seminar schedule

#	Date	Content
01	27.04.2017	<b>CANCELLED</b>
02	04.05.2017	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Areas of interest</li> <li>▪ Prior methodological/research knowledge</li> <li>▪ Use of reference management software</li> <li>▪ Do’s and Don’ts oral presentations</li> <li>▪ How the course assignments will lead up to your research paper: Module schedule and your own time management</li> </ul> <p><b>Required assignment:</b> Read the IN-EAST Guidelines for written assignments (formal requirements, plagiarism, declaration of originality)</p>
03	11.05.2017	<p><b>CrossAsia as a research tool</b> (Mr. Christian Dunkel, State Library Berlin)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Webinar introducing the usage of CrossAsia, a meta database for Japan focused resources</li> <li>▪ <b>Room SG 183</b></li> </ul>
04	18.05.2017	<p><b>Institutionalist approaches for research</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Research-centered discussion of institutionalist approaches</li> <li>▪ Research ideas for student papers</li> </ul> <p><b>Required assignments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Read Immergut, Ellen and Anderson, Karen (2008): Historical institutionalism and Western European Politics. In: <i>West European Politics</i>. 31: 1, pp. 345-369. Note down any questions you have and come prepared to discuss.</li> </ul>
05	25.05.2017	<b>HOLIDAY</b>
06	01.06.2017	<p><b>Research idea and research design</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Research Design</li> <li>▪ Research Questions</li> </ul> <p><b>Required assignments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Read Flick, Uwe (2011): <i>Introducing Research Methodology. A Beginner’s Guide to Doing a Research Project</i>, Chapter 2: <i>From Research Idea to Research Question</i>, pp. 18-30.</li> <li>▪ Consider how the information in the text relates to your own field of interest and upcoming term paper topic and come up with ideas for your research design. If appropriate, refine your research question. Bring your notes on these points to class.</li> <li>▪ Read ‘Tips on writing research papers’ and ‘Research strategies’ text. Note down any questions you have and think about what the contents of the two texts mean for your own project.</li> </ul>

07	08.06.2017	<p><b>Research strategy / Writing a paper</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Research tools (reference management software, Google Scholar, other databases)</li> <li>▪ How to structure a research paper</li> <li>▪ Writing strategies</li> </ul> <p><b>Required assignments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Find two major journal articles on your chosen research topic.</li> <li>▪ Read Flick (2011): <i>Introducing Research Methodology. A Beginner's Guide to Doing a Research Project</i>, Chapter 3: <i>Reading and Reviewing the Literature</i>.</li> </ul>
08	15.06.2017	<b>HOLIDAY</b>
09	22.06.2017	<p><b>Media data</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Traditional media: Newspapers, magazines</li> <li>▪ Social media</li> <li>▪ How to access media data and how to use it</li> </ul> <p><b>Required assignments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Flick (2011): <i>Introducing Research Methodology. A Beginner's Guide to Doing a Research Project</i>, Chapter 8, <i>Qualitative and quantitative data</i></li> <li>▪ Conduct a sample search on your topic and find sources in traditional and/or social media. Briefly document your search, method and results. Add those sources that are actually useful for your research paper into your literature database, print out an overview and bring it to class.</li> <li>▪ Work on your literature review. <b><u>Send in your literature review (2-3 pages) via e-mail by Monday, June 26th 2017.</u></b></li> </ul>
10	29.06.2017	<p><b>Survey data on Japan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduction: survey data</li> <li>▪ JGSS</li> <li>▪ ISSP</li> <li>▪ WVS</li> </ul> <p><b>Required assignments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Look at the websites of the social surveys ISSP, JGSS and WVS answer the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To what extent are the surveys different?</li> <li>▪ Which of these surveys would be best to study your chosen topic? Why?</li> <li>▪ If you think none of the surveys would be useful to study your topic, be prepared to explain why that is and what kind of survey would be better suited.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
11	06.07.2017	<p><b>Government and official data</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ White books</li> <li>▪ Government statistics</li> <li>▪ National Diet Library</li> </ul>

		<p><b>Required assignments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Read Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (2016): <i>Annual Health, Labour and Welfare Report 2015</i>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Read Chapter 1 (pp. 1-24, General Welfare and Labour)</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Answer the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What is the MHLW's position on population changes?</li> <li>▪ Does it have an official policy on how the issue of social security (and its spending) should be addressed in future?</li> <li>▪ What reforms are considered necessary by the MHLW?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
12	13.07.2017	<p><b>Comparative data on social development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Comparative measurements of welfare and social development (e.g. UN, OECD)</li> <li>▪ Japan in comparative perspective</li> <li>▪ How to use descriptive comparative data in single-country studies</li> </ul> <p><b>Required assignments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ OECD (2016): <i>Society at a glance 2016. OECD social indicators. The crisis and its aftermath</i>, Paris: OECD. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Read Chapter 2 (pp. 77-83, Interpretating Social Indicators)</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Choose one indicator in the report that corresponds with your research topic and read the respective part of the report, too.</li> </ul>
13	20.07.2017	<p><b>Roundtable on your research projects:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Progress</li> <li>▪ Status quo</li> <li>▪ Problems</li> </ul>
14	27.07.2017	<b>Presentation and Feedback on Research Papers</b>
15	03.08.2017	<b>Presentation and Feedback on Research Papers (Backup Session)</b>
–	18.08.2017	<b>Hand-in of the Research Paper</b>