

Fred Slocum  
Associate Professor, Political Science  
Minnesota State University, Mankato  
June 2019

Curriculum Project – “Incorporating Japanese Studies into the Undergraduate Curriculum”

Part I: POL 461, Environmental Politics

**Current course structure** (3 credit hours): At present, this is a U.S. focused course.

First half of course:

Introductions; value systems related to the environmental and environmental opposition movements; elements of the environmental movement (conservationism vs. preservationism vs. deep ecology); externalities; commons problems; environmental public opinion; environmental and environmental opposition interest groups; the environmental justice movement; NIMBY (not in my back yard) movements.

<Midterm exam>

Second half of course: Environmental cases and controversies. The US tackles air and water pollution; the Love Canal toxic-waste crisis; Rocky Flats nuclear waste crisis; Yellowstone snowmobiling controversy; grazing policy in the West; global warming/climate change; New England fisheries crisis; course synthesis and wrap-up.

<Final exam>

**New course structure** (4 credit hours):

First half of course:

Same as first half above, except in greater depth and with an additional course unit on environmental economics.

<Midterm exam>

Second half of course:

U.S. centered environmental cases and controversies as described in second half above, collapsed into four weeks instead of seven.

Last three weeks of course: Module on environmental politics in Japan:

Week 13: First generation environmental issues in Japan: Air and water pollution in Japan, and government response to it, i.e. passage of environmental laws: triggering, focusing events (?), time frame, groups and interests in favor and in opposition.

Week 14: 3/11 Fukushima nuclear disaster; government response/non-response. Of special interest will be whether Japan has responded to this disaster by shifting away from or de-emphasizing nuclear power.

Week 15: Japan – U.S. comparisons/contrasts; course synthesis and wrap-up.

Part II: POL 426, Racial and Ethnic Politics

**Current course structure** (3 credit hours): At present, this is a U.S. focused course.

First half of course:

Introductions; U.S. history of treatment of racial/ethnic groups, including Japanese American internment, status of blacks in pre-civil rights South, and civil rights movement. Impacts and aftershocks of civil rights movement in national politics. Geographic distribution, and social and economic conditions, for non-Hispanic whites, blacks, Hispanics, Asian Americans, American Indians, and Arab/Middle Eastern Americans.

<Midterm exam>

Second half of course: Specific racial/ethnic groups: History, patterns in party identification and voting, common stereotypes, and area of issue concern, for: Black/African Americans; Hispanic Americans; Asian/Pacific Islander Americans; Native Americans; Arab/Middle Eastern Americans. Issues examined include: Affirmative action; crime; welfare; race-based redistricting; racial appeals in electoral politics; immigration and language policies; Indian gaming; hate crimes; racial profiling; “flying while brown”; course synthesis and wrap-up.

<Final exam>

**New course structure** (4 credit hours):

First half of course:

Same as first half above, except in greater depth and with additional coverage of history of mistreatment of non-black minority groups, and an additional course unit on representation of minorities in the interest group, congressional and executive-branch arenas, emphasizing substantive vs. descriptive representation.

<Midterm exam>

Second half of course:

Specific U.S. racial/ethnic groups, as described above, collapsed into four weeks instead of seven.

Last three weeks of course: Module on racial/ethnic politics in Japan:

Week 13: History of race relations in Japan; focuses on Ainu and interactions with Chinese and Koreans who come to Japan.

Week 14: Is Japan an ethnically homogeneous society? Arguments in favor of and in opposition to the homogeneity thesis. We also will examine Japan's demographic future: expected falling populations, and expected labor shortages and challenges funding social services in a society with the world's highest life expectancy and an increasingly top-heavy population pyramid. Prospects for reforms to encourage/increase immigration to Japan?

Week 15: Japan – U.S. comparisons/contrasts; course synthesis and wrap-up.