

THE COURSES

MMWGS 15: The Contemporary Era: Conflict and Aspirations in a Globalized World, 20th-21st Century

MMW 15 examines the major sociocultural, economic, and political forces that have shaped the last two centuries. Beginning with WW I, it charts the forces that steadily culminated in the consolidation of an unstable global world and the contestations that this process has entailed, paying particular attention to the complex interaction between humans and the natural world.

The Global Seminar version of the course adapts the course to the history and experience of Japan, with a special focus on the impact of WW II on contemporary Japanese society and politics.

SOCI 148GS Political Sociology

Primarily concerned with processes of political change, SOCI 148 focuses broadly on the interaction between state and civil society. It employs central concepts of political sociology such as social cleavages, mobilization, nationalism, ideology, government, and legitimacy. It also focuses on the institutional features and societal outcomes of different state forms such as liberal democracies, authoritarianism, and communism.

The Global Seminar version of this course focuses on the Japanese experience after WW II. The Seminar focuses on how the conduct of WW II simultaneously promoted Japan's commitment to pacifism while discouraging a full acceptance of its conduct during the war. Frequent excursions to historic and cultural sites will illuminate both the extent of Japan's commitment to non-violence as well as some of the political and cultural tensions that flow from unresolved debates about Japan's moral accountability for wartime atrocities, with regional instability in the East strengthening the call for a reassessment of the country's pacifist Constitution.