Final Exam POL 2018, fall 2014  
Model Answers

Identifications: Based readings and class lectures, explain the significance of two of the following. Each answer is worth 25%:

1. Ozawa Ichirou  
Answer: A politician from Iwate who started his career in the LDP as a protégé of Tanaka Kakuei and learned Tanaka’s style of clientalistic politics. Ozawa rose quickly and after Tanaka was deposed as head of the faction in the late 1980s Ozawa emerged as one of its three leading members along with Takeshita Noboru and Kanemaru Shin. Since the faction, then known as the Takeshita faction, was the largest in the LDP, Ozawa emerged as a powerful figure in the party along with Takeshita and Kanemaru. After a political funds scandal forced Takeshita to resign as Prime Minister Ozawa, along with Takeshita and Kanemaru effectively ruled the LDP and Japan as, in Jacob Schlessinger’s words, “Shadow Shoguns,” choosing Prime Ministers and their cabinets. Ozawa served as Secretary General of the LDP during part of this period. Ozawa gained fame for calling on Japan to begin playing a more active, and even a military role, in international security, as spelled out in his book *Blue Print for a New Japan.* Eventually corruption scandals in the Tanaka faction damaged Ozawa’s reputation and led him to leave the LDP with his supporters in the name of promoting political reform. This move caused the LDP to lose power for the first time in 1993. Ozawa formed a new party called Shinseito and became a major figure in the first non-LDP government since 1955. However, the non-LDP coalition broke down as Ozawa fought with the Socialist Party, the largest member. Ozawa then founded a larger conservative party called Shinshin (or the New Frontier) Party, but after that party failed to make progress toward gaining power Ozawa dissolved it and founded the Liberal Party. After a brief time in coalition with the LDP Ozawa merged his Liberal Party with the Democratic Party of Japan in 2003 and eventually became DPJ party leader. However, renewed allegations of corruption forced Ozawa to resign as DPJ President. Nonetheless, he ruled the party and exercised big influence during the first DPJ government under Hatoyama Yukio. Following Ozawa’s indictment on corruption charges he was increasingly ostracized from the DPJ and eventually he left the DPJ to found yet a new party with core supporters, despite being acquitted. However, this new party lost most
of its seats in the 2012 lower house election, and most of the remainder in the 2014 lower house election.

2. Kurofune
Answer: A Japanese term that means “black ships,” the kurofune refer to the armada of ships commanded by US Admiral Perry that visited Japan in 1853 and 1854 to demand that Japan open up relations with the US, thereby effectively ending Tokugawa Japan’s 250 year policy of national isolation. Perry used his “black ships” to threaten the Tokugawa government to agree to his demands that several ports be open for resupply and safe-harbor for US whaling ships, and for trade. The Tokugawa government, fearing Perry would use his black ships to cut off the coastal ship traffic that supplied the capital with the food it needed to stave off mass starvation, acceded, albeit reluctantly, the Perry’s demands. Since that time kurofune has become a metaphor for unwanted foreign pressure. For example, when the US pressured Japan in the 1960s and 1970s to allow US companies to set up subsidiaries in Japan the Japanese media called this another coming of the kurofune.

3. Plurality PR Parallel System
Answer: Japan’s post-1993 lower house mixed electoral system consisting of 300 single-seat plurality (i.e. the candidate with the plurality of votes wins the seat) districts and 200 proportional representation (PR) seats elected from 11 regional PR districts. Originally adopted into law in 1994, the new system was first used during the 1996 lower house election. In 2000 the number of PR seats was cut to 180. The two systems exist parallel to each other, with no provision for the PR system to compensate for disproportionality in the plurality system. Thus, voters are given two votes, one for the regional PR district and the other for their local district. In 2014 the number of single seat districts was cut to 295 as part of an effort to reduce disparity in the value of a vote between urban and rural districts (i.e. by reducing the number of rural districts).

4. Fukoku Kyouhei
Answer: Rich Country Strong Army: Japan’s national slogan of self-strengthening from the beginning of the Meiji era to 1945. This four kanji character slogan originated in 4th century BC China. Dazai Shundai introduced the concept in his treatise on economic power in the early 1700s. By the end of the Edo era and the beginning of the Meiji era it was argued that achieving these twin goals would make Japan strong enough to stand against all countries. This slogan became a central theme
undergirding the world views and strategies Japan pursued during the Meiji and Showa eras. After World War II, the goal of a strong army was dropped, but Japan continued to pursue the goal of rich country. This change was sometimes taken very literally: after World War II the Rich Country Strong Army Life Insurance Company changed its name to the Rich Country Life Insurance Company, dropping “strong army.”

Essays: Answer only 1 question based upon class readings and lectures. This answer is worth 50%:

1. Japan is said to possess the twin qualities of “plasticity” and “endurance.” Explain the meaning of these two qualities, their historical origins, and at least one well-noted comparative advantage of modern Japan that is attributed to these twin qualities.

Answer: In the 1930s, the German scholar Kurt Singer, in *Mirror, Sword, and Jewel* developed these two concepts. Plasticity is the ability to import and indigenize aspects of foreign culture, and endurance is the ability to maintain certain central elements of one’s own culture. Singer found that Japan showed remarkable strength in these two contradictory areas. Arguably, Japan’s strength in these areas originates in the Asuka period when the Yamato state came into sustained contact with Chinese civilization, and began importing and adopting elements of Chinese culture, including Buddhism, Chinese characters, elements of Confucianism, etc. In the process Japan became very skilled at blending imported culture with indigenous culture, and deciding what elements of imported culture to adopt and which to reject as incompatible with domestic culture and self-identity. The Meiji era slogan Wakon Yousai, or promoting the combination of Japanese spirit and Western technology, well captures the duality of endurance versus plasticity. At least two of modern Japan’s well-noted comparative advantages can be attributed to its dual strengths in terms of plasticity and endurance: 1. popular culture, especially animation, manga and pop music, and 2. the adoption, diffusion and improvement of foreign technology. In both areas Japan has demonstrated an ability to import foreign influences, remake them and then export them as ostensibly Japanese creations.

2. Identify and assess Michael Green’s argument that Japanese foreign policy can be characterized as “reluctant realism.” When does this form of realism emerge, how was Japanese foreign policy characterized before this emergence, and what has
caused its emergence? Looking at recent developments in Japanese foreign policy is Green’s argument still valid?

Answer: Green finds that a series of “loose changes” in the decade following the end of the Cold War marks a turn away from what he sees as Japanese idealism, as embodied in pacifism, Asianism, and multilateralism. Reluctant realism is producing changes in Japanese foreign policy, which during the Cold War was characterized by a passive policy, one dependent on the US and focused on enhancing economic power by keeping a low political profile. This policy is often known as the Yoshida Doctrine. Idealism in Green’s view is losing ground to a narrower definition of national interest and greater concern about national security. He argues that while the Yoshida Doctrine remains resilient even as Tokyo has sought a more active and assertive role, Japanese foreign policy has nonetheless been strongly influenced by material changes in the East Asian balance of power. Reluctant realism is not a strategy that replaces the Yoshida Doctrine, but it is an emerging strategic view, one shaped by changes in the East Asian environment combined with insecurity about the nation’s power resources and aspirations for a revised national identity that transcends the legacies of the Second World War. Japan, because rather than despite its economic stagnation is moving to play a larger role in international politics. Green identifies six trends that reflect this emergent reluctant realism: 1. A greater focus on the regional balance of power; 2. Declining idealism in the face of growing realism; 3. Higher sensitivity to security; 4. a greater push for an “independent” foreign policy; 5. a greater focus on East Asia; and 6. a more fluid foreign policy-making process. At the same time Green finds some concern in Japan that this new realism must be a “healthy realism,” in other words a realism that will not provoke a growth in nationalism and that will be cognizant of the costs of returning to militarism of the past. Since Green first published Reluctant Realism in 2001 many of the changes Green identified and even accelerated, stimulated by the continued rapid rise of China. China’s rise has accentuated Japan’s relative decline: in 2001 China’s economy did not exceed that of Italy in size, but by 2010 China had overtaken Japan to become the world’s second largest economy. Since 2001 Japan has continued to devote increased attention to the regional material balance of power, especially vis-à-vis China. There are also continued signs of declining idealism, especially in relation to China, and heightened sensitivity to national security concerns, which 2010 have been manifested by a new focus on territorial defense, has grown at an accelerating pace. At the same time the rise of China has caused Japan to pull back from its previous pursuit of greater autonomy from the US and enhanced focus on tightening relations with East Asian nations. Especially since 2010 Japan has
been “hugging the US hegemon” more tightly than ever in an attempt to strengthen the alliance against an increasingly powerful China that is perceived to be becoming increasingly aggressive. The Abe administration’s recent attempts to reinterpret Article 9 of Japan’s constitution to allow the country to exercise the right of “collective self-defense,” in other words to militarily assist an ally under attack, is a concrete manifestation of an effort to strengthen the bilateral alliance to prevent the US from abandoning Japan in the face of a looming China threat. At the same time Japan has become more assertive in its foreign policy, especially in the way it manages its territorial conflicts with China and other neighbors, another trend that Green identified and which has deepened in the years since 2001. Nonetheless, many post-war era constraints remain on Japanese foreign policy. In particular Abe’s attempts to reform the constitution to allow the SDF to use force overseas have been stymied by very strong domestic opposition.