

Plan of Lectures at Rennes University

Theme: Macroeconomics and the Japanese Economy

Timetable:

1. March 5th : 3 hours (from 9h00 AM to 12h30 with 30 min break)
2. March 6th : 3 hours (from 9h00 AM to 12h30 with 30 min break)
3. March 9th : 3 hours (from 9h00 AM to 12h30 with 30 min break)
4. March 10th : 3 hours (from 9h00 AM to 12h30 with 30 min break)
5. March 13th : 3 hours (from 9h00 AM to 12h30 with 30 min break)
6. March 18th : 2 hours (from 10h00 AM to 12h00)
7. March 20th : 3 hours (from 9h00 AM to 12h30 with 30 min break)

- The first 5 classes will be devoted to lectures
- The last 2 classes will be devoted to the presentations by participants and discussions.

Language:

- I will use both Japanese and English. Whenever I introduce economic terms in Japanese, I explain them also by English.
- Presentations by participants can be either in English or Japanese. I would like to hear from you much about French economy and French society, but unfortunately, I do not understand French or Breton at all. So, when you need to use a French or Breton term, please explain them also in English.

Tentative Topics of the Lectures (subject to change)

1. Macroeconomic performance of Japanese and other economies: Overview
 - Growth rate
 - Unemployment Rate
 - Inflation rate
2. Savings, Investment, and Economic Growth
 - Determinant of long-term growth: theory
 - Japanese Rapid growth after WWII
 - Japanese high saving rate

- Capital market
3. Labor market
- Lifetime employment
 - Japanese low unemployment rate
 - Recent Issue: temporary and dispatched workers
4. Tax System, Income distribution, and Government Deficits
- Direct and indirect taxes
 - Progressive income tax
 - Efficiency and equity
 - Huge government deficits in Japan
5. Aging society and Welfare system
- Declining birth rate
 - Increasing life expectancy
 - Social security (pension system)

Presentations by Participants

In the last two classes, I ask participants to give presentations on the French economy (or French society) and its comparison to Japan. Each participant (or a group) is encouraged to make researches on one of the following themes beforehand and to prepare for a presentation. Below I give examples of topics in each theme. You may find other interesting topics, and then incorporate them to your presentation. Note that the listed questions may not have definite answers.

Theme 1. Economic Growth in France

- Explain the history of French macro economy (e.g., the recovery from the destruction during WWII) .
- Compare the growth rate between France and Japan in the past 50 years. Why do you think they are different?
- Explain the movement of the French saving rate.
- Compare it to the Japanese saving rate. Why are they different?
- Etc.

Theme 2. French Labor market

- Explain the French unemployment rate in the past 50 years.
- Is it higher or lower than in Japan? Why do you think it is so?
- How do you think about the unemployment benefit in France? Is it too benevolent?
- How did the economic integration to the EU affect the French labor market? Do you think Japan should open its labor market to nearby countries?
- Etc.

Theme 3. French tax system

- Explain the French tax system
- How is it different from Japanese system?
- How does tax affect efficiency (incentives) and equality (income distribution)?
- Do you think tax burden in France is heavier than in Japan?
- Do you think which system is better?
- Etc.

Theme 4. French social security and aging

- Explain the French pension system
- How do French people feel safe or worry about their life after retirement?
- Does that affect their saving?
- Explain French welfare system for children and mothers.
- Does that affect the birth rate?
- How do you think welfare system in Japan when compared to your country?
- Etc.

I think these excises are especially valuable for those willing to visit Japan because Japanese people often wants to hear from you about how French economy or French society differs from Japan, and how French people thinks about the Japanese economy/society.

Grades

Grades will be based primarily on your presentations in the last two classes. Participants are also encouraged to give me comments/questions whenever during the lectures. I expect each of you at least one comment/question in each class.