The Politics and Political Economy of East Asia

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Course Description:

This class is designed to help students understand political, economic, and diplomatic developments in East Asia with a focus on Japan, China, Korea, and Taiwan. We begin with the historical events that shaped the internal politics of each country and their international relations. We will explore the inter-relationship between their politics and their paths of economic development. Finally, we consider their uneasy relationships as neighbors in East Asia.

Course Requirements:

The requirements for this course are as follows.

1. Regular class attendance, participation, and a 1-page reading response on any four weeks of the course: 30%

2. A short paper (4-5 pages, 25% of the grade) tackling a historical topic from the first few weeks is due in Week 6. The questions guiding each week’s readings provide some suggested topics for this paper.

3. There are two options for the final assignment.
   a. A final research paper (12-15 pages for undergraduates, 15-20 pages for graduate credit, 45% of the grade) is due at the end of exam week. This paper is an opportunity to develop an empirically documented argument, based on a well-constructed research design, exploring some aspect of political or economic development of one or more of the countries studied in this course.
   OR
   b. A final exam in the scheduled time during exam week. The exam will be a combination of short identification, short answer, and essay.
Academic Honesty:

All work bearing your name must be your own. You may, of course, cite other people for words, paraphrases, and ideas that did not originate with you. For more information about what plagiarism is and how to avoid it, please visit Yale College Writing Center [http://goo.gl/5O94ej]. We will also have a short discussion about plagiarism. Please take a Plagiarism Quiz [http://goo.gl/e7SerL] before the class in Week4.

Class Schedule and Readings

Week 1 (Jan 19): Overview and Introduction

Questions:

- How did Japan become a regional empire in the 1930s? What is the legacy of Japan’s wartime aggression on its relations with its neighbors? What accounts for the negative relationships compared to the EU?
- What is meant by the East Asian “developmental state”? Did East Asian bureaucrats outsmart capitalism and outmaneuver their politicians to construct states that are prosperous and egalitarian?
- How are East Asian countries poised for the 21st century? Is it possible for these neighbors to coexist peacefully? What is appropriate U.S. engagement with the region?

Week 2 (Jan 26): War and Colonialism in Asia

Questions: Why did Japan expand into East Asia, 1894-1937? What accounts for the differences in Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese attitudes towards Japan, then and now?


Optional reading:

**Week 3 (Feb 2): U.S. Goals in East Asia: The New Deal Phase**

*Questions: What were U.S. goals in East Asia during and immediately after World War II? How successful were they?*


**Week 4 (Feb 9): The Cold War in Asia**

*Questions: What drove American policy in East Asia? How did the Cold War affect politics in Japan, Korea, and Taiwan? What was the range of choice? What did they do with it? What was the “Reverse Course” in the U.S. Occupation of Japan and how did it shape subsequent events?*


**Week 5 (Feb 16): Economic Development: The “East Asian Model”?**
Questions: How did politics shape economic policy making in various East Asian countries? Are there any common themes?


**Week 6 (Feb 23): Politics and Foreign Policy in East Asia: The Early Postwar Years**

Visitor: Victor Cha, Georgetown University

Questions: How well did the U.S. system of bilateral alliances work for American foreign policy goals? For politics in Asia? How did authoritarian rule in Korea and Taiwan take root under the U.S. alliance umbrella?


**Week 7 (Mar 1): Development and Politics in China**

Visitor: Professor Yuhua Wang, Government Department, Harvard

Questions: How does the CCP maintain its authoritarian control? What are its tools? How good are its odds? What characterizes government-business relations in China?


**Week 8 (Mar 8): Territorial Disputes and Military Rivalry**
**Visitor: Former Vice Minister Tokuchi, Japanese Department of Defense**

*Questions: Why do East Asian nations dispute island territories? How would you adjudicate the disputes? Does your suggestion have a chance of success?*


**Week 9 (Mar 29): Democratic Transitions in Korea and Taiwan**

*Questions: Compare the patterns of democratization in Korea and Taiwan. Who were the actors, and what were their resources? Why did they prevail? What do Korea and Taiwan contribute to our understanding of development and democracy?*


**Week 10 (Apr 5) : Trade and Economic Integration**

*Questions: How have East Asian economies integrated with each other and the rest of the world?*


**Week 11 (Apr 12) : Gender Inequality and Demographic Challenges**

*Questions: Why are women in East Asia deciding to have fewer children? What are the consequences for the workplace? For families? For fiscal policy?*


Week 12 (Apr 19) : Nationalism

Questions: *Is nationalism a cause or symptom of military tension in East Asia? How would we know?*


Week 13 (Apr 26) : Democracy, Interdependence, and War or Peace

Questions: *Is economic interdependence enough to prevent war? Is democracy?*


