Overview

This course will explore post-colonial politics in Asia. Particular focus will be placed on the nation-building process, democratization, and economic development in the region. The course opens by critically approaching the concept of Asian values. We will entertain various approaches to the definition of “Asia,” ranging from geography, culture, demographics, and political economy. For the first third of the semester, we will survey the political terrain in three Northeast Asian countries: Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. Starting with the unprecedented economic growth in the region since the 1950s and extending to democratization in the 1980s, we will examine the relationship between political regimes and economic development, and the linkages between global and domestic politics.

The second third of the semester will be devoted to understanding politics in Southeast Asia which will be illustrated through the examples of Singapore, Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, and the Philippines. Different colonial and Cold War experiences have shaped the political and development trajectories of this region in ways that are distinct from Northeast Asia. Here, we will focus on the themes of illiberal democracy, ethnic inequality and political corruption. Finally, this course closes with student-led class discussions on the core themes in the field of political science that directly relate to the politics of Asian countries. Students are asked to consider the relationship between regime types and economic growth, culturalism, corruption, and the role of the state in economy.

Course Objectives

1. Gaining Factual Knowledge (*IDEA #1*)

2. Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments and points of view (*IDEA #11*)

3. Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories (*IDEA #2*)
Requirements

- **Map Quiz (5%) (IDEA #1):** A map quiz on the geography of Asia will take place in class on September 5th. Students are required to identify each country on a provided map.

- **News Posts (15%) (IDEA #1 & #11):** Every week, students are required to post one news article or column on Asian politics by a short reflection piece (NOT summary) (100 to 150 words) in the Discussion page on Canvas (https://usu.instructure.com/courses/493734/discussion_topics). Students are also required to make a comment on at least two posts by their classmates each week. Weekly news posts (and comments) are due 11:59pm every Sunday (except Thanksgiving and final weeks).

Good sources for current events in Asia include, but not limited to:
The Economist
The New York Times
The Washington Post
The Straits Times (Singapore)
BBC
The Asian Wall Street Journal

- **Group Policy Analysis Presentation (20%) (IDEA #1 & #11):** At the start of the term, students will be placed into groups and asked to present their policy analysis on a chosen issue in one of Asian countries covered in class and facilitate in-class discussion. The entire presentation and discussion should be about 50 minutes. The first 30 minutes should be devoted to the presentation of the groups analysis and the remaining 15 minutes for class discussion.

Examples of issues that presenters can address include, but are not limited to, inequality, environment, ethnic/religious conflict, aging population, or gender conflict. Topics should not be too broad (e.g. economy/culture), and do not have to be limited to ones covered in class.

A good presentation will: 1) clearly identify key problems and issues that are related to a chosen topic in the context of a chosen country; 2) identify causes and effects of those problems as well as political actors with diverse interests involved in the issue; 3) explain how the government has attempted to addressed these issues and evaluate whether the current measures are effective; 4) provide policy suggestions to help resolve the problems under consideration and to overcome any limitations present in the existing policy; 5) prepare three to five discussion questions for classmates and facilitate in-class discussion.

Evaluation will be implemented by both the instructor (10 points) and students in audience (10 points). For students’ evaluation, I will distribute a marking rubric and take an average across students.

Teamwork is important for this group project, if there is any member who does not participate in preparing for the presentation, other group members should notify the
instructor in advance, and if need be, a grade will not be given to that member.

- **Short Book Review (10%)**: Students will be assigned selected chapters from a novel, [Human Acts] by Han Kang, and are asked to write a review of these sections (2-3 pages, 12pt, Times New Roman, double spaced). The novel depicts the 1980 Gwangju Uprising in South Korea from the perspectives of ordinary citizens who directly and indirectly engaged in democratic movements against a military dictatorship. The assigned chapters describe experience of the military dictatorship and democratic movements from perspectives of various actors — e.g., a female laborer, a male college student activist, and a middle school student. Students will compare and analyze what their experiences are like, what factors — at both macro- and individual-level — made each actor's experience distinct from others, and what their distinct political experiences imply about state-society relations. The review should *NOT* be a mere overview of the book. The summary of the story should not exceed one paragraph. This assignment should be submitted by 11:59pm via Canvas in October 24th.

- **Midterm & Final Essay Exams (20% each) (IDEA #1, #2, #8, #11)**: There are two at-home essay exams in this class. For each exam, students will write one essay on a given topic. The exam will cover reading materials and any contents covered in class. The exam question will be posted at 5 minutes prior to the exam time on Canvas, and students have to submit the exam electronically on Canvas by due time. *No late submissions will be allowed.* While the class room will be available during the exam hours, students are welcome to write their exam from home or school labs as long as they submit the exam on time.

It is an open-book exam. However, the exam will require you to critically think about issues discussed in class and present your own argument with a strong support. Also, importantly, no plagiarism is allowed. If students are using texts from other sources, they should be properly cited. *Any plagiarized essay will be given F.*

Essay evaluation criteria:

- Demonstration of clear understanding of a topic in the context of selected countries
- Clear and logical development of argument/evaluation of a given issue
- Substantive examples from selected country cases
- Proper citations of assigned readings, demonstrating understanding of the texts
- Any plagiarized essay will be given no point

- **Attendance and participation in class discussions (10%)**: Students should come to class and actively participate in class discussion. I will take attendance any day with no prior announcement. After *three* unexcused absences, I will begin to dock attendance points (1% each time). Please note that the materials presented in class will range beyond the readings and you are responsible for all materials covered in class. So if you miss the lecture you will miss testable materials. This is an active-learning course. Students are expected to actively participate in class discussion. Participation affects
your grade. So please engage in class discussion, ask questions, ask for clarification, comment, answer queries, etc.

Readings

All readings for the class, except the book, Human Act, will be provided. You can download them from Canvas. Only readings with an asterisk are mandatory.

Other Course and University Policies

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism, cheating or academic misconduct in any manner will not be tolerated and will result in an F for the course. All written assignments and exams will be thoroughly checked for plagiarism and cheating. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with and observe Utah State University’s policies against cheating and plagiarism. The University’s Code of Student Conduct in relation to academic integrity violation is available at https://studentconduct.usu.edu/aiv.

Students with Disabilities

USU is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for eligible students with disabilities, including students who have learning disabilities, health impairments, psychiatric disabilities, and/or other disabilities. If you believe you have a disability which requires accommodation, please the Disability Resource Center as early in the semester as possible (University Inn 101, 435-797-2444, drc@usu.edu) so that the necessary arrangements can be made. More information is available at http://www.usu.edu/drc/.

Late Assignments and Missed Exams

All assignments (e.g., news posts, book review) should be turned in on time. Late assignments will not be accepted. Unless I have agreed well in advance to an alternative date, all assignments should be turned in on or before the due date. The only excuses allowed will be those in line with university policy.

The midterm and final exams constitute a significant portion of your final grade. They should not be taken lightly. Make-up exams will not be allowed unless there is an acceptable excuse and I am notified well in advance (if possible).
Civility and Courteous Behavior

Civility in the classroom and respect for the opinions of others is very important in an academic environment. It is likely you may not agree with everything which is said or discussed in the classroom. However, classroom discussion is meant to allow us to hear a variety of viewpoints, and this can only happen if we respect each other and our differences.

To create and preserve a classroom atmosphere that optimizes teaching and learning, students are expected to be on time, and electronic devices such as cell phones must be turned off during class. Laptops are allowed only for taking notes. Text messaging and emailing/websurfing are not permitted in class.
Course Schedule

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the schedule and reading assignments. It is the student’s responsibility to be aware of these changes. Any change will be announced in advance during class.

08/27: Course Overview

*** How to Define “Asia”? ***

08/29: Approaches to Understanding Asia

- McDougall. 2007. Asia Pacific in World Politics. Intro.*

08/31: Conference Travel (No Class)

09/03: LABOR DAY (No class)

09/05: Asian Values (*** Map Quiz ***)

***Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan***

09/07: A Brief Overview of the Three Countries Part I


09/10: A Brief Overview of the Three Countries Part II

  

09/12: The East Asian Economic Success Part I

  
  
  
  
  
  - Movie: Asia Rising

09/14: The East Asian Economic Success Part II

  
  
  
09/17: Crony Capitalism


09/19: Labor Politics: “Sacrifice for National Glory!”


09/21: The Developmental Welfare State


09/24: Divergent Pathways to Democracy Part I: Japan


• Movie: Senkyo

09/26: Divergent Pathways to Democracy Part II: South Korea


09/28: Conference Travel (No Class)

10/1: Divergent Pathways to Democracy Part III: Taiwan


10/3: The 1998 Asian Financial Crisis

• Haggard. 2000. The Political Economy of the Asian Financial Crisis. Intro*

• The Economist. 1997. “The End of the Miracle.” *


• Movie: The Crash
10/05: GROUP PRESENTATION 1

10/08: Post-crisis Economic Reforms


10/10: Transformation of the East Asian Economies—The Eclipse or Adaptation of the State?


10/12: Gender Politics in East Asia


• Movie: South Korea’s Gender Wars

10/15: GROUP PRESENTATION 2

10/17: MIDTERM REVIEW

10/19: FALL BREAK

10/22: AT-HOME MIDTERM

*** Indonesia ***

10/24: A Brief Overview of Indonesia (*** Book Review Due ***)

• Bertrand. 2013. Political Change in Southeast Asia. Ch2. (only pp.41-64)*

10/26: The Politics of Corruption


10/29: From Democratic Transition to Consolidation


*** Malaysia ***

10/31: A Brief Overview of Malaysia


11/01: The Politics of Ethnicity/Religion

11/05: Pseudo-democracy


11/07: GROUP PRESENTATION 3

*** Singapore ***

11/09: A Brief Overview of Singapore

- The Economist. 2015. “The Singapore Exception.” *


- Nikkei Asian Review. 2018. “‘New Malaysia’ Makes Singapore Look Outdated.”


- Movie: To Singapore, With Love
11/12: The Politics of Social Engineering


*** Vietnam ***

11/14: A Brief Overview of Vietnam

- Movie: Vietnam War. Ep. 1

11/16: The Adaptation of the Communist State


11/19: GROUP PRESENTATION 4

11/21 23: THANKSGIVING BREAK

*** Thailand ***

11/26: A Brief Overview of Thailand

11/28: Unstable Democracy: Coup, Mass Protests, and the King


11/30: GROUP PRESENTATION 5

*** The Philippines ***

12/03: A Brief Overview of the Philippines


12/05: Cacique Democracy


12/07: Final Exam Review

12/10: AT-HOME FINAL EXAM