Sociology 167A/267A

Asia-Pacific Transformation

Spring Quarter 2013

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Class Meetings: Tuesdays 1:15pm-3:05pm at Littlefield, Room 103

Office Hours: Wednesdays 3pm-5pm and by appointment

Course Description:
The purpose of this course is to understand modern transformation in East Asian countries (primarily China, Japan, Taiwan, and South and North Korea) from a comparative perspective. How can we explain diverse paths to modernity among East Asian nations? How can we understand East Asia’s rise from a struggling agrarian region to an industrial powerhouse? What are the forms and nature of state-society relations in authoritarian and democratic regimes? What is the nature of persistent nationalism and its impact on the region? How will historical and territorial disputes affect the formation of a new regional order? What is the current state of U.S. relations with East Asian nations? These questions will be discussed in the larger context of the Asia-Pacific relations. This course is not aimed to survey a general history of these countries but to discuss major issues in social change and development using the East Asian experiences as explanatory case studies.

This class is a gateway course into the East Asian studies major and fulfills the General Educational Requirements for Area III-B and IV-A.

Requirement and Grading:
The class will combine lecture on theoretical issues with seminar discussions on substantive issues. Each student is required to submit a total of eight position papers on the topics of weeks three through ten. Each paper must (1) discuss the readings’ main issues and arguments and (2) offer the student’s own assessment of their strengths and weaknesses. The paper must be submitted on the day of class, prior to class discussion, to receive credit. It should be typed and double-spaced, with a length of about 600 words (167A) or 800 words (267A). The course grade will be based on class attendance and participation in discussion (20%) and position papers (80% = 8 x 10%).
Textbooks:

*All other readings in Course Reader—available for purchase at Copy America (334 N. California Ave., Palo Alto, 650-566-0344).
COURSE SCHEDULE

April 2: Course Introduction


April 9: East Asian Transition to the Modern World

How can we explain the diverse paths to modernity among East Asian nations? How did these nations respond to Western challenges? How did Japan successfully transform itself from a poor agrarian country to a strong modern nation, whereas China failed? Why did Korea become a Japanese colony?


April 16: War and Colonialism

In the first half of the 20th century, Northeast Asia was marked by colonialism and wars. What were the causes and consequences of these historical events for those nations involved? Is the region still grappling with their legacies?

Mark Peattie, “The Dragon’s Seed,” pp. 48-78 in Mark Peattie et al., eds., *The Battle for China*.


April 23: Revolution and Counter-revolution

How might we understand social and political changes after the end of the Pacific War? What were occupation politics in Japan and Korea (North and South)? How and why did nationalists and communists struggle in China? How did Japan deal with its unfortunate past? Did the U.S. play a significant role in shaping the new order in East Asia?

April 30: The Rise of East Asian Development: Capitalism

How can we explain the rise of East Asian capitalism? How did diverse factors (from cultural to geopolitical) contribute to its rise and development? Can the East Asian experience at development be replicated in other parts of the world? Is there something specifically “East Asian”?

Ezra Vogel, *The Four Little Dragons*.

May 7: The Rise of East Asian Development: Communism

How can we explain the rise of China over the past two decades? Is it transforming from a communist to a capitalist economy? How do we explain the earlier success and recent crisis of the North Korean economy? What are some similarities and differences between the capitalist and communist nations of the region?


May 14: From Dictatorship to Democracy

How can we account for recent transitions to democracy in South Korea and Taiwan? Are their democracies consolidating and maturing, and what are the new challenges? How can we evaluate the Chinese quest for democracy?

James Mann, *The China Fantasy*.

May 21: Nationalism

Why and how does nationalism persist in Northeast Asian nations despite efforts for globalization of their economy and society? How does it affect those nations’ own people and culture? Has nationalism “stunted” regionalism in Northeast Asia?

Harumi Befu, “Nationalism and *Nihonjinron*,” Chapter 5 in his edited book *Cultural Nationalism in East Asia: representation and identity*.

Gi-Wook Shin, Chapter 11 in *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea*. 
May 28: Historical Disputes and Reconciliation

Why have the nations of Northeast Asia failed to come to terms with the past? Will historical animosities disappear with growing regional interactions? How can historical reconciliation among these nations be promoted? Does the U.S. also have a role in the creation and plausible resolution of the Northeast Asian history problem? If so, what might such a role entail?


June 4: U.S.-East Asian Relations

What is the nature of U.S.-East Asian relations over the last century? What kind of role can the U.S. play in the region? How might the rise of China affect future relations between the U.S. and East Asia, including U.S. alliances with Japan and South Korea?

Shin, One Alliance and Two Lenses, Chapters 1, 7, and 8.