Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living.

Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*

This course provides an analytical overview of the comparative politics of East Asia, mainly focusing on Northeast Asia (China, Taiwan, Korea, and Japan) with some emphasis on Southeast Asia. This course has at least three goals: 1) to understand important political issues, political institutions, political behaviors, contentious politics, and political economies of East Asia, 2) to provide a theoretical framework to understand important historical events that have shaped the current politics of East Asia, and 3) to make an explicit comparison across countries (e.g., China and Japan) as well as comparison across regions (e.g., Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia). To do so, this course is divided into three parts.

In Part I, we will begin with a session that equips students with a theoretical framework of comparative politics and introduces this region more generally. By focusing on the modern nation-state formation in the context of colonialism, the following sessions in Part I will provide significant historical facts and issues of China, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asian countries to properly understand the substantive topics in the following parts.

The first part in Part II will deal with political regimes (democracy and dictatorship), regime dynamics, and the relationship culture and democracy. In the second part of Part II, we will study two divergent political systems: democracy in Japan and dictatorship in China. Here the topics are political institutions (political party system, parliamentarism and presidentialism, and electoral system) and political change (election and succession).

In Part III, we will examine the political economy of East Asia, highlighting East Asia’s phenomenal economic development and the recent financial crisis. We will explore the various conditions under which the economic “miracle” happened and the socio-political consequences of rapid growth. And we will investigate the financial “crisis,” evaluating competing explanations of the origins and effects of the “crisis.”
# SCHEDULE/OUTLINE OF TOPICS

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<th>Date</th>
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<td><strong>I. Modern Nation-State Formation</strong></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>January 21</td>
<td>Emergence of Modern East Asia: A Bird’s Eye View</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>January 28</td>
<td>China and Taiwan</td>
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<td>Korea and Japan</td>
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<td>Southeast Asia</td>
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<td><strong>II. Political System, Culture, and People</strong></td>
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<td>Democracy and Dictatorship</td>
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<td>February 25</td>
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<td>Midterm Examination</td>
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<td>Hegemonic Party and Politics of “Complacency”</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>Politico-Economic “Machine” and Its Sustainability</td>
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<td>Spring Break</td>
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<td><strong>III. Miracle and Crisis: Political Economy of East Asia</strong></td>
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<td>Development State as Engine of Miracle</td>
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<td>Financial Crisis: End of Miracle?</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>April 29</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>May 17</td>
<td>Final Examination</td>
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READINGS

Each student is expected to read (before class) all the required readings for each session (see the reading assignments below). All of these readings are posted on Moodle. All students should have a LSU e-mail account for access to Moodle through the PAWS desktop.

Students need to purchase and read the following book to write a final paper (see the course requirements below).


Here are some of the recommended/background readings:

**General**

**China**

**Taiwan**

**Korea**

**Japan**
REQUIREMENTS

Basically, classes will involve lectures and discussions of the reading material assigned for each session. But, I will introduce and explain some issues and concepts that are not in the readings, so attendance is crucial. This means that a significant amount of material on the examinations will come from class lectures presenting information not discussed directly in the text and other readings. Participation from students is important and will count toward the final grade. At the end of each week, I will distribute a memo (posted on Semester Book) that contains important points of my lecture.

Students are expected to complete:

1) Two in-class examinations (mid-term and final) (25% each)
The emphasis is on important concepts and competing explanations of various political phenomena. Knowledge of some relevant historical facts is required as well.

2) Critical review paper (25%)
You will write a critical review of Spector’s *In the Ruins of Empire*. The text should be no longer than six single-spaced pages. The format and guide of the paper will be discussed in class. **You should submit a hard copy due in class on April 29.**

3) Attendance and participation (25%)
Since class meets only once in a week, it is extremely important to come to class. It is virtually impossible for you to receive a satisfactory grade if you miss several classes. Attendance will be taken for each session. Students may earn credit for their attendance at each class session, while repeated and unexcused absence will cause deduction in student’s total grade. In addition to attending class, students are highly encouraged to ask and answer questions, and to make appropriate comments on issues covered in class.

GRADING SCALE

A: 90~100; B: 80~89; C: 70~79; D: 50~69; F: 0~49

**NOTE:** If you do not take any of the examinations, or if you do not submit the final paper, if you miss more than seven classes (half of lectures throughout the semester) you will automatically receive an F. No “make-up” examinations will be given; no late papers will be accepted.

IMPORTANT DATES

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<tr>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm examination</td>
<td>Wednesday, March 4</td>
<td>6:10 – 8:00 pm</td>
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<td>Final examination</td>
<td>Wednesday, May 6</td>
<td>8:00 – 10:00 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>Wednesday, April 29</td>
<td>In class</td>
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READING ASSIGNMENTS AND SPECIFIC TOPICS

I. Modern Nation-State Formation

Week 1 (1/14) Introduction
Scope and roadmap of the course.

Week 2 (1/21) Emergence of Modern East Asia: A Bird’s Eye View


Week 3 (1/28) China and Taiwan


Week 4 (2/04) Japan and Korea


Week 5 (2/11) Southeast Asia

Week 6 (2/18) Democracy and Dictatorship
Minimalist vs. maximalist definitions. Trend and pattern of political regimes throughout the world.

Week 7 (2/25) Mardi Gras Holiday

Week 8 (3/04) Midterm Examination

Week 9 (3/11) Democratic Transitions
Prerequisite vs. strategic interaction. Top-down vs. bottom-up models. Third Wave in Asia. Tiananmen Square in 1989. Why do some dictators survive longer than others?

Week 10 (3/18) “Asian Values?” Culture and Democracy
Conceptualization of political culture. “Asian values.” Do we need democrats to have a democracy? Is culture an independent or dependent variable? Is culture a variable?

II. Political System, Culture, and People


Parliamentarism vs. presidentialism. The 1955 system. Cabinet formation. Minimal coalition size vs. minimal connected coalition. Electoral system. What made the end of the LDP dominance possible? Conservative-socialist connection. “Lost ten years.” Politics of “complacency?” The general issues are: 1) party system, 2) parliamnetarism, 3) electoral system, and 4) cabinet formation.


**Week 12 (4/01) Politico-Economic “Machine” and Its Sustainability : China**


**Week 13 (4/08) Spring Break**

**III. Miracle and Crisis: Political Economy of East Asia**

**Week 14 (4/15) Developmental State as Engine of Miracle**


Week 15 (4/22)  Financial Crisis: End of Miracle?


Week 16 (4/29)  Conclusion
Final paper due in class. What have we learned from this course?

Week 17 (5/06)  Final Examination