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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<td><strong>III. Miracle and Crisis: Political Economy of East Asia</strong></td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Dec 06</td>
<td>Final Examination, 8:00 – 10:00 pm</td>
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READEINGS

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.


Recommended/background readings:

If you are serious about studying East Asia, read these three monumental books on the history of political thoughts: Feng Yulan’s A History of Chinese Philosophy [中國哲學史], Masao Maruyama’s Studies in the Intellectual History of Tokugawa Japan [日本政治思想史研究], and Joseph Needham’s Science and Civilization in China (esp. Volume 2).

East Asia and Southeast Asia in 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) In-class midterm and take-home examinations (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 November 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

In-class midterm exam: Tuesday, October 04 6:10 – 9:00 pm
In-class final exam: Tuesday, December 06 8:00 – 10:00 pm
Final paper Tuesday, November 29 In class
READING ASSIGNMENTS AND SPECIFIC TOPICS

I. Modern Nation-State Formation

Week 1 (8/23) Introduction
Scope and roadmap of the course.

Week 2 (8/30) The Emergence of Modern East Asia: A Bird’s Eye View


Week 3 (9/6) China and Taiwan


Week 4 (9/13) Japan and Korea


Week 5 (9/20) Southeast Asia


II. Political System, Culture, and People

Week 6 (9/27) Democracy and Dictatorship
Minimalist vs. maximalist definitions. Trend and pattern of political regimes throughout the world.


Week 7 (10/04) Midterm Examination
6:10 – 9:00 pm

Week 8 (10/11) 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 9 (10/18) Culture and Democracy: “Asian Values?”
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?


Week 10 (10/25) Hegemonic Party System and the Politics of “Complacency”: Japan


Week 11 (11/01) Politico-Economic “Machine” and Its Sustainability : China


III. Miracle and Crisis: Political Economy of East Asia

Week 12-13 (11/08 – 11/15) The Developmental State


**Week 14 (11/22) Thanksgiving Holiday**

**Week 15 (11/29) Financial Crisis: End of Miracle? Conclusion and Review**


Final paper due in class.

**Week 16 (12/06) Final Examination**
8:00 – 10:00 pm