

Geography of East Asia

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Office hours: Thursdays 1:30 – 3:30 PM or by appointment

Course description

This course provides an overview of East Asia from a critical geographic perspective. The course begins by asking what constitutes East Asia and what makes East Asia an emerging world region. While acknowledging that 'East Asia' is a highly porous and a fluid concept, we use the term to refer to a group of countries (China, Taiwan, Mongolia, South Korea, North Korea, and Japan) that are not only geographically proximate but also closely connected historically, culturally, ethnically, politically, and economically. Students will explore and engage with various historical and contemporary issues of the region, with a particular focus on China, South Korea, and Japan, through readings, case studies, discussions, and debates. Critical geography is concerned about the relations between space and society in terms of how knowledge-power is produced and enacted, and is inevitably drawn into the questions of differences, unevenness, and inequality. With this in mind, students will learn and apply key theoretical lenses in geography, which include modernity, uneven development, developmental state, (post)-colonialism, nationalism, neoliberalism, transnationalism, and geopolitics.

Learning objectives and outcomes

- 1) Describe the ideas and forces that have emerged East Asia as a world region
 - Locate major geographic features of the region
 - Describe major historic events and discuss their significance in shaping East Asia today
 - Explain different models of development and apply developmental and post-developmental state theory to the context of East Asia

- 2) Identify current issues of each country in East Asia and explain their interconnectivity
 - Describe major economic, political, social, cultural, and environmental issues of each country that constitutes East Asia
 - Examine how national issues are related to each other in regional and global political economy

- 3) Apply key geographic lenses to analyze major debates and transformations taking place in East Asia today
 - Define neoliberalism and examine how neoliberalism as a response to the reactions to recent economic crises is transforming East Asia

- Identify major environmental debates of East Asia and assess how the current socio-ecological transformations would shape the future of the region
- Describe major geopolitical debates of East Asia and assess how recent geopolitical events would shape the future of the region

Resources

This class does not have a required textbook. Readings for each week will be announced and posted on Blackboard in advance.

Readings for this class:

- Shapiro, Judith (2016). China's environmental challenges. John Wiley & Sons.
- Sze, Julie. (2015). Fantasy islands: Chinese dreams and ecological fears in an age of climate crisis. Univ of California Press.
- Yeh, Emily T. (2013). Taming Tibet: landscape transformation and the gift of Chinese development. Cornell University Press.
- Park, B.-G., Hill, R. C., & Saito, A. (2012). Locating neoliberalism in East Asia: neoliberalizing spaces in developmental states. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Satsuka, S. (2015). Nature in translation: Japanese tourism encounters the Canadian Rockies. Duke University Press.
- Manabe, N. (2015). The Revolution Will Not Be Televised: Protest Music After Fukushima. Oxford University Press.
- Tagliacozzo, Eric, Peter C. Perdue, and Helen F. Siu. (2015). Asia Inside Out: Connected Places. Harvard University Press.
- Roy, A., & Ong, A. (2011). Worlding cities: Asian experiments and the art of being global. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Robinson, Michael Edson. (2007). Korea's twentieth-century odyssey. University of Hawaii Press.
- Watson, James L. (2006). Golden arches east: McDonald's in East Asia. Stanford University Press.
- Said, Edward W. (1993). Culture and imperialism. Vintage.
- Cho, Y. (2011). Desperately seeking East Asia amidst the popularity of South Korean pop culture in Asia. Cultural Studies, 25(3), 383-404.
- Golley, J. (2016). China's environmental challenges: under the dome with no way out? The Asia-Pacific Journal, Volume 14, Issue 22, Number 3.
- World Bank and The Development Research Center of the State Council, P. R. China. (2014). Urban China: Toward Efficient, Inclusive, and Sustainable Urbanization. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Gregory, D., Johnston, R., Pratt, G., Watts, M., & Whatmore, S. (Eds.). (2011). The dictionary of human geography. John Wiley & Sons.
- Marston, S. A., Knox, P. L., & Liverman, D. M. (2016). World regions in global context: Peoples, places, and environments (6th ed.). Prentice Hall.

Regional media:

- China Dialogue (<https://www.chinadialogue.net>)
- Korea Exposé (<https://koreaexpose.com/>)
- The Asia-Pacific Journal Japan Focus (<http://apjif.org/>)

News media:

New York Times <http://www.nytimes.com> (Go to nytimes.com/passes for free access for FIU students)

NPR <http://www.npr.org/sections/news/>

BBC News <http://news.bbc.co.uk>

Course structure

In-classroom lecture and activities: There is a 110-minute in-classroom lecture and activities each week. Students are required to attend all scheduled class periods and will be responsible for all material presented in lecture during exams. There will be material presented in class that is not found in the readings, so students must make arrangements to get any information they may have missed.

Readings and reflections: Weekly readings for the course are mandatory. Readings include book chapters, articles, websites, etc., all of which are available on Blackboard. Readings will complement, not repeat, the lectures and other in-classroom activities. The required readings for each week will be announced and posted in advance on Blackboard. Your weekly reflections on the readings (other forms of assignments may substitute reflections; see the course schedule) should be a concise, specific, and coherent essay that integrates the key arguments of each reading and contains your critical opinion/argument on the topic of the week. Specific instructions will be given during class.

Blackboard activities: This course uses the Blackboard system as a course webpage. Students are expected to submit weekly assignments through Blackboard before attending each class. The online activities are designed to complement and enhance in-classroom learning. Along with readings, other class materials as well as the latest version of the syllabus and assignment instructions will be posted here. If you experience problems with accessing Blackboard, contact ETS in the Green Library for support (GL 152a).

Course evaluation

<i>Graded Item</i>	<i>% of Grade</i>	<i>Due date</i>
1. Weekly assignments	24%	Every Thursday (11:59 PM)
2. Midterm Exam (online)	20%	March 8
3. Final term paper	20%	April 27
4. Case-study presentation	20%	Friday (date of presentation)
5. In-class participation	16%	N/A

Grade scale (Modified from the FIU recommended scale effective Fall 2016)

Letter Grade	Points Per Credit Hour	Range (%)
A	4.00	93 or above
A-	3.67	90-92.99
B+	3.33	87-89.99
B	3.00	83-86.99
B-	2.67	80-82.99
C+	2.33	77-79.99
C	2.00	70-76.99
D	1.00	60-69.99
F (Fail)	0.00	Less than 60

Class policies

Attendance

In general, no in-class activity or exam can be made up, and no late work will be accepted. However, if you ABSOLUTELY must miss class, you must notify myself **before** the date and get approval. Unexcused absence will only be made for serious reasons (i.e., emergency, death of an immediate family member, acute illness). In either case, official documentation is required. Exceptions to this policy will be given **no make-up** for exams, assignments, or participation.

Electronic device

Phones are to be either **silenced or turned off AND removed from your desk** during class. You are **not allowed to use a laptop** *unless* you get an in-advance approval to use one for taking notes. If it is found more than three times that any of you do personal tasks, you as a class will no longer be allowed to use a laptop.

Plagiarism and academic misconduct

Academic honesty is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards academic dishonesty as an extremely serious matter, with severe consequences that range from probation to expulsion. If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by University Rules to report my suspicions to the Academic Integrity Committee. Please do not plagiarize. If you have any questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact me or consult FIU academic misconduct webpage at <http://academic.fiu.edu/academicbudget/misconductweb/1acmisconductproc.htm> .

University resources

Students with Disabilities

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Disability Resource center at 305-348-3532 in GC 190 (<http://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/student-success/disability-resource-center/>) to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

Counseling and Psychological Services

If you suffer from stress, sleep problems, anxiety, depression, interpersonal concerns or alcohol use that damages your academic performance, you are not alone. Students who have these issues are encouraged to contact the Counseling and Psychological Services at 305-348-2277 in SHC 270 (<http://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/wellness/counseling-and-psychological-services/services/index.php>).

Center for Excellence in Writing

As an upper level course in geography, you will be required to make your arguments clearly and coherently. The FIU Center for Excellence in Writing offers various services that will help improve your writing skills. If you feel you need assistance, visit their website (<http://writingcenter.fiu.edu/>) for making an appointment.

Schedule of readings and assignments

**Subject to change; Additional readings for each week are announced separately during class before the week.*

***Instructions for each week's assignment are given during class before the week. Each week's assignment is due on Thursday 11:59 PM.*

Week	Date	Theme	Reading (before class)*	Assignment (after class)**
Week 1	January 12	Introduction: What is geography? What is East Asia?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course syllabus • 'Geography' & 'Orientalism' (Dict of Human Geog) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistical comparisons using an online country profile database (World Bank; WTO; OECD; FAO; CIA)
Week 2	January 19	An overview of East Asian countries from a comparative perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World regions in global context, Ch 8 (East Asia) • 'Development' (Dict of Human Geog) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflections on the readings
Week 3	January 26	Rise of East Asia in the 20 th Century <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study: Japan's post-war economic miracle vs. the "Lost Decade" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The East Asian miracle: economic growth and public policy (World Bank, 1993) • Nature in translation, Ch. 1 (Satsuka, 2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflections on the readings
Week 4	February 2	From developmentalism to neoliberalism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study: South Korean society after the 1997-8 IMF crisis & the 2016 candle light protest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locating neoliberalism, Ch. 4 (Byung Doo Choi, 2012) • The Diplomat article (2014) • Koreanexpose.com article (2016) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflections on the readings
Week 5	February 9	Transnationalism and the East Asian Pop Culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study: Korean Wave 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Asian Pop Culture: Analysing the Korean Wave, Ch. 9 (Lee, 2008) • Desperately seeking East Asia amidst the popularity of South Korean pop culture in Asia (Cho, 2011) • NY Times article (2016) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflections on the readings
Week 6	February 16	North Korea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Korea's twentieth-century odyssey, Ch. 7 (Robinson, 2007) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflections on the readings

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study: North Koreans living in South Korea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liberty in North Korea website • Time article (2016) 	
Week 7	February 23	Territorial disputes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study: South China Sea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nuclear past and present (Manabe, 2015) • From Hiroshima to Fukushima (Bartal, 2016) • News article on Fukushima nuclear meltdown 	
Week 8	March 2	Mid-term review		• Mid-term (online)
Week 9	March 9	Nuke in East Asia – past, present, and future <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study: Japan’s 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The South China Sea is the future of conflict (Kaplan, 2011) • NPR news article on South China Sea territorial dispute (Ayyub, 2016) 	• Reflections on the readings
Week 10	March 16	<i>No Class (Spring Break)</i>		
Week 11	March 23	[Film] Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News article on the Minamata disease 	• Reflections on the readings
Week 12	March 30	Hyper-urbanization in China <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study: Urbanization of Tibet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban China (World Bank, 2014) • Taming Tibet, Ch. 6 (Yeh, 2013) 	• Reflections on the readings
Week 13	April 6	China’s environmental challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study: Air pollution (PM 2.5) in Beijing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China's Environmental Challenges, Ch. 2 (Shapiro, 2011) 	• Reflections on the readings
Week 14	April 13	[Film] Under the Dome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News article on China’s air pollution (Golley, 2016) 	• Reflections on the readings
Week 15	April 20	Climate change & China’s path to sustainability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study: Dongtan Eco-City 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fantasy Islands, Ch. 1 (Sze, 2015) • NY Times article on China’s renewable energy development (2017) 	
Week 16	April 27	Term Paper		• Term paper due