Geography of East Asia

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Office: SIPA 308
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:**


**Regional media:**

China Dialogue ([https://www.chinadialogue.net](https://www.chinadialogue.net))

Korea Exposé ([https://koreaexpose.com/](https://koreaexpose.com/))

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graded Item</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
<th>Due date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Weekly assignments</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>Every Thursday (11:59 PM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Midterm Exam (online)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>March 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Final term paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>April 27</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Case-study presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Friday (date of presentation)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. In-class participation</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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Grade scale (Modified from the FIU recommended scale effective Fall 2016)

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Reading (before class)*</th>
<th>Assignment (after class)**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>January 12</td>
<td>Introduction: What is geography? What is East Asia?</td>
<td>• Course syllabus&lt;br&gt;• ‘Geography’ &amp; ‘Orientalism’ (Dict of Human Geog)</td>
<td>• Statistical comparisons using an online country profile database (World Bank; WTO; OECD; FAO; CIA)</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>January 19</td>
<td>An overview of East Asian countries from a comparative perspective</td>
<td>• World regions in global context, Ch 8 (East Asia)&lt;br&gt;• ‘Development’ (Dict of Human Geog)</td>
<td>• Reflections on the readings</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>January 26</td>
<td>Rise of East Asia in the 20th Century&lt;br&gt;Case study: Japan’s post-war economic miracle vs. the “Lost Decade”</td>
<td>• The East Asian miracle: economic growth and public policy (World Bank, 1993)&lt;br&gt;• Nature in translation, Ch. 1 (Satsuka, 2015)</td>
<td>• Reflections on the readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>February 2</td>
<td>From developmentalism to neoliberalism&lt;br&gt;Case study: South Korean society after the 1997-8 IMF crisis &amp; the 2016 candle light protest</td>
<td>• Locating neoliberalism, Ch. 4 (Byung Doo Choi, 2012)&lt;br&gt;• The Diplomat article (2014)&lt;br&gt;• Koreanexpose.com article (2016)</td>
<td>• Reflections on the readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>February 9</td>
<td>Transnationalism and the East Asian Pop Culture&lt;br&gt;Case study: Korean Wave</td>
<td>• East Asian Pop Culture: Analysing the Korean Wave, Ch. 9 (Lee, 2008)&lt;br&gt;Desperately seeking East Asia amidst the popularity of South Korean pop culture in Asia (Cho, 2011)&lt;br&gt;NY Times article (2016)</td>
<td>• Reflections on the readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>February 16</td>
<td>North Korea</td>
<td>• Korea’s twentieth-century odyssey, Ch. 7 (Robinson, 2007)</td>
<td>• Reflections on the readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Comments</td>
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| 7    | February 23 | Territorial disputes  
• Case study: North Koreans living in South Korea  
• Liberty in North Korea website  
• Time article (2016) | • The nuclear past and present (Manabe, 2015)  
• From Hiroshima to Fukushima (Bartal, 2016)  
• News article on Fukushima nuclear meltdown |                                |
| 8    | March 2   | Mid-term review  
• Nuke in East Asia – past, present, and future  
• Case study: South China Sea  
• News article on Minamata disease  
• Reflections on the readings | • Mid-term (online) |                                |
| 9    | March 9   | Nuke in East Asia – past, present, and future  
• Case study: Japan’s 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster  
• 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 |                                |
| 10   | March 16  | No Class (Spring Break) | |                                |
| 11   | March 23  | [Film] Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind | • News article on China’s air pollution (PM 2.5) in Beijing | • Reflections on the readings |
| 12   | March 30  | Hyper-urbanization in China  
• Case study: Urbanization of Tibet  
• News article on China’s renewable energy development (2017) | • Urban China (World Bank, 2014)  
• Taming Tibet, Ch. 6 (Yeh, 2013) | • Reflections on the readings |
| 13   | April 6   | China’s environmental challenges  
• Case study: Air pollution (PM 2.5) in Beijing | • China’s Environmental Challenges, Ch. 2 (Shapiro, 2011) | • Reflections on the readings |
| 14   | April 13  | [Film] Under the Dome | • News article on China’s air pollution (Golley, 2016) | • Reflections on the readings |
| 15   | April 20  | Climate change & China’s path to sustainability  
• Case study: Dongtan Eco-City | • Fantasy Islands, Ch. 1 (Sze, 2015)  
• NY Times article on China’s renewable energy development (2017) |                                |
| 16   | April 27  | Term Paper | | • Term paper due |