

SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS

Voyage: Spring, 2014

Discipline: Politics/International Relations

PLCP 3500-102: Asian Politics

Upper Division

Faculty Name: Lew Hinchman

Prerequisites: none

Course Description

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has declared that the United States is executing a “pivot” toward Asia to inaugurate America’s “Pacific Century,” thereby giving Asia its due as the world’s most dynamic region. But this vast continent displays astounding variety, from wealthy, ultra-modern places such as Japan, Singapore, and coastal China to the impoverished backwaters of Myanmar (Burma) and India’s northeast. We shall therefore take a twofold approach to Asian Politics. We focus first on the internal politics of selected countries (mainly those we will visit) and their historical connections with one another. In the forefront of our inquiry is the question of whether there really are “Asian values” that distinguish at least East Asia from other parts of the world and account for both its economic success and authoritarian tendencies. We shall also highlight the ways in which Asian countries have adapted Western “imports” such as political democracy and human rights to their own indigenous traditions. Then we survey the geopolitics of East and South Asia, hoping to identify the security concerns that affect relations among these countries, as well as their ties to the United States, and assess the likelihood and potential causes of future conflicts among Asian nations. We will bear in mind—and try to test—the argument of Samuel Huntington that Asia is one of the theaters in which a “clash of civilizations” is most likely to occur. We will also not neglect Asian countries’ resolve to secure sufficient resources (e.g., petroleum, coal, food, metals) to keep their economic growth going.

Course Objectives

1. Acquire a basic working knowledge of the political systems and key actors of six of the countries formally described in this course: Japan, China, Vietnam, Singapore, Burma/Myanmar, and India. Recognize the similarities and differences between these countries’ paths toward development as compared to those characteristic of the United States and other Western nation-states. In doing so we will also realize that development is a multi-dimensional concept, one which must be measured not only by crude standards such as GDP growth or technological advances, but also in terms of more sophisticated indicators such as literacy, the empowerment of women, fair distribution of resources, educational attainments, preservation of natural capital, democracy, transparency, “quality of life” and

- more. Students will learn to use some widely recognized indices that address criteria such as these, including OECD and GINI reports.
2. Explore the relationships between economic development and culture as they have emerged in Asia; trace the different paths to economic and technological modernization followed by Asia and the West, respectively
 3. Gain insight into the burdens (and occasionally advantages) of colonialism and neo-colonialism on the countries to be studied, and see how the influence of colonial institutions continues to be felt even long after a country has gained full independence.
 4. Sample the varieties of democratic experience illustrated by many of the countries we'll be visiting. In particular, students should become aware of the challenges posed to democracy by ethnic and religious differences and understand some of the ways in which countries like India and China have attempted to accommodate such differences within their political systems. Also, students should recognize the potential conflicts between extreme inequality (e.g., the caste system in India) and the preservation of democratic institutions.
 5. Learn to evaluate the security situation of Asian countries as they themselves see it. What are the main risks to peace in the Asia-Pacific region? Is there a balance of power in Asia, or are countries "bandwagoning" with China as the new hegemon? What role should the United States play in Asia now that we have proclaimed a new Pacific Century?

Required Textbooks

Books to purchase:

Charleton, Sue Ellen: *Comparing Asian Politics: India, China, and Japan*, (Boulder, CO, Westview Press, 2010) ISBN: 978-0-8133-4414-0

Hayton, Bill, *Vietnam: Rising Dragon* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2010) ISBN: 0-300-17814-X

Huntington, Samuel, *The Clash of Civilizations* (New York, Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 2003) ISBN: 0-684-84441-9

Kaplan, Robert D.: *Monsoon: The Indian Ocean and the Future of American Power* (New York, Random House, 2010) ISBN: 978-1-4000-6746-6

Steinberg, David, *Burma/Myanmar: What Everyone Needs to Know* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2010) ISBN: 978-0-19-539068-1

Articles and book chapters on reserve

de Bary, Theodore, *Asian Values and Human Rights: a Confucian Communitarian Perspective* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1998) ISBN (13): 978-0674001961

Friedman, Thomas, *Hot, Flat, and Crowded*, chapter 15 (“Can Red China Become Green China?”) (New York, Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 2008) ISBN: 0-374-16685-4

Gilley, Bruce, *China’s Democratic Future*, chapter 4, “Resources for Change”; ISBN: 0231130856

Huntington, Samuel, *The Clash of Civilizations*, pp. 21-29, 102-109, 155-157, 168-174, 218-238 (book data noted above)

Joshi, Shashank, “Why India is Becoming Warier of China,” in *Current History*, April, 2011

Kurlantzick, Joshua, “Myanmar: the Next Failed State?” in *Current History*, September, 2011

Mauzy, Diane K. and Milne, R.S., *Singapore Politics under the People’s Action Party* (New York, Routledge, 2002), pp. 1-12; 128-156. ISBN: (13) 978-0415246538; ISBN: (10) 0415246539

McKibben, Bill, chapter entitled “Kerala,” in *Hope, Human and Wild* (St. Paul, MN, Hungry Mind Press, 1993). ISBN: 1-886913-13-7

O’Neill, Tom, “Untouchables” in *National Geographic Magazine*, June, 2003, pages 2-31

Ott, Marvin C., “Deep Danger: Competing Claims in the South China Sea,” in *Current History*, September, 2011

Rosenbluth, Frances M., *Japan Transformed*, pp. 140-154 and 186-192 (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2010) ISBN: 978-0-691-13592-2

Saich, Tony, *Governance and Politics of China*, pp. 364-372 (New York and London, Palgrave-MacMillan, 2011) ISBN: 0-333-59487-8

Thakur, Ramesh, *The Government and Politics of India*, ch. 9 (party politics) (New York, St. Martin’s Press, 1995) ISBN: 0-312-12719-7

Vogel, “Japan’s Post-Catastrophe Politics,” in *Current History*, September, 2011

Zakaria, Fareed, “Culture is Destiny: a Conversation with Lee Kuan Yew,” *Foreign Affairs* (volume 73, No. 2), March-April, 1994

Topical Outline of the Course (B days, 9:25-10:40)

Class 1: Course Introduction: (A) Organization of the course; reading assignments, grading, field assignments; (B) Some questions to think about: are there really “Asian values?” If so, what are they and how do they mesh with the requirements of political democracy and economic modernization? Are there crucial differences between East and South Asia or between countries that were colonized (India, Myanmar, Vietnam) and those that were not (Japan, China, Thailand)

Class 2: The problem of “Asian values”: Zakaria, “Culture is Destiny,” in *Foreign Affairs*, March-April, 1994 (on reserve); de Bary, *Asian Values and Human Rights*, pp. 1-6 and 17-29

Class 3: Japan’s demographics and political history: Charleton, chs. 4 and 7

Class 4: The constitution and government of Japan today: Charleton, ch. 8 (pp. 184-189 only); chapter 9, read the sections on Japan; chapter 11, pp. 260-265

Class 5: Recent elections in Japan: Is the Liberal Democratic Party really in decline? Charleton, ch. 12: read sections that pertain to Japan; Rosenbluth, *Japan Transformed*, pp. 140-154 and 186-192 (on reserve). Also recommended: Vogel, “Japan’s Post-Catastrophe Politics” (on reserve)

Class 6: China, demography and history: Charleton, chs. 3 and 6

Class 7: China’s constitution and formal power arrangements: Charleton, 189-195; the “party-state complex”, Charleton, ch. 11, regionalism: read sections that pertain to China; increasing pluralism, Charleton, ch. 12: read sections on China

Class 8: Continue above assignment

Class 9: Can China find a path to democracy and environmental sustainability? Charleton, ch. 13, pp. 312-320; Gilley, *China’s Democratic Future*, ch. 4, “Resources for Change” (on reserve); Friedman, *Hot, Flat, and Crowded*, chapter 15 (on reserve); also recommended: Saich, *Governance and Politics of China*, pp. 364-372 (section on “The challenge of constraints...”, on reserve)

Class 10: Vietnam: communist or capitalist?: Hayton, pp. 1-9 (ch.1); 22-25, 68-90

Class 11: Vietnam: triumphs and troubles of the Communist Party: Hayton, pp. 91-112 and 203-228

Class 12: Singapore: Asia's most amazing success story, Mauzy and Milne, pages 1-12 and 128-156 (on reserve)

Review session for midterm to be arranged

Class 13: Midterm Exam

Class 14: Myanmar (Burma): Colonial legacies and independence: Steinberg, 15-80

Class 15: Myanmar: Military coups, resistance and rebellions by national minorities: Steinberg, 80-132

Class 16: Myanmar: Military rule II; the new Constitution and elections: Steinberg, 132-189. Recommended reading: Kurlantzick: "Myanmar: the Next Failed State?" (on reserve)

Class 17: India, demography and political history: Charleton, ch. 2 and ch. 5; castes in India: O'Neill, "Untouchables" in *National Geographic* (on reserve)

Class 18: The constitution of India: Charleton, ch. 8, pp. 177-184; the government of India: Charleton, chapter 9 (read the sections on India)

Class 19: Trends in Indian politics: regionalism, Charleton, ch. 11: 247-254; electoral shifts and party alignments, Charleton, ch. 12: read sections that pertain to India; read Thakur, ch. 9 and Kaplan, ch. 6: "The Troubled Rise of Gujarat" in *Monsoon*

Class 20: Models of growth and modernization for India (I): Nilekandi, 242-267; Kaplan 96-118

Class 21: Models of growth for India (II): McKibben, chapter on "Kerala" in *Hope, Human and Wild*

Class 22: Why Asia may be the scene of the most severe "clash of civilizations": Huntington, 21-29, 102-109, 155-157, 168-174, 218-238

Class 23: The security situation in South Asia: Should India be more worried about Pakistan or China? Kaplan, *Monsoon*, pages 119-134; Steven Cohen, "Shooting for a Century: The India-Pakistan Conundrum"; and Shashank Joshi, "Why India Is Becoming Warier of China," both articles in *Current History*, April, 2011

Class 24: The Burma-China-India triad: Kaplan, *Monsoon*, 213-239; China's two-ocean strategy, Kaplan, *Monsoon*, 277-293; Marvin C. Ott, "Deep Danger: Competing Claims in the South China Sea," in *Current History*, April, 2011

FIELD COMPONENT

Each student must participate in an all-day field lab led by the instructor. Prior to our arrival in each port, and thus before the field assignment for that country begins, you should formulate some specific questions that you want to answer by drawing on your readings, observations and experiences. Based on the data you gather in the country, you will be asked to write a report in which you answer several of these questions, explaining how your experiences on shore—as modified by the reading you have done—support your conclusions. Your reports should be about six to eight pages long. Well-designed field lab reports will integrate material from the readings and briefings with actual “on the ground” experience. Also, they will always be comparative, and increasingly so as you acquire more knowledge of the countries we are studying and have a broader basis for comparison. Evaluation will be based on a variety of factors: organization and clarity, connections made between field observations and material from the readings, originality, care in observing and recording what the student has experienced, appropriateness of the questions around which the report is constructed, and quality of writing. Remember: a field report should offer more than mere description or narrative. It should reflect your ability as a social scientist to gather and analyze data, and to use it to suggest solutions to problems of fact and interpretation.

For our field lab in Asian Politics we will travel to a site chosen by the Centre for Public Policy Research, an NGO prominent in the state of Kerala for its contributions to more effective governance and sustainable development. Staff members from the CPPR will offer lectures and question-and-answer sessions on a variety of topics concerning Kerala’s unusual model of development, one that emphasizes social justice, harmony among ethnic groups, empowerment of women, political involvement of all citizens, and the attainment of a higher quality of life for everyone. Later in the day we will visit the Corporation of Cochin, as the municipal government is called there. We will learn how a major Indian city (pop. of over 600,000) is run, with subjects ranging from budgeting and social services, to education, water, etc.

Besides the one major field lab, students in Asian Politics will have a second field assignment that they will be asked to carry out. There will be two ways to do it. First, students could sign up for the trip I am leading to the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo. There we will hear some presentations by Embassy staff on Japan’s domestic and foreign policy and relations with the United States, and have a chance to ask questions. Then students will have an opportunity to meet with their Japanese counterparts and work on some social media projects connected to the presentations. You would then submit a report describing what you learned and how you used it to fashion a social media campaign. Note that you do not have to sign up for this trip! it is just one alternative for meeting a course requirement.

The second way to carry out the special field assignment is to seek out English-language newspapers in every Asian port where it would be possible and appropriate, and then do a comparative study of the ways in which certain broad issues are handled by these papers. For example, a student might look for articles about the relations between the United States and the Asian countries in question, or again about economic affairs within the country (jobs, economic growth, currency values, access to raw materials, trade), or perhaps about how religion and politics intersect, or about an especially

sensitive issue that affects the region (say, conflicting territorial claims in the South China Sea). I will gladly offer suggestions about specific topics as we approach the ports. Students may choose to focus on reporting or on editorializing, but they should bear in mind that many newspapers have a “slant” and thus do not necessarily represent public opinion generally in a given country (especially in countries like China in which the press is severely restricted). In some countries such as India, Hong Kong, and Singapore, it will be easy to find English-language papers. In others, such as Japan and China, you might have to go to good local bookstores and end up buying a paper published by and for local expats. You might also find it useful to compare style and content of reporting in the local papers with what you find in the *International Herald Tribune* (available in many port cities).

METHODS OF EVALUATION

1. Midterm exam (100 points) will cover material from Japan through Vietnam. It will include longer essays plus short essays/commentaries on terms from a sheet I will distribute in advance.
2. Final exam (100 points) will be broadly comparative and draw on material from the entire course, but with the greatest emphasis on Myanmar/Burma, India, and the foreign policy section of the course. It will have several long essay questions as well as terms (related to the study of politics in the countries we have visited), which will require short essay commentaries like the ones you wrote for the midterm.
3. Quizzes, to be given when needed (10 points each). Quizzes will be announced one class day in advance.
4. Class participation (100 points). This is a “directed discussion” course. That is, I will often present concepts, historical background, and key distinctions relevant to understanding each country’s politics. In turn, you will be expected to try to answer a variety of questions on the readings and on comparisons of Asian countries, and should be prepared to ask plenty of questions of your own devising, debate your fellow participants, and confront the myriad interpretative, moral, and policy issues implicit in the readings and class discussions. How well you do all this will determine your participation score. Note: class attendance is a component of participation. You obviously cannot accumulate any credit for participating if you are not there! On the other hand, those who come to class dutifully, but use the time to send text-messages or edit their photos should not expect any credit for participation either. So...come to class alert, with the reading done, and ready to engage. If you do that, your participation score will be fine.
5. Field lab reports as outlined in the previous section (75 points) and reports based on the special field assignment(s) described above (25 points).

At the end of the semester we will figure out how many points were available in total (this can't be done until we know how many quizzes were given). Then we calculate how many points each student earned and figure your grade on a percentage basis of the available points as follows:

A	93-100%
A-	90-92%
B+	87-89%
B	83-85%
B-	80-83%
C+	77-79%
C	73-76%
C-	70-72%
D+	67-69%
D	63-66%
D-	60-62%

Thus, at any time you can see how you are doing in the course by adding up the available points to date and the share of them you have earned thus far. Participation points constitute the exception, since they cannot be calculated until the course is over. One can always make a "late run" and improve on this measure! Note: attendance is part of the participation score; missing more than one or two classes without an excuse will result in a lower participation grade even for those who have been engaged and active in class discussions. Why not come to class? After all, where else do you have to go on a ship?

Honor Code: students are required to adhere to the University of Virginia Honor Code as described in the *Voyager's Handbook*.