

Midwestern State University
Department of Political Science

POLS 3593: Asian Politics

Fall 2023

Section 101 TR 11-12:20 (PY 209)

Instructor: Dr. Juheon Lee

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Office Hours: Mon 3:30pm- 5pm; Tue 2pm-5pm; Wed 9am-12pm; and by appointment

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Course Description

Many scholars and policymakers believe that East Asia is the area of greatest strategic importance to the United States and the world today. Despite East Asia's strategic importance to other states and actors, relations among East Asian states have not gained the greatest attention outside the region so far. What are the reasons for this gap? Given that international relations theories have been derived mostly from the European experience, how much are the theories useful in explaining the state behavior in East Asia? Have those theories explained East Asia well?

This course provides an analytical overview of international relations in East Asia, mainly focusing on Northeast Asia (China, Taiwan, Japan, and Korean Peninsula) with some emphasis on Southeast Asia. Over the semester, we will explore the major theoretical and empirical issues in East Asia. We begin with historical events that shaped cultures, political systems, and inter-state relations in contemporary East Asia. We then focus on institutional arrangements, regime dynamics, political economy, and democratization in major countries and examine how domestic politics and interstate relations have been interacting each other. Finally, we examine some of regional issues in East Asia. Major topics for discussion include U.S. strategy in East Asia, the impact of the rise of China on regional security, nuclear proliferation, territorial disputes, nationalism, economic interdependence, and regionalism.

Course Objectives

Through the completion of this course, students are expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes:

- understand historical and cultural contexts of East Asian politics and compare different political systems in East Asia,
- identify key concepts and theories in the study of East Asian international relations,
- critically assess opposing theoretical arguments by evaluating the validity of empirical evidence,
- apply theoretical knowledge to a variety of issue areas and policy scenarios,
- evaluate the success and challenges of East Asian countries.

NOTE: The syllabus provides a general plan for the course, and changes may be necessary throughout the semester. Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor. Any changes made to this syllabus will be announced in class and posted on D2L.

Course Requirements

Completing ALL the readings and regular attendance will be required of all students. Active participation in discussions is critical for students to succeed in this course.

Assignment	Weight	Notes
Final exam	20%	Essay questions
Midterm exam	20%	Essay questions
Current issue presentation	15%	Case study & discussion leading
Policy paper	20%	> 2500 words written report
Movie reflection paper (2)	10%	5 points for each paper (>500 words)
Engagement	15%	Attendance & Participation

- Exams (Midterm 20 points / Final 20 points):** Each exam will consist of 2-3 essays. They will test your understanding of the key concepts of comparative politics and the main arguments of the assigned articles. The exams will also ask you to apply a theoretical framework to the real-world examples. A study guide will be provided before the exams, and make-up exams will be granted only in case of dire and documented personal emergencies.
- Policy Paper (20 points):** You will be required to complete a policy paper on a specific issue/problem that has involved more than two countries in East Asia. A good paper will highlight effectively and logically the theoretical significance of the problem and its strategic importance to the United States or any other actors in international politics. You may use academic articles, local/national news sources, or your own knowledge to identify the issue you wish to focus on. You must use a critical thinking approach and not simply summarize the information.
- Current Issue Presentation (15 points):** All students are required to sign up for an individual slide presentation (approximately 25 minutes) in the first week. The presentation should include an in-depth case study on a topical issue and some questions for class discussion. Students will decide his/her own presentation topic and notify the instructor by the end of the first week. An effective and interactive presentation will earn extra credits.
- Movie reflections papers (10 points):** During the semester, we will watch 2 movies on comparative politics. You will be expected to respond to each movie in a short reflection paper (>500 words). Your response must be critical and go beyond a summary or a description of those movies. Originality will be critical for your grade (similarity rate above 5% will be penalized). All papers should be submitted electronically via D2L.
- Attendance and Participation (15 points):** Attendance is vital to learning the material presented in this course. You will be expected to come to class prepared to engage thoughtfully, listen attentively, and interact with your peers respectfully. Over the course of the semester, 4 excused absences will be allowed for all students. More than 4 absences and unexcused absences will lower your final grade.

Your final grade will be based on the quality of assignments listed above. It will be determined using the following percentage scale:

A = 100 – 90 B = 89 – 80 C = 79 – 70 D = 69 – 60 F < 60

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

All of the material for this course is located on the MSU D2L platform. Each student is expected to be familiar with this platform as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into D2L through the MSU Homepage. Again, if you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor. DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO TAKE QUIZZES OR EXAMS.

On Academic Honesty

Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individuals to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the [Office of Student Conduct](#).

Student Disability Services

Any student having an education disability plan on file with the university needs to inform me within the first week of the class, so I make the appropriate arrangements to accommodate your situation. In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to Disability Support Services.

On Electronics and Courtesy

All electronic messaging devices must be turned off and stowed away by the time class begins: no e-mail/Facebook/text message checking, net surfing, etc. during class time. The use of laptops and tablets is prohibited in class except when explicitly permitted by the instructor. Out of courtesy to your classmates and your instructor, please come to class on time and do not leave until the class ends, unless you obtained prior permission, and do not engage in private conversations in class.

Textbooks

Mark Beeson. (2014). Regionalism and Globalization in East Asia: Politics, Security and Economic Development (2nd Edition). ISBN: 987-1-137-33235-6. Palgrave MacMillan [Recommended]

All readings will be posted on D2L

Course Schedule

Week 1: International Relations Theories in the Context of East Asia

What are the central tenets of the mainstream international relations theories? Have the theories of international relations explained East Asia well? Why do scholars think that East Asian international relations have been understudied in the international relations literature?

August 29 & August 31

- Introduction to the course
- Snyder, J. (2004). One world, rival theories. *Foreign policy*, (145), 52.
- Kang, D. C. (2003). Getting Asia wrong: The need for new analytical frameworks. *International Security*, 27(4), 57-85.

Week 2: History and International Relations in East Asia

How do we define East Asia? What, if anything, is different about East Asia? How have historical circumstances shaped the international politics of East Asia? What accounts for the East Asian countries' attitudes towards Japan, then and now?

September 5 & September 7

- Beeson: Conceptualizing East Asia: From the Local to the Global (pp. 1-22)
- Beeson: Northeast Asia and the Weight of History (pp. 23- 46)

Week 3: Cold War and East Asian International Relations

How the Cold War affected Asia? How did the Cold War spread to East Asia? Was the Cold War cold in East Asia?

September 12

- Beeson: The Evolving Security Agenda (pp. 63-76)
- Hiroshi Mitani, "Why Do We Still Need to Talk about 'Historical Understanding' in East Asia?"

September 14

- Beeson: Regional Security (pp. 77-92)
- Hemmer & Katzenstein, "Why Is There No NATO in Asia?"
- Student presentation 2

Week 4 – East Asian Economic Miracle

What are some key characteristics of East Asian Economic Miracles?

September 19

- Beeson: East Asia's Developmental States (pp. 120-149)
- Noguchi, Y. (1998). "The 1940 System: Japan Under the Wartime Economy." *American Economic Review* 88(2): 404–7.
- Krugman, P. (1994). "The Myth of Asia's Miracle," *Foreign Affairs* 73 (6): 63-78.
- **Student presentation 1**

September 21

- Movie: *American Factory* (Netflix)
- **A reflection paper should be submitted by September 24 (11:00 pm)**

Week 5 – The United States in East Asian Region

What were U.S. goals in East Asia during and immediately after World War II? How has China's rise affected U.S. leadership in the region? Is U.S. influence declining in East Asia?

September 26

- Tow, W. T., & Limaye, S. (2016). What's China Got to Do With It? US Alliances, Partnerships in the Asia-Pacific. *Asian Politics & Policy*, 8(1), 7-26.
- **Student presentation 2**

September 28

- Beeson: The China Model (pp. 150-166)
- Lam P. (2016) "China, the United States, Alliances, and War: Avoiding the Thucydides Trap?"
- **Student presentation 3**

Week 6 – Great Power Rivalry and the Leadership in East Asia

What is the nature of the recent debates on participation in regional economic partnership organizations in Asia-Pacific region?

October 3

- Ferdinand, P. (2016). Westward ho—the China dream and 'one belt, one road': Chinese foreign policy under Xi Jinping. *International Affairs*, 92(4), 941-957.
- **Student presentation 4**

October 5

- Tow, W. (2015). "The United States and Asia in 2014: Reconciling Rebalancing and Strategic Constraints," *Asian Survey*, 55, 1: 12-20.
- Ankit P. (2017). "Trump Killed TPP. What's Next For Trade in Asia?" *The Diplomat*, <http://thediplomat.com/2017/01/trump-killed-tpp-whats-next-for-trade-in-asia/>
- **Student presentation 5**

Week 7 – Analytical Approaches to China’s Foreign Policy

How can outside observers explain Chinese foreign policy? What are the factors that drive Chinese foreign policy? Are those factors internal or external to China?

October 10

- Nathan and Scobell, Chapter 1 “What Drives Chinese Foreign Policy?”
- **Student presentation 6**

October 12

- Ng-Quinn, M. (1983). “The Analytic Study of Chinese Foreign Policy,” *International Studies Quarterly*, 27(2), 203-224.
- Grossman, D. (2019) “One Country, Two Systems, Lots of Problems,” *Foreign Policy* (June 21).

Week 8 – Chinese Foreign Policy

How does Chinese domestic situation change the country’s foreign policy orientation? What are the domestic factors of Chinese foreign policy? Who runs Chinese foreign policy? Politicians, diplomats, or party leaders? What does sovereignty mean in China? What is the “one-country-two-system” and how does it work in China? Is Chinese nationalism rising?

October 17

- Midterm Review

October 19

- **Midterm**

Week 9 – Domestic Politics and North Korea

How have domestic politics affected international relations in East Asia?

October 24

- Beeson: Nationalism and Domestic Politics (pp. 93-119)
- Gallagher, M. E. (2011). “‘Reform and Openness’: Why China’s Economic Reforms Have Delayed Democracy.” *World Politics* 54(03): 338–72.
- **Student presentation 7**

October 26

- Bruce Cumings, “North Korea: The Sequel,” *Current History* 102, 663 (April 2003): 147-151.
- Mark Bowden, “How to Deal with North Korea,” *The Atlantic*, July/August 2017.
- Wu, A. (2005). What China Whispers to North Korea. *Washington Quarterly*, 28(2), 35-48.
- **Student presentation 8**

Week 10 – ASEAN and Regional Cooperation

Why was the ASEAN formed? Does ASEAN fulfill its purpose? Does ASEAN have bright future?

October 31

- Beeson: The evolution of East Asian Regionalism (pp. 204-222)
- Ravenhill, John. 2009. "East Asian Regionalism: Much Ado about Nothing?" *Review of International Studies*, 35: 215-235.
- **Student presentation 9**

November 2

- Rüländ, J. (2000). ASEAN and the Asian crisis: theoretical implications and practical consequences for Southeast Asian regionalism. *The Pacific Review*, 13(3), 421-451.
- Mahmood, S. S., Wroe, E., Fuller, A., & Leaning, J. (2017). The Rohingya people of Myanmar: health, human rights, and identity. *The Lancet*, 389(10081), 1841-1850.
- **Student presentation 10**

Week 11 – Territorial Disputes

Why do East Asian nations dispute island territories? How would you adjudicate the disputes? Does your suggestion have a chance of success?

November 7

- Tim Liao, "Why China, Japan and Korea Fuss Over Tiny Islands—4 Things to Know," *The Washington Post: The Monkey Cage*, April 17, 2018.
- **Student presentation 11**

November 9

- M. Taylor Fravel, "China's Strategy in the South China Sea," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 33, 3 (December 2011): 292-319.
- Zhao, S. (2011) "China's Approaches toward Regional Cooperation in East Asia: Motivations and Calculations," *Journal of Contemporary China*, 20(68), pp. 53-67
- **Student presentation 12**

Week 12 – China, Russia, and Central Asia

How has China-Russia relationship evolved since after the WWII? What makes them cooperate in the central Asian region? How is China perceived by Central Asian countries?

November 14

- Wilhelmsen, J., & Flikke, G. (2011). Chinese–Russian convergence and central Asia. *Geopolitics*, 16(4), 865-901.
- **Student presentation 13**

November 16

- Dadabaev, T. (2014). Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) regional identity formation from the perspective of the Central Asia States. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 23(85), 102-118.
- **Student presentation 14**

Week 13 – China’s Global Strategy and East Asia

What is China’s “One-Best-One-Road” project, and how does it affect the United States? Should the United States and other countries be afraid of China’s creating of its own multinational organizations?

November 21

- Watch: “First They Killed My Father”
- A reflection paper should be submitted by November 26 (11:00 pm)

November 23

- Thanksgiving Holiday (No class)

Week 14 – China’s Global Strategy and East Asia

What is China’s “One-Best-One-Road” project, and how does it affect the United States? Should the United States and other countries be afraid of China’s creating of its own multinational organizations?

November 28 & November 30

- Ding, S. (2008). To build a “harmonious world”: China’s soft power wielding in the global south. *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, 13(2), 193-213.
- Dembicki, G. (2017). “The Convenient Disappearance of Climate Change Denial in China,” *Foreign Policy*, May 31
- Gallagher & Zhang. (2019). <http://theconversation.com/china-is-positioned-to-lead-on-climate-change-as-the-us-rolls-back-its-policies-114897>.
- Policy Paper Due on November 30 (11:00 pm)

Week 15 – China’s Search for Energy

How does China respond to climate change? How has China’s energy policy evolved? How does it affect China’s neighboring countries?

December 5

- Final exam review

December 7

- Final exam