

Midwestern State University
Department of Political Science

POLS 3593: Asian Politics

Fall 2021

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

Instructor: Dr. Juheon Lee

Office: O'Donohoe Hall 203

Office Hours: TWR 2:00 pm-4:00 pm, and by appointment (via Zoom or Skype)

E-mail: juheon.lee@msutexas.edu

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	Point	Notes
Final exam	25	Essay questions
Midterm exam	25	Essay questions
Policy paper	20	> 2500 words
Current issue presentation	20	Case study & discussion leading
Engagement (attendance & participation)	10	

- 1. Exams (Midterm 25 points / Final 25 points):** Exams will be in-class and closed-book and consist of short and long essays. Short essays will test your understanding of key concepts or the main arguments of the assigned articles. Long essays will test how you apply a theoretical framework to the real-world examples.
- 2. 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.
- 3. Current Issue Presentation (20 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.
- 4. Engagement with the course (10 points):** Your attendance and participation are vital to learning the material presented in this course. Without any change of university-wide COVID-19 policy, you will be expected to come to class prepared to engage thoughtfully, listen attentively, and interact with your peers respectfully. However, please do not come to class if you are feeling sick or you think you might have been exposed to COVID-19. Contact me (via email) and provide details about your situation at your earliest convenience for your absence to be excused. Over the course of the semester, 6 excused absences will be allowed for all students. More than 6 absences and unexcused absences may lower your final grade. As the course instructor of record, I reserve the right to move the course online, either partially, or in full, in the event of a personal emergency that prohibits me from delivering the course fully in-person. More instructions will be given at that time

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.

Additional 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?

Tuesday, August 24

- Introduction to the course

Thursday, August 26

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

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?

Tuesday, August 31

- Beeson: Conceptualizing East Asia: From the Local to the Global (pp. 1-22)

Thursday, September 2

- Beeson: Northeast Asia and the Weight of History (pp. 23- 46)
- Beeson: Southeast Asia's Dependent Development (pp. 47-62)

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?

Tuesday, September 7

- Beeson: The Evolving Security Agenda (pp. 63-76)
- Hiroshi Mitani, "Why Do We Still Need to Talk about 'Historical Understanding' in East Asia?" (posted online)
- Student presentation 1

Thursday, September 9

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

Week 4 – East Asian Economic Miracle

What are some key characteristics of East Asian Economic Miracles?

Tuesday, September 14

- 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. (posted online)
- Student presentation 3

Tuesday, September 16

- Beeson: Crises and their consequences (pp. 186-203)
- Krugman, P. (1994). "The Myth of Asia's Miracle," *Foreign Affairs* 73 (6): 63-78. (posted online)
- Student presentation 4

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?

Tuesday, September 21

- 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. (posted online)
- Student presentation 5

Thursday, September 23

- Beeson: The China Model (pp. 150-166)
- Lam P. (2016) "China, the United States, Alliances, and War: Avoiding the Thucydides Trap?" (posted online)
- Student presentation 6
- **Deadline for policy paper proposal**

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?

Tuesday, September 28

- 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. (posted online)
- Student presentation 7

Thursday, September 30

- Tow, W. (2015). "The United States and Asia in 2014: Reconciling Rebalancing and Strategic Constraints," *Asian Survey*, 55, 1: 12-20. (posted online)
- 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/> (posted online)
- Student presentation 8

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?

Tuesday, October 5

- Nathan and Scobell, Chapter 1 “What Drives Chinese Foreign Policy?” (pp. 3-36, posted online)
- Student presentation 9

Thursday, October 7

- Ng-Quinn, M. (1983). “The Analytic Study of Chinese Foreign Policy,” *International Studies Quarterly*, 27(2), 203-224. (posted online)
- Grossman, D. (2019) “One Country, Two Systems, Lots of Problems,” *Foreign Policy* (June 21). (posted online)
- Student presentation 10

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?

Tuesday, October 12

- Midterm Review

Thursday, October 14

- **Midterm**

Week 9 – Domestic Politics and North Korea

How have domestic politics affected international relations in East Asia?

Tuesday, October 19

- 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. (posted online)
- Student presentation 11

Thursday, October 21

- Bruce Cumings, “North Korea: The Sequel,” *Current History* 102, 663 (April 2003): 147-151. (posted online)
- Mark Bowden, “How to Deal with North Korea,” *The Atlantic*, July/August 2017. (posted online)
- Wu, A. (2005). What China Whispers to North Korea. *Washington Quarterly*, 28(2), 35-48. (posted online)
- Student presentation 12

Week 10 – ASEAN and Regional Cooperation

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

Tuesday, October 26

- 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. (posted online)
- Student presentation 13

Thursday, October 28

- Rüländ, J. (2000). ASEAN and the Asian crisis: theoretical implications and practical consequences for Southeast Asian regionalism. *The Pacific Review*, 13(3), 421-451. (posted online)
- 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. (posted online)
- Student presentation 14

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?

Tuesday, November 2

- Tim Liao, "Why China, Japan and Korea Fuss Over Tiny Islands—4 Things to Know," *The Washington Post: The Monkey Cage*, April 17, 2018. (posted online)
- Student presentation 15

Thursday, November 4

- M. Taylor Fravel, "China's Strategy in the South China Sea," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 33, 3 (December 2011): 292-319. (posted online)
- Zhao, S. (2011) "China's Approaches toward Regional Cooperation in East Asia: Motivations and Calculations," *Journal of Contemporary China*, 20(68), pp. 53-67 (posted online)
- Student presentation 16

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?

Tuesday, November 9

- Wilhelmsen, J., & Flikke, G. (2011). Chinese–Russian convergence and central Asia. *Geopolitics*, 16(4), 865-901. (posted online)
- Student presentation 17

Thursday, November 11

- 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. (posted online)
- Student presentation 18

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?

Tuesday, November 16

- 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. (posted online)
- Dembicki, G. (2017). “The Convenient Disappearance of Climate Change Denial in China,” *Foreign Policy*, May 31 (posted online)
- Gallagher & Zhang. (2019). <http://theconversation.com/china-is-positioned-to-lead-on-climate-change-as-the-us-rolls-back-its-policies-114897>.

Thursday, November 18

- **Watch: American Factory**

Week 14 – 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?

Tuesday, November 23

- **Policy Paper Writing (No class meeting)**
- **Policy Paper Due (Midnight)**

Thursday, November 25

- Thanksgiving Holidays

Week 15 – Final Exam

Tuesday, November 30

- Final exam review

Thursday, December 2

- **Final exam**