INTRODUCTION TO MODERN ASIAN HISTORY

HIST 1910/ASIAN 1911/CAPS 1910

Fall 2015

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This course introduces students to Asian history in modern times and to Asia as a region, not just as a collection of disparate nation-states. To this end, we explore topics in the histories of Southeast and East Asia through four overlapping chronological phases: the early modernity of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries; the age of empires in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; the rise of the nation-state in the first half of the twentieth century; and the new postwar order in the second half of the twentieth century. Each week, we concentrate on aspects of either Southeast Asia or East Asia within this historical framework, examining what changes took place and how people reacted to those changes. The lectures will address these themes broadly, while the section meetings will provide opportunities for students to reflect on them through discussions grounded in selected primary and secondary source readings.

Each student is required to write two essays (each five pages double-spaced). The first essay should address one of the “Questions for Discussion and Essays” listed under “Early Modernity” (part I of the course, which is covered in weeks 1-3), and the second essay should address one of the “Questions for Discussion and Essays” listed under “Age of Empires” or “The State in Revolution and War” (parts II and III of the course, which are covered in weeks 4-10). One of these essays should be based on readings assigned during a week when Professor Tagliacozzo is lecturing, and the other essay on readings assigned during a week when Professor Seow is lecturing. You may consult other texts (and we will happily suggest relevant items), but you are not required to read more than the assigned readings in writing essays. The first essay is due in class at the start of lecture on Monday, September 21, and the second one is due in class when lecture begins on Monday, November 9. More details on submission will be given prior to the deadline.

Rewrite policy: We do not require you to rewrite each essay, but you have the option of doing so. Before you rewrite an essay, you are required to discuss what is expected in the revised version with the TA who graded the original. The rewrite for the first essay is due in class at the beginning of lecture on Monday, October 5, and the second rewrite is due in class at the beginning of class on Monday, November 23. Submit rewrites only if you make substantive changes of content, organization, or prose (more than correcting punctuation and spelling). The rewrite must be turned
in with the original essay, as marked by the original grader, or it will not be accepted. Rewrites will receive a grade that will be an average of the grades on the original paper and the revised version. Penalty for lateness of original papers (late rewrites will not be accepted): ½ letter grade lost for every day of lateness. For example, an “A” paper arriving on September 22 would receive an “A-.” If it arrived on September 23 it would receive a “B+” and so on.

In addition to writing two essays, students take one fifty-minute exam in class on Wednesday, October 14 and another, also in class, on Wednesday, December 2. These exams will cover the readings, the lectures, and the discussion sections.

There is only one required textbook for this course— In Search of Southeast Asia, ed. David J. Steinberg (1987). It is on sale at the Cornell Store and on reserve in Uris Library. All other readings are available on Blackboard (marked “bb”).

Grades will be based on the two essays (20% each), attendance of and participation in lectures and discussion sections (20%), and the two examinations (20% each). You are welcome to consult us about paper topics and other matters during the semester.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1: Introduction (VS+ET)

Wed Aug 26 Introduction to the Course

PART I: EARLY MODERNITY

Week 2: Early Modern Asia (VS+ET)

Mon Aug 31 Empire, Kingdom, and Shogunate (VS)
Wed Sep 2 Early Modern Southeast Asian Culture (ET)

Discussion sections on Wed Sep 2 and Fri Sep 4

Assigned Readings:

Questions for Discussion and Essay: What was China’s relationship with its neighbors? What was the extent and limits of its influence upon them? Would you consider early modern East Asia a coherent region? Why or why not? How does Southeast Asia compare as a “system” during this time? Did it cohere as a region? Was Ayutthaya symbolic of cohesion or anomalous in this respect?

**Week 3: Maritime Asia: Views from the Periphery (ET)**

Mon Sep 7 Labor Day Holiday – No Class
Wed Sep 9 Intra-Regional Connections: Sino-Southeast Asia (ET)

Discussion sections on Wed Sep 9 and Fri Sep 11

Assigned Readings:

Questions for Discussion and Essays: In eighteenth and early nineteenth century Southeast Asia, were Chinese identified as Southeast Asian, as outsiders, or otherwise? Where in Southeast Asia were they considered to be “local”? What differences can we see in Chinese communities in the different parts of the region?

**Week 4: East Asia in Upheaval (VS)**

Mon Sep 14 War Capitalism and Gunboat Diplomacy
Wed Sep 16 Between Rebellion and Restoration

Discussion sections on Wed Sep 16 and Fri Sep 18

Assigned Readings:

Questions for Discussion and Essay: What sort of impact did the First Opium War (1839-1842) have on China and the wider East Asian region? How did external pressures—of which this conflict was one—have bearing on internal forces like peasant rebellions and court politics, and vice versa?
PART II: AGE OF EMPIRES

Week 5: Maritime Asia and Western Imperialism (ET)

Mon Sep 21  Western Imperialism in Southeast Asia
             Essay #1 due at the start of lecture
Wed Sep 23  Imperial Ideologies

Discussion sections on Wed Sep 23 and Fri Sep 25

Assigned Readings:

- In Search of Southeast Asia, ed. Steinberg, pp. 111-122, 139-159.

Questions for Discussion and Essays: What is the relationship between imperialism and nationalism? How was race used to further nationalistic goals? Was the imperial project enacted in the same ways everywhere one looks in Southeast Asia?

Week 6: Japan’s Modern Empire (VS)

Mon Sep 28  Japanese Imperialism
Wed Sep 30  From Manchuria to Manchukuo

Discussion sections on Wed (Sep 30) and Fri (Oct 2)

Assigned Readings:


Questions for Discussion and Essay: How would you describe the nature and evolution of Japanese imperialism? In what ways did the ideas and everyday practices of Japanese settlers in Manchuria and Korea, migrants to the United States, and citizens back in the home islands contribute to the shaping of this enterprise of empire?
Week 7: Colonial States and Resistance (ET)

Mon Oct 5  Modern Colonial States
Wed Oct 7  Race, Rule, Resistance

Discussion sections on Wed Oct 7 and Fri Oct 9

Assigned Readings:


Questions for Discussion and Essays: Can peasant rebellions ever be nationalistic or are they always localized and traditional in their goals? How were colonial states built, and maintained? What were the best ways to resist the imposition of colonial states by local peoples?

Week 8: First Midterm Exam (VS+ET)

Mon Oct 12  Fall Break
Wed Oct 14  First Midterm Exam

No discussion sections this week

PART III: THE STATE IN REVOLUTION AND WAR

Week 9: Making a Modern Nation in East Asia (VS)

Mon Oct 19  Nationhood and Citizenship
Wed Oct 21  Industrial Development and Urban Change

Discussion sections on Wed Oct 21 and Fri Oct 23

Assigned Readings:


Questions for Discussion and Essay: In what way did gender function as a site for articulations about nationhood, citizenship, and modernity in East Asia? What were the contradictions between these idealized notions and lived actualities for women in those times?

**Week 10: Political Identities in Southeast Asia (ET)**

Mon Oct 26       Southeast Asian Identity Formation  
Wed Oct 28       Pan-Asianism, Japan, World War II

Discussion sections on Wed Oct 28 and Fri Oct 30

Assigned Readings:

• *In Search of Southeast Asia*, ed. Steinberg, pp. 292-311, 324-331, 349-355.  

Questions for Discussion and Essays: Was the Japanese occupation a watershed for modern political development in Southeast Asia? In what ways was there significant continuity with the pre-World War II past? Where is there less evidence for continuity, and more of an argument for new patterns appearing on the landscape of ideas and local power?

**Week 11: East Asia at War (VS)**

Mon Nov 2       The Second Sino-Japanese War  
Wed Nov 4       China’s American Allies

Discussion sections on Wed Nov 4 and Fri Nov 6

Assigned Readings:


Questions for Discussion and Essay: How were China’s domestic and international politics affected by the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945)? What were the lasting legacies of that period?

**PART IV: A NEW POSTWAR ORDER**

**Week 12: Cold War East Asia and Beyond (VS)**

Mon Nov 9 Red China and Its Neighbors

Wed Nov 11 Essay #2 due at the start of lecture

Reform and Opening Up

Discussion sections on Wed Nov 11 and Fri Nov 13

Assigned Readings:


Questions for Discussion: To what extent were the developments in East Asia after 1945 a product of Cold War dynamics? To what extent were they outgrowths of prewar and wartime experiences?

**Week 13: Fear and Loathing in Modern Southeast Asia (ET)**

Mon Nov 16 Cold War Manifestations in Indochina

Wed Nov 18 The 1965 Coup and Killings in Indonesia

Discussion sections on Wed Nov 18 and Fri Nov 20
Assigned Readings:


Questions for Discussion: Is violence an integral part of Modern Southeast Asia’s History? Was the violence experienced both on mainland Southeast Asia and in the island world symptomatic of events and trends elsewhere in the world at the time? What was purely local about these conflagrations?

**Week 14: Southeast Asia for Sale (ET)**

Mon Nov 23       Illegal Economies of Southeast Asia
Wed Nov 25       Thanksgiving Break – No Class

No discussion sections this week

Assigned Readings:


Questions for Discussion: How important has the illegal nature of commerce been in Modern Southeast Asian History? Why does Southeast Asia exhibit more of this ontological sense of being for sale—both in terms of its products and of its people—than other regions of comparable size?

**Week 15: Conclusion (VS+ET)**

Mon Nov 30       Wrap Up + Review
Wed Dec 2        Second Midterm Exam

**Statement on Academic Integrity**

A Cornell student’s submission of work for academic credit indicates that the work is the student’s own. All outside assistance should be acknowledged, and the student’s academic position truthfully
reported at all times. Students are encouraged to discuss the content of a course among themselves and to help each other to master it, but no student should receive help in doing a course assignment that is meant to test what he or she can do without help from others. Representing another’s work as one’s own is plagiarism and a violation of this Code. If materials are taken from published sources the student must clearly and completely cite the source of such materials. Work submitted by a student and used by a faculty member in the determination of a grade in a course may not be submitted by that student in a second course, unless such submission is approved in advance by the faculty member in the second course.” If you have any questions or doubts about what constitutes plagiarism in a written work, please consult with us prior to the submission of said work. Thanks!