POLI380 Asian Politics and Development
Spring 2016 - Tuesdays & Thursdays 2:30-4:00 p.m.
Smullin 129

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Office Hours: Mondays 3-4:30 p.m., Thursdays 4-5 p.m. or by appointment (recommended)

Description and Objectives: This course explores the politics of Asia’s modern political and economic transformations, with particular emphasis on questions of democratization and development. For millennia, Asia was home to humanity’s wealthiest and most politically sophisticated societies. European and American colonialism, however, forced Asian societies to adapt to new, or modern, forms of political, social, and economic organization. Efforts to modernize accelerated after independence. According to many observers, Asia has achieved the greatest development success in the non-Western world, as several of its constituent societies rapidly increased their levels of wealth, education, and political capacity in the latter part of the 20th century.

Asia’s experience of political change and economic growth raises profound questions about the nature of “modernization”. Do all political and economic systems tend to converge around a common set of basic characteristics as they undergo growth and change? Is there even a singular process that we can call “modernization”: a pathway or sequence of political and economic changes along which all societies progress as they undergo socio-economic transformation? Or, do the diverse societies in Asia manifest distinctive forms of political and economic modernity, whether arising from their varying cultures or the distinct historical conditions under which development occurs? Are there patterns that define “Asian-style democracy” or “Asian capitalism”? Or are such ideas merely a form of “Orientalism” that exaggerates cultural differences and offers excuses for illiberal systems of power? If Asian politics and development are distinct in important ways, are these differences residues of the past that are destined to fade as Asia’s modern transformations advance and deepen, or models that might influence various other societies around the world?

These questions place the study of Asia’s political and economic development in a theoretical and comparative context. This course is thus concerned with debates about whether Asia’s experiences are distinct from ostensibly universal, perhaps Western, theories of modernization. Yet it also explores variation among Asian polities. After all, Asia is a vast region with a tremendous diversity of political systems, social dynamics, and cultures, not to mention great economic disparities. The very concept of “Asia” as a singular entity may be seen, debatably, as a Western invention. Therefore, the course compares the political and economic development histories of a range of Asian societies, asking what is similar as well as different among them. In order to yield comparative insight, we will range across many countries in East, South and Southeast Asia. By focusing on the thematic concerns and theoretical questions described above, the course touches on numerous topics and countries without devolving into a conceptually “thin” survey. Studying the politics of such a vast region comprehensively in one semester, however, is impossible. Our focus will be on the larger countries and on the more economically advanced societies. Unrepresented, alas, are many less-developed societies as well as the entire region of Central Asia or what is sometimes called “West Asia”, aka “The Middle East”.

The course is organized into five sections. In the first section, we will critically examine claims that Asia displays distinct, culturally- or historically-embedded forms of modern politics and economics. The second section offers a concise survey of the political histories and systems of East, South, and Southeast Asia. The third section examines the question of democratization, asking whether Asia’s experience shows that economic transformation inevitably fosters pressures for democratization, or instead whether cultural or historical patterns support enduring authoritarianism or other illiberal political patterns. The fourth section looks at national development patterns across Asia, with a particular focus on the thesis that “the developmental state” (or its absence) explains developmental success and failure in Asia. The fifth, concluding section asks whether Asia’s globalization, specifically the Asian Financial crisis of the late 1990s and the global crisis of the late 2000s, sounded the death-knell for an Asian-style capitalism and / or illiberal politics, and prompted convergence towards free-market capitalism and liberal democracy. Or, instead, have these crises heightened the distinctive characteristics of Asia’s economic and political systems – is the notion of an “Asian model” of political and economic modernity back in vogue?
The goals or student learning objectives of the course include enabling students to:

- Exercise general academic skills as applied to the course topics
  - read carefully
  - research effectively
  - speak competently
  - think critically and broadly without losing attention to specificity
  - write persuasively
- Acquire specific knowledge of Asia’s politics and political economy
  - become familiar with the history of politics and development in Asia, including their key institutional features
  - identify and analyze the factors shaping processes and patterns of change in the region
  - apply and critically evaluate theoretical debates about Asian politics and development

Assignments and Assessment:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>In class exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term take-home essay</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research paper</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
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**Participation:** Attendance is required. A seminar depends crucially on student attendance and engagement in discussion. You are expected to read the materials in advance of each class and be prepared to engage in a detailed discussion of the readings. Your grade here will be based on your attendance and attentiveness; the quality of your contributions in the class; your willingness to give serious consideration to your peers' ideas and opinions. It will also include occasional turns leading discussion and occasional in-class writing. More than three absences will result in points lost from the participation component of the course. These three are like “sick days” given in a professional / work environment; they include “excused” absences for athletics, debate, as well as genuine illness. The first day back in class after an absence, you should submit a half-page summary of the reading’s key argument and your reaction to it.

Your genuine effort to prepare and contribute to class discussion will be the key to the course’s success or failure. Don’t be shy! Even if your thought is half-formed, try to jot it down and then speak up to explain it to your peers. Help each other identify key points of debate and clarify any points of confusion. Ask questions about anything that seems unclear or confusing in the readings or discussion. I will occasionally give mini-lectures to frame topics, but do not wait for my “approval” to speak up and contribute your thoughts and reactions to the issues discussed in the readings. Please debate ideas in the readings and discussion – you are encouraged to debate vigorously, feel free to disagree, non-personally, with each other and with me. It often helps to acknowledge and/or affirm the validity of another person’s points before critiquing or adding a different perspective.

**In-class exam:** At the end of the first month of the course, there will be an in-class exam, with a variety of question formats (such as identification; explication; short-answer essay).

**Take-home essay:** This will be a eight- to ten-page take-home essay assignment based on a choice from among instructor-provided question prompts that ask you to tie together various course themes and readings. It will not require any outside research or reading. You will be given sufficient time frame to complete this essay.

**Presentations:** The presentations will occur during the last three weeks of the course, and will introduce your research paper work in an oral presentation format, which should help you as you prepare to complete the paper assignment.

**Research paper:** Students can choose the topic on which they would like to write, and I will also provide a list of possible topics. The research paper can explore a particular country or countries, or dispute / issue in Asia’s politics or development. I will consult with you on your proposal and give feedback on your draft. You are required to use 8-10 scholarly articles or books, of which at least two must be books. Proposal due XXX before
spring break; presentations on work will run during the last three weeks of the class; final paper due May 7 by 5 p.m. Late final papers will be deducted by three points (100 point scale) per day. Seniors who want to graduate in May do not have the option of turning in a paper late.

**Key Expectations**

**Class environment:** A good seminar depends on your engagement and respect for the class and for each other. Please do not whisper or talk privately while in the classroom – it’s disrespectful to the speaker. Likewise, do not text, check e-mail, or surf the web for anything other than material directly class-related (and then only when absolutely necessary). If non-class-related electronic activity occurs on a regular basis, this might force me to forbid the use of laptops and mobile devices during class sessions. We will take a three or five minute break in the middle of each session. Please don’t leave the classroom until the break unless you have a genuinely urgent physical need.

**Two-way feedback:** I will do my best to provide quality feedback on your work in the class. Sometimes, the quality of feedback is a trade-off with the speed of returning comments to you. My general standard is within two weeks. Meanwhile, do not wait for my feedback to begin on your next assignments. If you are ever concerned or upset about anything in the class, please come see me during office hours or make an appointment. I will do my best to address your concerns or respond to your suggestions, but you must let me know that there is an issue of concern. I want this class to be the best learning experience it can possibly be; that can only happen if you and I invest our best efforts and give each other feedback.

**Time Commitment:** Willamette's Credit Hour Policy holds that for every hour of class time there is an expectation of 2-3 hours work outside of class. Thus, for a class meeting three days a week you should anticipate spending 6-9 hours outside of class engaged in course-related activities. Examples include study time, reading and homework assignments, research and other projects, group work, and extra- and co-curricular activities linked to the class.

**Academic Honor Code and Plagiarism:**

http://www.willamette.edu/cla/dean/ethic/index.html

We will hold ourselves to the highest standards of moral, academic excellence. We will proudly submit only our original work. We will never attempt to give ourselves or others an unfair advantage. We will commit to upholding our honor and the value of our work. Through this commitment we will serve as an example of our peers.”

Plagiarism is an extremely serious offense against academic integrity, and will not be tolerated, but referred to the College for sanction. Two pieces of simple advice, if followed, can eliminate any confusion: a) when in doubt, quote or cite; b) simply remember that when the instructor (or anyone else) reads your written work, it must be you who is “speaking” to him/her through the words on the page. Make sure your writing is always a statement in/of your own thoughts expressed in your own voice, even when you are speaking about, or reflecting on, others’ ideas. If you’re unsure of what plagiarism means or entails, please familiarize yourself with Willamette’s plagiarism policy, which you can find at


**Diversity:** I am committed to building a community that recognizes and values the worth and dignity of every person; fosters understanding and mutual respect among its members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. In pursuit of the goal of academic excellence, I seek to develop and nurture diversity, believing that it strengthens classroom engagement, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life. I do not condone discrimination against any member of the school’s community on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, marital status, parental status, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability status, health status, or veteran status. As such I strive to make the classroom a space where all participants are treated with respect and equity. I welcome your ideas and suggestions about how to improve the creation of such an inclusive learning community.

**Religious Holidays:** Willamette University recognizes the value of religious practice and strives to accommodate students’ commitment to their religious traditions whenever possible. When conflicts between holy days or other religious practice and academic scheduling arise, every effort should be made to allow students to adhere to their tradition, including, when possible, excusing class absences and allowing make-up work. A student anticipating
the need to miss a class for religious reasons should alert the faculty member within the first two weeks of the semester, and the two of them should determine the next course of action. Any unresolved difficulty should be referred to the Office of the Chaplains.

**Individual Accommodations:** [http://www.willamette.edu/dept/policies/selected/students/disability.html](http://www.willamette.edu/dept/policies/selected/students/disability.html) If you have particular learning needs, medical conditions, or disabilities that require accommodation in order for you to perform up to your potential, please inform me at the beginning of the semester, and make an appointment with the Bishop Wellness Center’s Disability and Learning Services staff. Accommodation will gladly be made according to their instructions, but only if notice is given in advance.

**Books:** there are three textbooks available for purchase. Other readings will be accessible via Library e-reserve or via the course’s WISE website:

- Gilley, Bruce *The Nature of Asian Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press 2014)
Tentative Course Schedule and Readings (NOTE: The schedule of the readings might change; please refer each week to the WISE Schedule. Also, any non-textbook readings will be found there, as attachments to the Schedule class session entry).

- **Asia Modern as Alterity – Claims and Critiques**
  
  **January 19** – Is there a distinct Asian political culture?
  - Yamazaki, Masakazu “Asia, a Civilization in the Making” *Foreign Affairs* July/August 1996
  
  **January 21**
  
  **January 26** – Is there such a thing as “Asian-Style Democracy”?
  
  **January 28** – Is there such a thing as “Asian capitalism” or “Asian model of development”?

- **Political Systems** – what are the chief historical turning points, institutional features, and patterns of change in Asia’s various political systems? Are commonalities salient? What important distinctions do you notice?

  **February 2**
  - Wood, Allen T. *Asian Democracy in World History* Ch. 3 (section on Japan)
  - Zhang, Yumei *Pacific Asia: The Politics of Development* Ch. 5 Japan

  **February 4**
  - Wood *Asian Democracy* Ch. 4 (South Korea, Taiwan, China)
  - Zhang, Yumei *Pacific Asia* Ch. 6 (sections on Taiwan, South Korea and conclusion).

  (Note: February 5 is the last day to file a CR/NC with the Registrar’s Office.)

  **February 9**
  - Wood *Asian Democracy* Ch. 3 (section on the Philippines); Ch. 5 (Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia)
  - Zhang, Yumei *Pacific Asia* Ch. 6 (section on Thailand), Ch. 7 (Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia)

  **February 11**
  - Wood *Asian Democracy* Ch. 3 (Section on India); Ch. 6 (Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka).
  - Chadda, Maya “The History of the Democratic Experience in South Asia” Ch. 2 in *Building Democracy in South Asia*

  **February 16** – In-class exam

- **State and Society in Authoritarianism and Democracy**

  **February 18**
  - Gilley “Introduction” to *The Nature of Asian Politics*
  - Fukuyama “The Patterns of History”, Ch. 1 in Diamond *et al*, [DPC] eds *Democracy in East Asia: A New Century*

  **February 23**
  - Gilley Ch. 2 “State and Society”
February 25
- Gilley Ch. 4 “Democracy” pp. 89-117  (to section break)

March 1
- Gilley Ch. 4 “Democracy” pp. 117-141 (from section break)

March 3
- Gilley Ch. 5 “Governance”

March 8
- Reilly, Benjamin “Parties, Electoral Systems, and Governance” Chapter 2 in “DPC”.
- Emmerson, Donald “Minding the Gap Between Democracy and Governance”

March 10
- Vogel, Steven “Japan’s Long Road to Competitive Politics” Current History September 2010 [on WISE]
- Chu, Yun-han and Im, Hyug Baeg “The Two Turnovers in South Korea and Taiwan” Ch. 7 in DPC

March 15
- Pei, Minxin “Is CCP Rule Fragile or Resilient?” Ch. 5 in DPC
- Chu, Yun-han “China and the Taiwan Factor” Ch. 6 in DPC

March 17
- Aspinall, Edward “The Irony of Success in Indonesia” Ch. 8 in DPC
- Thompson, Mark R. “Reviving Reformism in the Philippines” Ch. 9 in DPC

March 29
- Pongsudhirak, Thitinan “Thailand’s Uneasy Passage” Ch. 10 in DPC
- Slater, Daniel “Strong-State Democratization in Malaysia and Singapore” Ch. 11 in DPC

March 31
- Gainsborough, Martin “Elites vs. Reform in Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam” Ch. 12 in DPC
- Min Zin and Brian Joseph “Burma: The Democrats’ Opportunity” Ch. 13 in DPC

- Development

The Political Economy of Capitalist Development in Asia – What is the “developmental state” theory? What explains the emergence and success of developmental states in some countries (and not in others)? Was/is authoritarianism a necessary component of rapid growth in Asia’s more dynamic capitalist economies? Why / why not?

April 5

April 7
- Zhang, Yumei Pacific Asia Ch. 3 “The Political economy of ‘Confucian’ capitalisms”, Ch. 4 “The political economy of ‘ersatz capitalism’ in Southeast Asia”

April 12
- Gilley, Ch. 3 “Development”
April 14
- Zhang, Yumei *Pacific Asia: The Politics of Development*, Ch. 8 “‘Welfare Orientalism’ and social development in Pacific Asia”
- Joseph Wong “From Developmental States to Welfare States” Ch. 3 in DPC.

April 19
- Gilley, Ch. 6 “Public Policy”

April 21
- Tang Shui-Yan, Zhan Xueyong “Civic Environmental NGOs, Civil Society, and Democratisation in China” *Journal of Development Studies* 44(3): 425-448. [on WISE]
- Gilley, B. “Comparing National Sustainability in India and China” in *China, India, and the end of development models* [on WISE]

- **Prospects - Asian Politics and Development in a changing global system** – what can we observe, anticipate, and/or conclude about the prospects for, and relationship between, (capitalist) development and democracy in Asia?

April 26
- Stubbs, Richard “The East Asian developmental state and the Great Recession: evolving contesting coalitions” in *Contemporary Politics* 17(2) June 2011, pp. 151-166

April 28
- Reilly, Benjamin “The Shadow of China” Ch. 15 in DPC

May 3