

East Asian Studies Program Spring 2025 Course Descriptions

Four-credit hours courses

These courses meet twice a week for 105 minutes per class.

Please note that students must attend both sessions of the course.

GLOBALIZATION & ASIA

Mikhail Kotykhov

Tuesday & Thursday 4th (15:20-17:05)

Globalization affects different aspects of economic and social environment in Asia. In this class we will focus on how globalization process changes the economic and social development in Asian countries. In particular, we will discuss the impact of globalization on the economic integration, free trade, labor migration, quality of life, education and knowledge economy, cultural exports, technology development and environmental sustainability.

COMPARATIVE CULTURES & HISTORIES

Junichiro Ando

Monday & Friday 4th (15:20-17:05)

The aim of this course is to provide basic organized knowledge and discussions on the East Asian history and its “cultural backgrounds”, which might lead to deeper and better insights into the contemporary issues of the region. The course will consist of three parts.

Firstly, it will focus on the Chinese philosophical and religious traditions which had come to be shared in the whole East Asian region (*Confucianism, Taoism and Chinese Buddhism in particular) and their various local developments. The political and social structures of the pre-modern states based on these ideologies will be also discussed.

In the second part, the historical conditions of East Asia in the early modern period will be considered. (1) The huge multiple Qing Empire, (2) the diplomatic and cultural interactions between Qing and the surrounding states and peoples, and (3) the ethno-cultural backgrounds of East Asian dynastic states will be the main topics of this part.

The third part will be a brief introduction to the modern history of East Asia after the mid-19th century. The following topics will be examined in particular: (1) the different processes of “nation building” in China and Japan; (2) the “Imperial Japan” and its colonialism; (3) the ethnic problems of modern Chinese (both republican and communist) states.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

Colin Tyner

Friday 3rd (13:25-15:10) & 4th (15:20-17:05)

The aim of this course is to provide an introduction changing relationship between human beings and nature from the mid-nineteenth century to beginning of the twenty-first century. The chronological focus will be on the early modern and modern periods. Themes covered in this course include, but are not limited, to the impact of colonialism on environmental change, resource use and development, disasters and vulnerability, migration and conflict, environmental dynamics of cities, and the impact of climate change on human societies.

SURVEY OF IDENTITIES IN ASIA

Julian Manning

Tuesday 4th (15:20-17:05) & 5th (17:15-19:00)

This course will examine issues of ethnic identity in Japan, China and South Korea and how discourses of ethnic identity have historically informed the construction of these nation-states and national identities. As a starting point, we will attempt to arrive at concrete definitions of the terms used in discussing these issues, namely ethnicity, nation and identity. Dismissing the notion that any of these properties are primordial in origin or innate to human beings, we will argue that all of these are best understood as socially constructed concepts. This implies that the concepts are therefore also subject to social deconstruction and reconstruction and cannot be properly understood if we imagine them to be distinctive reified, essential properties of specific groups of human beings.

Having established the ground rules, students will be presented with two opposing arguments concerning the origins of national identities derived from studies in nationalism. The first position is that contemporary nation-states and the concomitant identities and nationalisms associated with them are products of the modern, industrial world. This position is supported by writers such as Ernest Gellner (*Nations and Nationalism*), Benedict Anderson (*Imagined Communities*) and Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (*The Invention of Tradition*). The opposing position is known as ethno-symbolism. The main proponent of this

position is Anthony Smith (*The Ethnic Roots of Nations*). Smith argues that contemporary nation-states and nationalisms have their roots in pre-modern ethnic identities.

Having presented the two opposing models, we will turn to the specific case studies of Japan, China and South Korea and attempt to identify the salient discourses of ethnic and national identity current in each society. We will examine how these discourses have developed over time and how they have been employed to shape each society. We will assess whether the modernist, the ethno-symbolic or neither model of the origins of national identity best fits our East Asian examples of nation-states.

GLOBAL ASIA IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Sam-Sang Jo

Wednesday 4th (15:20-17:05) & 5th (17:15-19:00)

Despite the notable strides in democracy and economic integration, Asia remains marked by pervasive tensions, potential flashpoints, and complex antagonistic relationships. The course is designed to offer students a profound exploration of the geopolitical landscape, security challenges, and foreign policy dynamics in 21st-century Asia. Throughout the semester, this course will delve into crucial facets such as the rising influence of Japan, South Korea at the crossroads, the debate over North Korea, India-China relations, democracy in East Asia, history disputes, territorial Disputes, and new regional order. A focal point of the course is a thorough examination of the profound impact of China's ascent and the escalating strategic rivalry between the United States and China on the region's geopolitical dynamics.

Two-credit hours courses

Full TERM: 13-week courses

This course meets once a week for 105 minutes.

POLITICS IN ASIA

Jake Northey

Wednesday 3rd (13:25-15:10)

This course offers an account of change and continuity in Japanese politics from the postwar years to the present. The course provides an overview of Japan's political landscape, focusing on major political institutions, such as the party system, the government and public administration, the media, civil society and more. This course provides students with a foundational knowledge of Japanese politics through textbook readings as well as in-class exercises designed to stimulate independent thinking about the critical issues that characterise Japanese politics today. This course will be of interest to students interested in learning more about Japanese society through a lens of political issues and those who have an interest in comparative politics in general.

2nd QUARTER: 7-week courses

June 5-July 23

These courses meet twice a week for 105 minutes per session

Students must attend both sessions of these courses.

SEMINAR IN VISUAL CULTURES

Robert Dahlberg-Sears

Monday & Thursday 3rd (13:25-15:10)

What kinds of visual relationships do we create between representations and reality? Between the self and others? The course acts as an introduction to a variety of elements of visual culture in Japan as a way of coming to better understand the idea of Japan and its lifeways and to begin formulating answers to these questions. We will apply an interdisciplinary lens to introduce concepts, case studies, and points of comparison across our materials. Our materials are broadly ethnographic, but will also pull on media studies, art, photography, and cultural studies. Course meetings will be student discussion driven rather than lecture based, and we will draw on in-class outings and out of class field observations to support these.

FIELDWORK IN JAPAN

Brian Masshardt

Tuesday 3rd (13:25-15:10) & Thursday 1st (9:00-10:45)

This course provides a foundational understanding of key fieldwork methods used in ethnographic research. Although formally classified as a lecture, this course will be highly interactive, balancing readings, discussions, and conversations with fieldwork professionals. However, fieldwork is learned by doing, not just by reading about it. Students will gain hands-on experience with essential research methods, including journaling, surveying, direct observation, participant observation, and interviewing, all of which will contribute to the creation of a mini-ethnography. Above all, this course challenges students to actively engage with their surroundings, critically reflect on their observations, and apply theoretical knowledge to real-world contexts.

SEMINAR IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Jason Douglass

Wednesday 3rd (13:25-15:10) & 4th (15:20-17:05)

Entrepreneurship is the practice of creating value from nothing by identifying opportunities, taking calculated risks, and building sustainable, ethical solutions to real-world problems. In essence, it is about the relentless pursuit of innovation, adaptability, and pragmatic problem-solving. The course invites students to embrace an entrepreneurial mindset and provides the structure and individualized guidance necessary for them to achieve meaningful outcomes.

The course is designed for students who are eager to tackle problems – whether social, environmental, economic, cultural, health-related, technological, educational, or beyond – they genuinely care about solving. Ideal participants will be self-driven, curious, and ready to commit to developing a minimum viable product (MVP) that demonstrates their innovative solution to a problem of personal significance. Through seminar discussions, interactive exercises, individualized guidance, and peer-to-peer feedback, students will leave the course with a refined pitch deck, polished presentation, and tools to iterate upon and scale their concept. The course culminates in a Demo Day, where students present their ventures to a panel of local entrepreneurs for feedback and discussion.

East Asian Studies Program Fall 2025 Course Descriptions

Four-credit hours courses

These courses meet twice a week for 105 minutes per class. Attendance at both sessions is mandatory

SURVEY OF JAPANESE LITERATURE

Munia Hweidi **Monday & Wednesday 3rd (13:25-15:10)**

This course provides a survey of Japanese literature, particularly fiction and poetry. We will explore selected representative works with an emphasis on the modern period, Meiji and after. We will also consider some pre-modern works in the Japanese tradition and their importance in the context of Japanese literature through the ages. Class discussions will look at the text both for its content and how this content is presented. We will learn how to unravel and put together the text, as well as identify key literary concepts such as imagery, metaphor, allusion, narrative voice, etc... and how to apply these concepts within the critical language we use when reading, discussing, and acquiring knowledge of Japanese literature.

JAPANESE CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Matthew Carlsen **Monday & Wednesday 5TH (17:15-19:00)**

This course explores Japanese society and culture from historical and theoretical perspectives. The scope of topics covered will be wide ranging, including Japanese philosophy, Bushido, religion, anime, manga, fashion, art, Meiji Restoration, class/gender stratification, family and school educations, economy, immigration, demographic and social problems. The course will stress primary engagement with these cultural forms incorporating a variety of activities and field experiences in and out of the classroom. It will also enlighten specific issues of cultural phenomenon, social and historical contexts to gain insights into the links between traditional and modern Japan. This intensive course is basically designed for international junior/senior students interested in Japanese culture, society, philosophy and history.

JAPAN & INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY:

TRANSNATIONAL HISTORIES & GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

Yasuko Kobayashi-Hassell **Tuesday & Thursday 3rd (13:25-15:10)**

This advanced history course provides a critical examination of modern Japan's historical development within a transnational and global framework. It interrogates Japan's complex engagement with global historical processes, emphasising the reciprocal influences of intellectual exchange, migration, and cultural diffusion—particularly through food. Challenging nation-centric narratives, the course investigates Japan's evolving role within transnational networks, assessing how it has both shaped and been shaped by global forces. Through a critical analysis of Japan's interactions with Asia, the West, and broader global systems, students will develop a sophisticated understanding of its historical trajectory in an interconnected world. Designed for those with a strong foundation in global history, this course fosters a deeper engagement with historiographical debates and methodological approaches in transnational history.

TOPICS IN GLOBAL BUSINESS

Mikhail Kotykhov **Tuesday & Thursday 4th (15:20-17:05)**

Japan, Korea, and China have distinctive characteristics in relation to business and management systems. Through an examination of the development stages and current issues facing these three countries, students will have acquired specialized knowledge on diverse models of business and management systems in East Asia, as well as acquired skills to critically analyze regional business and management systems in a global economy.

JAPANESE HISTORY: FROM 1868 TO THE PRESENT

Colin Tyner **Friday 3rd (13:25-15:10) & 4th (15:20-17:05)**

This course covers the cultural and social history of Japan from the mid-1850s to the present moment. The course was designed for students without any background in Japanese history. We will begin with an examination of the construction the nation-state of the Japan in the context of an imperialized East Asia. Through a selection of translations, secondary sources, we will discuss how people were enrolled in the making of Japan and how their participation in the construction of this empire differed depending on their gender, class, and ethnicity.

Two-credit hours courses

These courses meet once a week for 105 minutes.

STUDIES OF ASIAN ECONOMIES

Tai-Wei Lim Monday 4th (15:20-17:05)

This is a contemporary political-economic and economic history (from the late 20th century to the current period) course on East Asia surveyed through the lens of multidisciplinary area studies. It highlights some selected important themes in political-economic developments that may potentially lead to a better understanding of contemporary East Asian regionalism and affairs. These political-economic themes can be found in the case studies on East Asian regionalism and technological developments. The course materials are also divided into three major regions of focus: Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, and US Pacific presence. This course does not pretend to be comprehensive but provides class participants with the essential knowledge to analyse and understand contemporary East Asian political-economic affairs and developments.

SEMINAR IN GLOBAL ASIA ISSUES:

INT'L RELATIONS THEORY & THE ASIA-PACIFIC

Eddie Hearn Tuesday 3rd (13:25-15:10)

This course examines the international relations of East Asia focusing on diplomacy, economic exchange, and conflict in the Asia-Pacific region. The course begins by introducing and applying traditional IR theory to East Asia. Do theories largely created and tested in Europe provide useful explanations of international relations in East Asia? The second part of the course examines the political economy of East Asia by first introducing Japan's distinctive model of political economy. The course then considers how this model has influenced other countries in Asia and examines the effect of China's economic rise on the region. How has China's rapid growth altered economic strategies and outcomes in East Asia?

MODERN ARTS OF ASIA

Cecile Laly Tuesday 3rd (13:25-15:10)

This lecture focuses on Japanese art from the early 20th century until today. Japanese artists and creations are studied in a global context in order to grasp the difference of "contemporary Japanese art" viewed from Japan or from abroad. Special attention is given to painting, photography, and performance. The class aims at students who want to discover Contemporary Japanese art and also students who want to deepen their understanding of Japanese contemporary culture and society.

SURVEY OF GLOBAL MEDIA & COMMUNICATION:

CONTEMPORARY MEDIA IN GLOBAL ASIA

Ikenna Steve Nweke Tuesday 4th (15:20-17:05)

Contemporary Media in Global Asia introduces students to the interaction of media and sociopolitical issues in global Asia. The course is particularly devoted to examining the relationship between media and themes such as (In)security, identity politics, democracy, migration, diplomacy, inequality, human rights, and climate change, all from the perspective of Global Asia. The course aims to help students adeptly weave theory, history and contemporary events in analyzing the complexities of such interaction

SPECIAL TOPICS IN GLOBAL ASIA:

THE POLITICS OF DEMOCRACY ACROSS EAST ASIA

Jake Northey Wednesday 3rd (13:25-15:10)

In the final decades of the 20th century, there was a so-called "third wave of democratisation", with many scholars pointing to Asia as the hotspot for democratic struggle. Today, this view has been somewhat substantiated. However, struggles for democracy remain, as do the legacies of authoritarian regimes. Therefore, this course focuses on the historical and contemporary factors that fuel both drivers of and challenges to democracy in East Asia by providing an overview of the political cultures across the region. Because this course does not focus on one particular country it will be useful for students interested in East Asian politics, regional political developments, and political cultures in general.

SURVEY OF GLOBAL ISSUES: REGIONAL ORDER & ASEAN

Sam-Sang Jo Wednesday 4th (15:20-17:05)

Established in 1967, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is recognized as one of the world's most successful regional organizations. This course aims to explore and analyze the historical development, current challenges, and future prospects of ASEAN. Additionally, it seeks to provide students with a better

understanding of ASEAN within the context of a changing global landscape, particularly amid the growing rivalry between the United States and China, along with addressing the challenges to the principle of ASEAN Centrality and the Indo-Pacific security architecture. The course should broaden and deepen your substantive, historical, and systematic knowledge of regional order and ASEAN. In addition, the course should improve your general learning potential and level of competence. My hope is that you will find the material interesting, that you will learn, and that you will grow intellectually.

**TOPICS IN TECHNOLOGY & SOCIETY:
DISCOURSES ON TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY**

Ikenna Steve Nweke Friday 4th (15:20-17:05)

The focus of this course is to explore how technology affects society, and vice versa? This course is designed to provide students with theoretical tools to begin asking questions for themselves and seeking better answers. Over the course of the semester, we will examine key themes in technology studies that involve Political Science, Economics, Anthropology, and Sociology within the context of Japan and Global Asia. Emphasis will be placed on understanding the emergence of new forms of social relationships involving both humans and non-humans in alignment with the adoption of new technology in the region.