

GEO 491 Current Topics in Regional Geography: East Asia

Credit: 3 hours Prerequisites: None Class: Tu/ Th 11-12:15, Graham 402
For Whom Planned: Undergraduate students interested in regional studies
Instructor Information: Dr. Susan Walcott (email: smwalcot@uncg.edu);
Office: Graham 443; Tel: 334-5382; Office Hours: Tu 1:30-2:30

Catalog description: This course examines dynamic economic, sociocultural, and political changes in East Asia by using geographical criteria to study physical and human resources influencing rapid modernization within an ancient framework.

Student Learning Outcomes
At the completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- Understand the interconnections among East Asian countries in such aspects as colonial and neocolonial relationships, human rights, discourses of justice, cultural and aesthetic developments, and processes of modernization viz cultural preservation;
- Locate, interpret, and evaluate information on the distinguishing features of East Asian countries and their cultural, historical, and economic experiences using a geographic perspective;
- Demonstrate sensitivity to cultural differences on a global scale particularly between Asian and Western experiences.

Teaching Methods and Assignments
This primarily lecture course includes in-class discussions, two tests and a project.

- Project : analyzing an Asian video on geographic criteria as noted in assignment. Assessment of assignment will be based on the accuracy of application of these criteria, and insightfulness of evaluation of geographic aspects (effect of setting, cultural issues specific to place or degree of universality, type of transportation, other indicators of development level, transferability of story, effect of location shift, etc.);
- It is necessary to complete reading assignments before the class period listed in order to participate in class discussion and benefit from the lectures. Three discussion questions on the readings are required per week;

Evaluation and Grading: A=100-93; A- = 92-90; B+=89-87; B=86-83; B- = 82-80; C+=79-77; C=76-73; C- = 72-70; D = 69- 60; F=less than 60. Midterm and Comprehensive exams = 35% each, project = 10%. Class participation (articles, weekly questions, and discussion participation) = 20%. The exams should demonstrate mastery of underlying concepts, familiarity with key terms, and appropriate application to contemporary events. The midterm will include a regional map section; the second exam will cover material since midterm.

Required Text: Weightman, B. 2006. *Dragons and Tigers: A Geography of South, East and Southeast Asia*: Second Edition. NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Other assigned readings posted on Blackboard:

Collinwood, D. 2008. Hong Kong. In *Japan and the Pacific Rim, Global Studies 9th edition,* McGraw-Hill, p.60-64.

_____. Taiwan. P. 116-120.

Shakya, T. 1999. "Introduction". *The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet Since 1947.* NY: Columbia University Press, pp. 1-32.

Toops, S. 2004. "Xinjiang (Eastern Turkistan): Names, regions, landscapes, and Futures". In C. Hsieh and M. Lu, eds. *Changing China: A Geographic Appraisal.* Cambridge, MA: Westview Press, 411-421.

Veeck, G., C. Pannell, C. Smith, and Y. Huang. 2006. *China's Geography*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Zurick, D. and P. Karan. 1999. "Himalaya Under Siege". *Himalaya: Life on the Edge of the World.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Course Calendar

Wk	Date	Topic	Reading
1	1/22	**East Asia**: Geographic Basics	Weightman, pp. 1-75
2	1/27	**East Asia** Physical and Cultural Setting	Weightman
	1/29	**Historic China: Roots**	Weightman
3	2/3	**Modern Regional China**	Veeck
	2/5	**Rural China**	Veeck
4	2/10	**Industrial and Urban China**	Veeck
	2/12	**21st c. China: The Delta's**	Veeck
5	2/17	**China**'s Periphery: **Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia**	Toops/Xinjiang
	2/19	**Tibet**	Shakya
6	2/24	**MIDTERM**	
	2/26	The **Five Tigers** Model	
7	3/3	**Taiwan:** The "Other" China	Weightman, assorted;
	3/5		Collinwood 116-120
	3/10-2	**SPRING BREAK**	
8	3/17	**Singapore**	Bowen 379-407
		Hong Kong	Collinwood 60-64
9	3/24-6	**Association of American Geographers**	Work on Project
10	3/31	**PROJECT 1 DUE; Discussion**	

	4/2	**North and South Korea**	Weightman
11	4/7		Weightman
	4/9	**Japan**: Historical roots	Weightman
12	4/14	**Japan**: Transition	Weightman
	4/16	**Japan:** Modernizer success	Weightman
13	4/21	**Himalayan Rim:** Mountains to monsoon	Zurick & Karan 1st Chapter
	4/23		Zurick & Karan 2nd Chpt.
14	4/28	Comparison-contrast: **Bhutan, Sikkim, Nepal**	Weightman
	4/30	**Review**	
15	5/5	**2nd Examination**	

Academic Integrity Policy: Each student is required to sign the Academic Integrity Policy on all major work submitted for the course. Refer to *UNCG Undergraduate Bulletin.*

Attendance Policy: Students are expected to attend all class meetings and participate in class discussion with thoughtful and relevant comments. Students who miss class do not do well on exams, since material covered in class supplements as well as emphasizes important points made in the text. A roll sheet may be circulated on random days as a check on attendance. Office hours are for students who need assistance with material covered in classes they attend. Make-up exams will not be given without verifiable evidence of extreme unforeseeable hardship. It is necessary to complete reading assignments before the class period listed in order to participate in class discussion and benefit from the lectures. Students who do not attend class during the first two weeks will be dropped from the roll.

Examination**:** The second examination will look at major themes covered in the course, requiring synthesis and analysis of overall trends in major areas with specific country examples. Short essay topics will be distributed in advance for response preparation. Instructor will chose from these topics for the in-class, no notes written test on the day noted in the syllabus.

Additional Requirements: Turn off all electronic items before class; no food permitted.

PROJECT: CRITIQUE OF SIGNIFICANT ASIAN MOVIE (no kungfu)
Viewing Guide

Carefully select an outstanding example of a video from one of the political entities covered in this course. You may discuss your choice with instructor before selecting it, and consult ratings such as www.asianfilms.org . Read these questions over carefully BEFORE watching the video so you are familiar with what you are looking for while watching it. During or after watching, respond to the following in five pages of thoughtful reflection:

1. What is the geographic setting of each place where major events occurred?
2. What is the significance of what happened where (how do place specifics affect events)?
3. What are the major issues in this film, and how are they portrayed in culturally specific ways to that place?
4. In what ways are these universal issues?
5. How do the means of transportation reflect on the type of place? Give examples.
6. How do place characteristics differ from those in the United States?
7. What does this tell you about the level of development?
8. If the story were set in another country in East Asia, how would that affect significant aspects of the portrayal and outcome?