

## Modern East Asia

Instructor: [Professor James Gethyn Evans](#)  
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Credits: 3, Intermediate Course, No Prerequisites

Course time: Asynchronous Lectures; **Discussion Meeting Thurs 4pm MST via Zoom**

Drop-in Hours [via Zoom](#): Wed 11am-1pm and Fri 1pm-2pm MST ([sign up via Calendly](#))

### Course Description:

This intermediate course surveys the global and interconnected histories of China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. By exploring the connections, themes, and legacies that emerge out of East Asia's transformative century, this course will equip students with the necessary skills and context to understand how this dynamic region has evolved and emerged into the contemporary economic and political (super-)powers that we see today. Understanding East Asia—from the Meiji Restoration and the Korean War to the rise of China and K-pop—will be of increasing importance to anyone interested in global affairs in our modern world.

This course has two primary objectives: (1) to build a foundational knowledge of China, Korea, Japan, and Taiwan in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and (2) to develop transferable skills in both how to “do” history as an academic discipline, and how to understand, communicate, and conduct effective research on a range of topics.

The course has two components: a lecture and a discussion. The lectures are asynchronous and should be watched before the discussion. The discussion is your opportunity to engage in generative conversation with your peers and collectively wrestle with the complexity of the topics addressed in this course. We will clarify confusing or complicated concepts, historical contexts, and address questions that emerged from your responses to readings or the lecture. You are expected to come to discussion ready to discuss the weekly assigned readings, themes from the lectures, and to participate in activities.

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Understand and critically analyze central debates in the history of modern East Asia.
- Understand key debates as to how historians and other scholars think about history.
- Identify critical events and figures and define their significance.
- Analyze whether scholarship is convincing or lacking.
- Write and argue convincingly and with evidence

### Required Books:

*Modern East Asia: From 1600, Volume 2 – EBOOK*, by Ebrey, Patricia Buckley / Walthall, Anne (9781285546209) SKU:9781285546209 - 3RD 14 CENGAGE CO  
(You can rent or buy a used copy, which is much cheaper than buying a new textbook)

All other readings will be uploaded to the course website or be made available as a hyperlink.

**Schedule of Meetings and Assignments:**

- ☆ This indicates a *primary* historical source
- book This indicates a piece of *secondary* scholarship
- This indicates a film or visual source

**PART I: EMPIRE IN EAST ASIA**

Intro Week: Course Introduction

Tues, Jan 17: Intro Lecture (welcome to the course!)

Week 1: What is “Modern” about “East Asia”?

Mon 23: Lecture 1

- ☆ Kakuzo Okakura, *Ideals of the East*: read “[Range of Ideals](#)”
- ☆ [Rabindranath Tagore, Talks in China](#), “Introduction” by Liang Qichao, pp. 1-21
- book [Tessa Morris-Suzuki, “Liquid Area Studies: Northeast Asia in Motion as Viewed from Mount Geumgang,” positions: \*asia critique\* 27, no. 1 \(Feb 2019\): 209–39.](#)

**Wed, Jan 25: First short response due on course site discussion board**

**Thurs, Jan 26 at 4pm MST:** Discussion 1 - Why is East Asia a region?

Friday, Jan 27 at midnight: **SYLLABUS QUIZ DUE (see course site)**

Week 2: Opium Wars and the Rise (and fall) of Empires

Mon 30: Lecture 2

- ☆ [Letters from Millard Fillmore and Matthew Perry to the Emperor of Japan](#) (1853)
- ☆ [Treaty of Peace and Friendship Between the Empire of Japan and Kingdom of Corea](#) [Treaty of Kanghwa], 1876,
- ☆ [Ebrey \(this is the course textbook\), Part 4: pp. 306 – 313](#)

Thurs, Feb 2 at 4pm: Discussion 2 – How did empire operate in East Asia?

Friday, Feb 3 at midnight: **MAP QUIZ DUE (see course site)**

Week 3: The Meiji Restoration and Japan’s Ascension

Mon, Feb 6: Lecture 3

- ☆ [The Charter Oath and Constitution of 1868](#)
- ☆ “[On Leaving Asia](#)”, *Jiji shinpō*, 1885
- ☆ [The Meiji Constitution](#), 1889
- ☆ Rabindranath Tagore, [The Spirit of Japan](#), 1916
- book Ebrey, Chapter 20 (Meiji Transformation), pp. 347 - 362

Thurs, Feb 9 at 4pm: Discussion 3 – How did Japan go from isolation to expansionist empire?

Friday, Feb 10 at midnight: **FIRST ANALYTICAL ESSAY DUE (SEE COURSE SITE FOR GUIDELINES)**

Week 4: Rebellions, Uprisings, and Dynastic Collapse

Mon, Feb 13: Lecture 4

- ☆ [Zou Rong on Revolution, 1903.](#)
- ☆ The Revolutionary Alliance Proclamation, 1907.
- ☆ Chen Duxiu: "[Call to Youth](#)," 1915.
- 📖 Ebrey, Chapter 18 (China in Decline) pp.314-332

Thurs, Feb 16 at 4pm: Discussion 4 – Why did the Qing Dynasty collapse?

Week 5: Japan's Empire in Korea and Taiwan

Mon, Feb 20: Lecture 5

Guest Lecture: Sara Kang, Harvard University

- ☆ [Li Hongzhang Negotiates with Japan, 1895](#)
- ☆ [Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty, 1910](#)
- ☆ [The March 1<sup>st</sup> Declaration of Korean Independence, 1919](#)
- ☆ [Manifesto of the Korean Communist Party in Shanghai, 1921](#)
- 📖 Ebrey, Chapter 23 (Modernizing Korea and Colonial Rule), pp. 400-414

Thurs, Feb 23 at 4pm: Discussion 5 – How did Japan colonize Korea and Taiwan?

Week 6: China's Republic and Civil War

Mon, Feb 27: Lecture 6

- ☆ [Mao Dun, \*Midnight\*, chapter. 1, pp. 1-24C](#)
- ☆ [Guomindang Emergency Laws, 1931](#)
- ☆ [Soong Mei-ling, "Three Accounts of the New Life Movement," 1935](#)
- 📖 William Hinton, *Fanshen*, [chapter 1](#) (pp. 17-25) and [chapter 3](#) (pp. 46-57).

Thurs, Mar 2 at 4pm: Discussion 6 – Why did the Communists win the Chinese Civil War?

Sun, Mar 5 at midnight: **SECOND ANALYTICAL ESSAY DUE**

**PART II: HOT AND COLD WARS**

Week 7: World War II in East Asia

Mon, Mar 6: Lecture 7

Guest Lecture: Jesús Solis, Harvard University

- ☆ [Petition to the President of the United States](#), July 17, 1945
- ☆ [The Jewel Voice Broadcast](#), 1945
- ☆ [US-Japan Treaty of Peace and Bilateral Security Treaty](#), 1951
- 📖 Ebrey, Chapter 26 (“War and Aftermath in Japan”), pp. 456-471.

Thurs, Mar 9 at 4pm: Discussion 7 – How did WWII redefine East Asia?

Fri, Mar 10 at midnight: **MIDTERM QUIZ DUE**

Week 8: China's Communist Victory and the Korean War

Mon, Mar 13: Lecture 8

- ☆ [China New Laws: Marriage and Divorce, May 1950 \(pp. 1-11 only\)](#)
- ☆ [Statement by President Syngman Rhee](#), 1953 Wilson Center Digital Archive
- 📖 [Monica Kim, \*The Interrogation Rooms of the Korean War: The Untold Story\* \(Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2019\). Introduction.](#)
- [To Live](#) [Directed by Zhang Yimou, 132 minutes], 1994

Thurs, Mar 16 at 4pm: Discussion 8 – How did the Korean War shape the Cold War?

Fri, Mar 17 at midnight: Extra credit film response due (optional)

**SPRING BREAK (NO CLASS)**

Week 9: The Cold War and a Divided East Asia

Mon, Mar 27: Lecture 9

Guest Lecturer: Caitlin Barker, Michigan State University

- 📖 [Amanda Shuman. “Friendship in Solidarity: The Chinese Ping-Pong Team Visits Africa in 1962.” In \*Sport and Diplomacy: Games within Games\*, 110–29. Manchester University Press, 2018. Please focus on pages 110-112 and 114-121.](#)
- 📖 [Philip Hsiaopong Liu. “Planting Rice on the Roof of the UN Building: Analysing Taiwan’s ‘Chinese’ Techniques in Africa, 1961–Present.” \*The China Quarterly\* 198 \(June 2009\): 381–400. Please focus on pages 381-388 and 391-395.](#)
- 📖 [T.A. van der Hoog. “Microphone Revolution: North Korean Cultural Diplomacy during the Liberation of Southern Africa.” In \*The Lives of Cold War Afro-Asianism\*, 265–90. Leiden University Press, 2022. Please focus on pages 265-270, and 273-283.](#)

Thurs Mar 30 at 4pm: Discussion 9 – How did East Asia engage with the world during the Cold War?

Fri Mar 31 at midnight: **THIRD ANALYTICAL ESSAY DUE**

Week 10: Cultural Revolution and the Global 1960s

Mon, Apr 3: Lecture 10

Guest Lecturer: Ruodi Duan, Haverford College

- ☆ [“On Chairman Mao’s Declaration of 20 May 1970,” \*The Black Panther\*, June 20, 1970.](#)
- BOOK [Ruodi Duan, “Solidarity in Three Acts: Narrating US black freedom movements in China, 1961-66,” \*Modern Asian Studies\* 53, 5 \(2019\).](#)
- BOOK [James Gethyn Evans, “Maoism, Anti-Imperialism, and the Third World: The Case of China and the Black Panthers,” \*Made in China\*, Vol 6, Issue 2, May – Dec 2021.](#)

Thurs Apr 6 at 4pm: Discussion 10 – How did the Cultural Revolution become a global phenomenon?

Fri Apr 7 at midnight: **RESEARCH PROJECT PRIMARY SOURCE SELECTION DUE**

**PART III: REFORM AND REVOLUTION**

Week 11: US-China Rapprochement and East Asia’s Economic Boom

Mon, Apr 10: Lecture 11

- ☆ Deng Xiaoping, “[On Science and Modernization](#),”
- ☆ Deng Xiaoping, “[Build Socialism with Chinese Characteristics](#),”
- BOOK [Chalmers A. Johnson. 1982. \*MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925-1975\*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. Chapter 9, pp. 305-324.](#)

Thurs Apr 13 at 4pm: Discussion 11 – How did East Asia become an economic powerhouse?

Fri Apr 14 at midnight: **RESEARCH PROJECT PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS DUE**; Additional extra credit analytical essay due (optional)

Week 12: Economic Growth, Democratic Activism

Mon, Apr 17: Lecture 12

- ☆ “[Long Live Democracy](#),” Translated by Chien-Wen Kung

Choose **one** of the following two secondary sources:

- BOOK [Eunhee Park, “\*Kyebaram: The Culture of Money and Investment in South Korea during the 1970s\*,” in \*Cultures of Yushin: South Korea in the 1970s\*, Youngju Ryu \(ed.\), 2018](#)
- BOOK [Kellee S. Tsai, \*Capitalism without Democracy: The Private Sector in Contemporary China\*, Cornell University Press, 2007. Chapter 2: “\*Bypassing Democracy\*”](#)

Thurs Apr 20 at 4pm: Discussion 12 – Does economic growth lead to democracy?

Fri Apr 21 at midnight: **RESEARCH PROJECT SECONDARY SOURCE ANALYSIS DUE**. Optional extra credit event summary due.

Week 13: The End of the Cold War

Mon, Apr 24: Lecture 13

Guest lecturer: Sungik Yang, Harvard University

- ☆ “[Agreed Framework Between the United States of America and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea](#)”, 1994
- ☆ “We Must Unequivocally Oppose Unrest,” People’s Daily, April 26, 1989
- 📖 [Sungik Yang, “An Old Right in New Bottles: State without Nation in South Korean New Right Historiography,” Journal of Asian Studies, Volume 80, Issue 4, November 2021 , pp. 889 – 909.](#)

Thurs Apr 27 at 4pm: Discussion 13 – Why did communism not collapse in East Asia?

Week 14: “Cool Japan” and the “Korean Wave”

Mon, May 1: Lecture 14

- [Howl's Moving Castle](#), [Directed by Hayao Miyazaki], 2004 (you can rent on YouTube for around \$5)

Choose one of the following two secondary sources:

- 📖 [Yoshitaka Môri, “The Pitfall Facing the Cool Japan Project: The Transnational Development of the Anime Industry Under the Condition of Post-Fordism”, in International Journal of Japanese Sociology 20 \(2011\): pp. 31-42.](#)
- 📖 [Sung Deuk Hahn, Sooho Song; The Impact of the Korean Wave on South Korea–Taiwan Relations: The Importance of Soft Power. Asian Survey 1 April 2021; 61 \(2\): 217–240.](#)

Thurs May 4 at 4pm: Discussion 14 – Why are Japan and South Korea pop culture icons?

Fri May 5: Upload a 5-minute presentation on your research project to the course site;

Optional extra credit film response due

**MON, MAY 8 AT MIDNIGHT: FINAL PAPER DUE**

**Course Requirements:**

This course is designed to give you flexibility and maximize learning. Some assignments are **mandatory** and must be completed to pass the course; others you can complete for **extra credit**, and you may pick and choose which of them you would like to complete to supplement your grade. Extra credit assignments must still be completed by the deadline to receive credit. Information about assignments can be found on the course site. All written assignments should be printed in 12-point Times New Roman font and double-spaced.

**Mandatory Assignments:****Class Work**

Short weekly online responses (0.5% each)	7.5%	Due Wed each week
Map Quiz	5%	Fri Feb 3
Analytical essay 1	10%	Fri Feb 10
Analytical essay 2	10%	Fri Feb 24
Midterm quiz	10%	Fri Mar 10
Analytical essay 3	10%	Fri Mar 24

**Research Project**

Part 1: Primary source selection (500 words)	5%	Fri Mar 31
Part 2: Primary Source analysis (500 words)	10%	Fri Apr 7
Part 3: Secondary Source analysis (500 words)	10%	Fri Apr 21
Part 4: Final project presentation (5 mins)	5%	Fri May 5
Part 5: Final project write-up (6000 words)	10%	Mon May 8

**Optional Extra Credit Assignments:**

1. Attend and participate in a discussion (0.5% each, discussions are on Thursdays at 4pm MST [via Zoom](#))
2. Additional analytical essay (5%, due Friday, April 7)
3. Film responses on *To Live* (1994) and *Howl's Moving Castle* (2004): 2% each, up to a maximum of 4%; film responses are 2 pages, double-spaced 12 pt font; this should not merely be a summary of the plot. Instead, engage with one or more cinematic elements of the film (cinematography, editing techniques, narrative structure, and acting) and bring them into dialogue with one or two themes and issues in our class. Due Friday March 17 and Friday April 28.
4. Event summary (2%): There are many events on East Asia that take place on campus or via Zoom. Attend a relevant event hosted by a university or think tank on East Asia and write a short summary (1-2 pages) with 3-5 takeaways from the event (key themes, the speaker's argument, the audience's response, etc.). If you're not sure how to find a suitable event, just ask! Due Friday April 14.

**Late Work:** Please late me know **48 hours in advance** if you believe that you will need an extension for a submission. Late submissions without advance notice will have a half grade deducted per day (i.e. one day late will reduce an "A" grade to an "A-", a "B" grade to a "B-") and so on). Submissions are due by midnight on the due date.

**Honor Code:**

This course is designed for you to learn about East Asia and develop skills that will be helpful to your future careers; cheating on the course will therefore negatively affect yourself more than

anyone. All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the [Student Conduct Code](#).

Do not plagiarize. Plagiarism is defined as “Representing another person's words, ideas, data, or materials as one's own.” When I ask you a question, it may be tempting to look up the answer online, copy it, and alter a few words to make it sound like your own thoughts. If you do so, you will betray your own education. I am invested in you as a student – I want you to learn this material, and to become a better thinker. Because plagiarism harms your development, I will discourage it: in the first instance of plagiarism, the assignment in question will receive a grade of 0 with no chance for revision. In the second instance, we will pursue the matter through established university disciplinary procedures.

### **Accessibility:**

This course is designed to help you succeed. For some students, this can mean the need for accommodations to help them learn and participate in the course to the best of their abilities. All video/lecture content will be captioned, and students can engage in alternate assignments if they feel that this would better serve their learning outcomes.

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lomasson Center 154 or at (406) 243-2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide appropriate modification. If you have any concerns about your ability to participate or attend a section, please schedule a time to see me on Zoom during drop-in hours. Also, do not hesitate to email me to provide feedback on how I can make the course a better space for all.

If you are a parent, children are more than welcome to attend course discussions via Zoom.

### **Email Policy:**

I will respond to emails in 48 hours. To help your email get my attention, please start the email subject with “HSTR 391.50” – this will mean that your email gets my attention so that you get a prompter response!

### **Feedback:**

You will have several chances to offer anonymous feedback about the course throughout the semester, which I will take into consideration as best as I can when planning and adjusting the course schedule and our discussions.

### **Drop-in Hours (via Zoom):**

I am always open to meeting with you via Zoom during my drop-in hours. It helps to sign up for a designated time slot via Calendly in advance. If you can't make the designated drop-in hour times, send me an email and we can find another time to meet. You can come to drop-in hours with a specific question about the course, to review any of the material that we have covered, to discuss your own research projects, or for feedback on any assignments.

## **How to Succeed in this Course**

### Lectures

Lectures are one hour in duration and will give you context for the assigned readings. We are covering a lot of content in this course—multiple countries and over 100 years!—so there will be a lot of names, dates, and places mentioned in the lectures, some of which may sound unfamiliar to you. Anything that is important will be written down on a slide, and slides will be uploaded to the course site so that you can review them during or after lecture. The lecture slides will also indicate what is the key or important information that you need to know for any quizzes or exams in the course.

That said, history at the college level is NOT just about memorizing names and dates (though those are important). Rather, it is more about how we think about evidence, arguments, power relations, and whose stories get told (or forgotten). The important takeaways from lectures will therefore be primarily about trends and narratives, as well as thinking critically about why we hold certain views or perceptions about history.

### Readings

Some of the readings may seem quite advanced in terms of the content they cover or how they are written – that's OK! Part of the aim of this course is to teach you how to read both primary and secondary sources. To start, I suggest using the “IIQ” method: note down something you find interesting about the reading, and a question (or questions) that you still have after finishing. Another technique is to try to think about how you would summarize the main points from the reading: what is the main argument, the intervention (how does this reading claim that it is different from other works on the same topic), and the evidence that the article is using to make its points? These techniques will help you filter the readings to decide what is the really important information that the article or chapter is trying to convey.

The readings present a diverse perspective on East Asia. You may not agree with all the arguments presented—indeed, it would be unusual if you agreed with everything! This course is not about presenting a “correct” view of history or of East Asia, rather it is about teaching students how to analyze different perspectives and their evidence to decide whether they agree with an author’s conclusions. Moreover, one of the skills that you will learn in this course is also how to form your own arguments with evidence, where you will use many of the analytical skills that we will develop as you read other scholars’ work to improve your own persuasive writing techniques.

### Engagement

I expect you to have completed the week’s readings, to participate in discussion, and to ask thoughtful questions. I expect you to be open to new ideas and opinions and to push one another

intellectually. Furthermore, I expect everyone to remember that there are no “right answers” in this class – what might seem like even the most basic question has the potential to generate a vibrant discussion! In return, you can expect me to be well-prepared for lectures and discussions, to listen to your ideas, to push you to think critically, and to be responsive to any concerns or requirements that you may have that relate to the course.

Engagement and participation in section comes in many forms, not just attendance! Engagement includes the following:

- **Preparation:** Preparing for discussions by watching the lecture, and reading, reviewing, and thinking critically about the assigned materials before class. Asking specific questions and making connections between the readings or ideas in the course is a great way to show that you are engaging with the course materials.
- **Asking questions:** you can ask questions on the course online forum, during discussion, or via email.
- **Research Projects:** You will be asked to work on a research project throughout the second half of the semester, culminating in a final project and presentation about your findings. We will work together to help you think through your project, and to give you time to work on the project alongside the weekly assignments. You are expected to conduct original research, be responsive to feedback, and to bring ideas from the course into your work.

As this is an online course, the majority if not all our interactions will be via Zoom or the course site. I expect everyone in this course to make this a respectful, considerate, and supportive environment for learning. Your classmates are your colleagues, and you should treat them, and me, with the same level of courtesy that you should expect to receive in return.