General Introduction

This course emphasizes a historical and systemic approach toward understanding the international relations of Northeast Asia (and international politics in general). The course is designed with two convictions. The first conviction is that a decent understanding of history is the foundation for any understanding of international politics, and focusing only on current affairs actually tends to obscure some causes and issues that were there decades or even centuries ago. The second conviction is that a systemic approach is absolutely necessary for understanding international politics, and the broader system called human society.

The reading material in this course thus generally provides the necessary historical background for understanding the international relations of Northeast Asia. The instructor generally refrains from assigning required readings that are purely interpretative, other than on fairly contemporary issues (e.g. the regional order). In some sessions, the reading list does include materials on contemporary issues, explicitly linking the past with the present.

For each session, several questions will be posed. These questions generally seek to explore the causes behind the historical development and the consequences of the historical developments with a historical and systemic approach. Before each session, students are required to offer their tentative thoughts on the questions posed, after they finish the required reading materials.

For each class, the lecture, providing a brief historical account of the subject and, lasting no more than 20 minutes, will be delivered. It will then be followed by presentations from two students on the questions posed (each about 20-30 minutes), followed by open discussion on the questions posed and presentations. Additional questions that may be of interest for the students can be added to the discussion when time allows.

The instructor hopes that such a course design will enable students to think independently from and challenge existing interpretations of the past, the present, and the future.
Guide to Good Performance

1. Read the required readings carefully and take notes. You should finish at least 75% of the required readings (about 150 pages) in order to have a decent grasp.
2. Read some of the recommended readings if you can, and especially if you are assigned to do presentations for the session. Carefully consider which argument or interpretation is most plausible, and why.
3. Write down what you have in mind on the questions posed, regardless whether you are going to present or not.
4. Be outspoken and try to challenge others' points. Silence is not gold here.
5. Re-think and re-formulate your thoughts on the questions after each session, in light of the discussions during the class, and put your more developed thoughts on paper (Laziness will never pay). The questions in the final examination will consist of questions that are derived from (but are different from) these questions posed for each sessions.
6. Do not be late for class, or in turning in your assignments.

Performance Assessment

Students in this course are presumed to have some, but not much, background knowledge about the topics to be discussed. Students who do not have much background knowledge are encouraged to read some general texts (e.g. History of Modern China, Japan, Korea, Russia, and the post-1900 United States).

Students are expected to complete the required readings and encouraged to do the recommended readings prior to class and be prepared to participate in discussions.

For each session, two students are picked to present their thoughts on the questions posed for each session. They must outline their arguments and explain why they have come to the arguments. Depending on the number of students, each student may get 2-4 opportunities to present. Students are required to pick their topics for presentations before session 2.

Students’ performance will be assessed based on the following criteria:
1. Attendance and discussion 10%
2. Presentations in the Class 20%
3. Two essays (1500-2000 words) on two topics 20%
4. Final (3 questions answered in short essays, each 1000-1500 words) 50%

Books Recommended for General Reading

The following two books are recommended not specifically for this course, but for your general interest. These two books will provide invaluable intellectual support for your understanding of the world around us, whether you stay in academia or work in other professions.

**General Texts for the Course**

The following books are recommended for a general introduction to Northeast Asia, and sometimes East Asia (i.e. both Northeast and Southeast) and Asia-Pacific. Also recommended are some standard textbooks on the modern history of the major players, China, Japan, Russia, Korea (one then two), and the U.S. in the Asia-Pacific Region.


**Current Affairs**

Emphasizing the historical and a systemic approach for understanding international politics does not mean that the instructor is asking you to ignore current affairs. In fact, students are strongly encouraged to follow current affairs, especially if
they intend to stay in the academics or if they intend to make informed decisions about business matters in Asia.

**New Sources**
Read one or two papers from the major players in the Northeast Asia System:

Japan: Asashi Shimbun, Manichi Shimbun, Japan Times
Korea: Korea Herald, Korea Times
China: China Daily, South China Morning Post
Russia: Moscow Times, Pravada

*Asia Times* (online versions). Some of the news reported here may contain unsubstantiated stories and opinions. Some of the commentaries in this paper tend to be unbalanced. Overall, though, this website is a good source of news about Northeast Asia (and Asia in general).

*Associate Press/Reuters/BBC*: reliable sources, although limited coverage on Asia.

Of course, if you can read Chinese, Japanese, Korean, or Russian, that is even better!

**Professional journals**
(The following recommended links and lists of things you may want to read are from Prof. Brian Job’s syllabus.)


**Some useful annual series for an overview**
(Generally, these surveys tend to focus on things that are of most concern for the states in which they are produced. Thus, they should be read with a grain of salt.)

The *Strategic Asia* series published by the National Bureau of Asian Research. The *East Asia Strategic Review* series, by National Institute for Defence Studies.
1. Introduction

Course Introduction
Rules for presentations
Rules for short papers
Rules for final examinations

Northeast Asia as a System
1: Players
Major players: China, Japan, Czarist Russia/the Soviet Union/the Russian Federation, the United States (post-1890)
Minor players: pre-1945 Korea, and the two Koreas after 1945, South Korea and North Korea, Mongolia (this course generally ignores Mongolia)

2. The Beginning of Modern History of Northeast Asia: the clash of two-systems
a) Before 1840, NEA was still very much an independent system, and a more-or-less China-centric system. This system was more-or-less hierarchical.
b) After 1840, NEA became a system that was superimposed by the Westphalian system. Westphalian system is de jure anarchical, although often de facto hierarchical in the sense there were always some leading powers, and these leading powers held advantages over smaller powers.
c) China itself became a periphery state: it no longer held a centric position, and it will not hold a centric position for at least two centuries.

3. Introducing the Systemic Approach and its Implications for understanding society

Recommended Reading
Systemic Approach

2. The Making of NEA as a Modern International System

Required
The Nature of the Sino-centric (a semi-hierarchical system) Order


**The Making of the Westphalia System**


**Recommended**

**General History of China and the Tribute System**


**Sovereignty and China**


**Interpretations and Misinterpretations? A Debate**


**Questions**

1. Why did the Chinese create an image of cultural superiority? Did Chinese retain its sense of cultural superiority? If yes, why? If no, why? What is the implication
of this retention or non-retention of its sense of cultural superiority for China’s foreign policy behavior today?

2. Is the image of cultural superiority unique to the Chinese? If yes, why? If no, why?

3. What is the relationship between material superiority (i.e. power) and cultural superiority (idea)? Did the Chinese rely (or live in their own myth) too much on cultural superiority? Did the West rely too much on material superiority?

4. What does sovereignty mean today?

3. Contrasting Responses by China and Japan and its Consequences

in Systemic Perspective

Required Reading


Recommended

Modern History of NEA (including Russia and Korea)


2. Richard Samuels, Machiavelli’s Children, chapter 2, “How to build a State,” pp. 41-68. (IDSS library, on reserve)


5. Frederick R. Dickinson, War and National Reinvention Japan in the Great War, 1914-1919 (D621 DIC, SAFTI)

Questions
1. Why did Japan emulate Western imperialism? Or did it? What specific aspects did Japan emulate, if any?
2. What were some of the consequences of Japan’s imperialism, from 1895-1919? (Use your systemic imagination)
3. Why did the United States and Britain favor Japan over Tsarist Russia after the Russo-Japanese war? What had been some of the consequences of US support of Japan? (Use your systemic imagination)
4. Would China have behaved differently from Japan if China reformed successfully first? What would today’s Northeast Asia be like if China reformed first? (a counterfactual question)

More profound and fundamental questions
1. Why did China and Japan respond to the West as the way they did? Or why did Japan reform successfully, while China failed?

4. The Chinese Revolution, phase I (1895-1927)

This session looks into the struggle for a “Rich and Powerful China” from Sun Yat-sen to Mao Ze-dong, and the influence of external great powers (Japan, U.S. and Russia/ Soviet Union) upon the trajectory of the Chinese revolution. The purpose is to understand the root causes of China’s foreign policy after 1949, and how the earlier years had a profound impact on the making of the post-WWII Northeast Asia.

Required Reading
**Recommended Reading**


**Questions:**

1. What were the major ideas for Chinese elite to choose in revolutionizing or reforming China? Why was liberalism rejected and Communism adopted in China’s revolution?

2. Why the Soviet Union had a unique place in China’s elite imagination (both among KMT party members and CCP party members)?

3. The first real “Lost Chance”: If the rupture between KMT and CCP did not happen, what would the Chinese revolution look like? What would be the impact of such an outcome on Northeast Asia as an international system?

**Deep Question**

1. Was the rupture between KMT and CCP inevitable?

**5. WWII and the Chinese Revolution: Phase II, 1927-1949**

This session looks at the making of New China’s /Communist China’s foreign relations and its consequences.

**Required Reading**


**Recommended Reading**

**The Roots of Peasant Revolution**

**WWII in East Asia**

**“The lost chance.”**
1. “Symposium on Rethinking the Lost Chance in China.” *Diplomatic History* 21, no. 1 (Winter 1997).

**Further reading on the Chinese Revolution**
1. Tang Tsou, “Interpreting the Revolution in China: Macrohistory and Micromechanisms,” *Modern China*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Apr., 2000), pp. 205-238. (This is a splendid outline of a major project that seeks to understand the Chinese Revolution in a holistic (and an evolutionary) way. The outline suggests the great promise of this project. The author passed away before he could do anything about it.

**Questions**
1. A second “real” lost chance: Why couldn’t Jiang and Mao (i.e. the Nationalists and the Communists) get along after WWII/the anti-Japanese War?
2. Why did the Chinese Communist Party choose to ally the Soviet Union? Did they have much a choice? Or was there a “lost chance” between China and the United States between 1948-1950, or the “lost chance” was a myth as Sheng argued?
3. In 1949, was a war between China and the United States inevitable?

6. **WWII and the Coming of the Cold War to Northeast Asia**

This session examines the immediate time followed the end of WWII: U.S. occupation of Japan, the division of Korea, and containment.
Required Reading
3. Mr. X/George Kennan, “The Source of Soviet Conduct,” *Foreign Affairs* 15 (July 1947), 566-582. (The Cold War had been officially on since Truman Doctrine, Mach 12, 1947. Kennan’s long telegram was on Feb. 23, 1946 then Churchill’s Iron Curtain speech on March 5, 1946)

Recommended Reading

Occupation of Japan

Background on Korea: 1895 to 1945.

Division of Korea: 1945-1948
Reconciliation in Europe and Asia after WWII


**Questions**

1. Why did both the Soviet Union and the United States leave the Korea peninsula, without making sure that peace will hold on the peninsula? [This had certainly made the Korean War possible: most divided countries went down the path of civil war.]

2. Kennan’s Long-telegram and X-article had been two of the most influential policy documents in the past century. (In a way, all of us wished that we have the talent and luck that He had). Questions: A) ON what factors did Kennan base to gauge the behaviors of USSR? B) His prediction that the West would eventually win the Cold War had proven to be correct? Why so? C) His policy recommendations can be improved. IF you were to draft such a report in 1945-7, what would you have done to improve the report (e.g., add or delete certain policy recommendations)? Why? (Assuming you were standing in 1945-7, and you did not know what would come afterwards).

3. The US occupation of Japan was a crucial period of time and a crucial event in the shaping of Northeast Asia after that. Looking back, what specific impacts that this event had on the international relations of Northeast Asia? [Remember, you need to attribute things after that period to the occupation, and this inevitably demands counterfactual thinking. This is no easy task.]

**Other Questions**

4. Why was the partition of Korea carried out? Why could not the Koreans themselves reunify after WWII? Why does partition usually lead to war?

5. Why hadn’t Japan and China/Korea reconciled the way as France and Germany did? What is the probability of a reconciliation between China/Korea and Japan as robust as that between France and Germany? Why so?

7. The Coming of the ‘Hot’ Cold War to Northeast Asia
This session examines the crucial turning point between 1949-1950, focusing specially on the making of the Sino-Soviet-North Korea Alliance, the Korean War, and the U.S.-China Rivalry.

**Required Reading**

**Origin of the War: deep**
1. 沈志华, 《毛泽东、斯大林与朝鲜战争》, 广东人民出版社 2003 年版，第三章，《越过三八线》。

**Origin of the War: Immediate**

**Impact of the War**
5. Paul Nitze et al., NSC-68 (April 7, 1950).

**Recommended Reading**

**The Korean War**

**An Alternative Interpretation of American Strategy (for supremacy)**
Questions

2. Much of the literature on the impact of the Korea War has been on the policy of the United States. What had been some of the war’s impacts on other countries’ foreign policies (i.e. China, Japan, the Soviet Union, the two Koreas), both short-term (i.e. 10-20 yrs) and long-term (20 yrs and beyond)? You can pick 2 countries for your presentation. Again, you need to use counterfactuals to make sure your answers more robust.

[In a way, counterfactuals are a very powerful analytical tool.]

Deeper Question (please do not choose)
3. The Soviet-China-North Korea was an offensive alliance. Without the backing of the Soviet-China alliance, would North Korea have attacked South Korea? If yes, why? If no, why?

8. From Sino-Soviet Split to Sino-American Rapprochement

Required Reading

Recommended Reading

Alliance Theory

The Sino-Soviet Alliance: Final Efforts and Eventual Split

**The Sino-American Rapprochement**


**Questions**

1. Why did the Sino-Soviet alliance collapse? Obviously, when facing a powerful common opponent, the alliance should not have collapsed (from a realism point of view)? Please compare the Sino-Soviet alliance vs. the stability of the US-Japan alliance to arrive your answers.

2. A counterfactual question. If the Sino-Soviet alliance had remained intact until the end of the Cold War, would the Soviet Union have collapsed? (Recall George Kennan's predictions). What would be China like today if the Sino-Soviet alliance had remained intact until the end of the Cold War?

3. Obviously, the collapse of the Sino-Soviet alliance had been a very critical event in the evolution of the Northeast Asia international system? Can you elaborate on the collapse’s impact over the Northeast Asia international system, besides it made the rapprochement between China and US possible? (This is essentially to ask the questions: What are some of the lasting impacts of China’s rapprochement with the United States and Japan?)

4. With regards to their China policies, the United States and Japan acted differently between 1970 and 1972. Please develop some hypotheses regarding how two countries in an asymmetric alliance deal with the third country (inimical) by comparing their relationship to the Soviet-China alliance, and please try to discuss these hypotheses.

**9. The Fragile Thaw of U.S/Japan-China Relationship**

**Required Reading**


**Recommended Reading**


**Questions**

1. The relationship between China and U.S./Japan has been quite uneasy with much instability, *even after their rapprochement*. What are the things they could have done *differently* to make their relations more stable, in the period of 1972-1989? Again, you have to use counterfactuals.


**10. Soviet Union/Russia’s Relations with China and Japan**

This session examines the evolution of Russia’s relationship with China and Japan and Russian’s presence in Northeast Asia

**Required Reading**


**Recommended Reading**

**Russia, China, Japan, and Northeast Asia**

1. Steven G. Marks, *Road to power: the Trans-Siberian railroad and the colonization of Asian Russia, 1850-1917* (Cornell 1991), (DK766.M346, Lib. 2)


6. Lowell Dittmer, “The Emerging Northeast Asian Regional Order,” in, Samuel S. Kim ed., *The International Relations of Northeast Asia*. (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004), pp. 335-342. (This piece will be required reading in the last session, so read it now, if you can.)


**Questions**

1) What are some of the major properties of Sino-Russian relationship today? What has made Russia and China treat each other in today’s way? (Please compare their relationships today with their not-so-pleasant past. This is what we called intra-case comparative studies)

2) What are some of the roles Russia plays in Northeast Asia international system today? Why is it so?

3) What are the implications of the Russo-China strategic partnership for Northeast Asia international relations, in terms of traditional security? (Again, you need both factual and counterfactual thinking).

**11. Post-Cold War and Beyond: Major Issues I, Korea and 1997**

**Crisis**

**Required Reading**

**General**


**Korea: False Hopes, Different Pulls, Difficult Choices, and Possible Solutions**


**The 1997 Financial Crisis and East Asian Regionalism**


**Recommended Reading**
Korea

Korea and China: The Recent Koguryo Dispute and Many Other Things

The Financial Crisis

Questions
The Two Koreas
1. What challenges would a possible Korean reunification pose to Northeast Asia?
2. Explain the dynamics of the six-party talks so far (Aug., 2003-Dec., 2008)?
3. Why did the 1994 deal between the U.S. and North Korea collapse. Please use the security dilemma and reassurance as theoretical tools to explain the outcome?

Asian Financial Crisis and East Asian Regionalism (*please challenge my views too*)
4. Are there any linkages between the 1997 crisis and the “new” East Asian Regionalism? If yes, in what ways, and by how much? Why couldn’t the Asian Monetary Fund (AMF) fly, or has it taken off with the Chiang Mai Initiative?
5. Did the 1997 crisis really change the “development state” of East Asia? If yes, by how much? If not (or not much), why?

12. Post-Cold War and Beyond: Major Issues II, Japan

Required Reading
*Japan: Rethinking, Nationalism, and New Life after “the Lost Decade”*

Japan-US Alliance, China, and East Asia

Recommended Reading
Japan

Alliance Politics

Questions
1. Why has the U.S.-Japan alliance become tighter, rather than looser as NATO has become (especially after the U.S. invaded Iraq), after the Cold War?
2. Why has the security dilemma (or spiral) in post-Cold War Northeast Asia gotten worse? What may be the potential consequences of this worsening of security dilemma (or spiral) in Northeast Asia? What are the potential measures to reverse the worsening of security dilemma (or spiral) in Northeast Asia?
3. Nationalism rises when Japan was in a relative stagnation whereas it rises when China was in a phase of rapid growth. In your opinion, why can nationalism rise in these two very different contexts? Can you draw some general lessons on nationalism by comparing the two cases?

13. Post-Cold War and Beyond: Major Issues III, Rise of China-I

Required Reading
The Rise of China and East Asia (mid-1990s-today)
The literature on how to cope with China’s rise or the China threat/problem is so large and is still growing. Here, I shall just assign six representative pieces.

Mainland China and Taiwan

Containment, Engagement, Hedging, and Stake-holder: China, US and E. Asia
**Recommended Reading**

**China, East Asia, and the United States**

16. Shiping Tang, “Projecting China’s Foreign Policy: Determining Factors and Scenarios,” in Jae Ho Chung ed., *Charting China’s Future: Political, Social, and*

**Taiwan**
5. Ted Galen Carpenter, *America's coming war with China: a collision course over Taiwan* (Palgrave, 2005) (IDSS library)

**Questions**

**China, U.S. Taiwan, and East Asia**
1. Logically, states that are closer to China (i.e. regional states) should be more sensitive to the growth of China’s power and China’s behavior. Yet, the most ardent proponents of the “China Threat” thesis in the past decade have been from the United States, and Japan? Why so?
2. IT can be argued that most regional states haven’t adopted a hardened containment approach against China. Rather, they have been hedging. Why so? What would be the consequences (for Northeast Asia, of course) of this much hedging between China, US, and regional states?
3. Why so much hedging, from U.S., China, and regional states? Has hedging been good to the region?
4. How has the Taiwan issue impacted China’s foreign policy and Northeast Asia in general?
14. Post-Cold War and Beyond: Major Issues IV, Rise of China-II

Required Reading

China’s Policies and Impact

A “Beijing Consensus”? Chinese Soft Power?

Recommended Reading

Interpreting and Predicting China’s Foreign Policy
China’s Policies and Their Impact


A “Beijing Consensus”? Chinese Soft Power?


Questions

1. Obviously, it is not easy to judge whether China’s regional strategy has yielded good results. What aspects do we need to take into consideration in order to evaluate the performance of China’s regional strategy?

2. “Soft power” is a bad concept, from a social science point of view. If so, then how can we explain why so many American pundits and Chinese pundits are so clamoring for a discussion on “China’s soft power” amid the discourse on the rise of China (here, we are not going to address whether China has a lot of soft power or not per se). Please try to address the question from the perspective of the sociology of knowledge. The sociology of knowledge asserts that all knowledge (especially social knowledge, including concept, theory, interpretation, etc) is tightly linked (but not wholly determined) to the social context (i.e., power structure, power/knowledge structure, institution/culture) and observers’ understanding and internationalization of the social context. The founding fathers
of “sociology of knowledge” include Marx/Engels (*The German Ideology*, 1846), Max Scheler, Karl Mannheim, and most recently, Michel Foucault.

15. Post-Cold War and Beyond: Major Issues V: International Order of Northeast Asia

**Required Reading**

General Theory of Institutional Change

**The International Order of Northeast Asia: Goal? Or Process?**

**Recommended Reading**

From the Past to the Future?
What Is Regional Order: Other Discussions


Questions

1. Obviously, assessing the success or failure of America’s Northeast Asian (Regional) Strategy in the post-Cold War era will not be an easy job either. What kind of factors should be considered, if you want to do such an assessment? Please discuss by drawing others’ assessment of China’s East Asian (Regional) Strategy.

2. (Regional) Order/structure is hard to define.¹ My working definition of regional order here is a set/system of rules or institutions that states tend to comply with when they interact with each other within a particular system (for instance, Northeast Asia). Certainly, institutions (as rules) can be internalized into “norms (as part of culture)”. In this sense, constructing a regional order is a process of constructing an institutional system, which can be understood by the aid of my general theory of institutional change. Obviously, the interaction between China, Japan, and the U.S. is of critical importance to the future of Northeast Asia regional order/structure. Yet, regional order cannot be dictated by any one of the three countries alone. Please address this question of regional order from these two perspectives (a student only has to tackle one perspective, so this question can be addressed by two students).

   a) Assuming China, Japan, and the U.S. each has several designs for Northeast Asia regional order/structure, discuss the interaction between these different designs (in different combinations) and explore their impact on Northeast Asia regional order/structure.

   b) Assuming other countries within Northeast Asia (e.g., Russia, South Korea) also have several designs for Northeast Asia regional order/structure, and then discuss how their designs can interact with China, Japan, or the U.S. to shape Northeast Asia regional order/structure in the future.

¹ It may be the case that our concern for (regional) order is a false question invented by our anxiety about uncertainty. But for now, we take such a concern to be real.
12: Past, Present, and Future: Northeast Asia after 911

**Required Reading**

**September 11 and the Bush Revolution**

**The Bush Revolution and Asia**

**Recommended Reading**

**The Bush Revolution**
1. Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *American Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy* (Brookings, 2003) (IDSS library)

**A Consensus for Preventive War?**

**The Bush Revolution and Asia**

**The Global Financial Crisis and East Asia**

Questions
1. Why is the Bush Doctrine revolutionary? What made the revolution possible? Within a system, however, revolutionary behaviors do not necessarily lead to revolutionary changes (at least within a given time frame). Why so? Please illustrate such a possibility with the changes within Northeast Asia after 911/the coming of the Bush Doctrine.

2. After the 2008 Financial Crisis, predicting the consequences of this crisis has become a cottage industry. There are three general predictions: 1) The crisis hit hard on the United States, and the U.S. will inevitably decline (absolutely? relatively?), partly because the United States cannot reform due to its domestic politics; 2) Yes, the crisis hit hard on the United States, but the U.S. will not inevitably decline (absolutely? relatively?) and may even have a re-birth, because the United States will be able to reform (exactly because of the crisis); 3) Yes, the crisis hit hard on the United States, but it hit hard on everybody else too. Therefore, the crisis may not have much an impact on the overall relative distribution of power after all.

Among the three predictions, which prediction is the most risky (that is, it is more likely to be proven false)? What are the places that a prediction can be proven to be wrong? How do prophets try to avoid risk of failures?