

## **Syllabus for History/EA 255: East Asian Civilization**

**Professor:** Viren Murthy ([vmurthy2@wisc.edu](mailto:vmurthy2@wisc.edu))

**Meeting Times:** Tuesday-Thursday 4:00pm-5:15pm in room Humanities 1131

**Office Hours:** Tuesday-Thursday 5:25-6:25pm, Office

**TA:** Jonathan Hackett ([jjhackett2@wisc.edu](mailto:jjhackett2@wisc.edu))

### **Course Description:**

This course is an introduction to the political, intellectual and cultural transformations in East Asia from Ancient times to the present. We will draw on resources from the disciplines of history, political science, anthropology and international relations to examine the changes taking place in this region, often referred to as East Asia. Throughout this course, we will examine why and to what extent it makes sense to think of East Asia as having a unity. During different times, the area has been seen to be unified based on different characteristics, such as Confucianism and Chinese writing system, tribute system, trading, Buddhism and numerous other factors. We will study each of these aspects and understand how people in this region themselves grasped their identity and also interrogate the benefits and drawbacks of thinking about East Asia as a geographical entity today.

### **Accommodations for Students with Disability**

Please notify the instructor during the first week of the semester if you have a documented requirement for accommodation in this course. If you have any questions about this or require any assistance, feel free to contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center at 263-2741.

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Students will understand in depth a major geographical region of the world, one that is becoming increasingly prominent in recent years.
2. Students will study how regions and geographical boundaries are imagined differently in various historical periods.
3. The lectures and the class assignments will encourage students to analyze writings about history and construct arguments about East Asia.
4. Students will also learn about how interdisciplinary thinking can help conceive problems in new ways. For example, by examining how political ideologies change through time, students will be able to analyze politics and philosophy historically. At the same time, by studying how people wrote history in different epochs for different purposes, students will grasp the political implications of writing history.

### **Credit Hours and Policy**

This is a 4-credit course and there will be the equivalent of 4 hours per week instruction (each 50 minute segment of lecture and discussion counts as one hour according to UW-Madison's credit hour policy). The course also carries the expectation that you will spend an average of at least 2 hours outside of class for every hour of lecture. In other words, in addition to class time, plan to allot an average of at least 8 hours per week for reading, writing, preparing for discussions, and/or studying for exams for this class.

### **Academic Misconduct:**

We deal with academic misconduct severely. Papers with any plagiarized content will receive an “F” with no chance for a rewrite. If you directly copy more than five words in a row without citing their source, or if you include interpretations and conclusions that are not your own without citing their source, you are committing plagiarism even if you paraphrase. These principles must guide you whether your source is from printed or electronic sources and whether an author’s name is listed or not.

### **Requirements:**

Coming to class, paying attention to lectures/discussions, Writing Reading Responses and Commenting on Reading Responses: 30%

Quizzes: 10%

Mid-Term Exam : 20%

Final Exam (Take Home) : 20%

Paper: 20%

Grading Scale:

94-100 A

90-93 AB

83-89 B

80-83 BC

71-79 C

60-70 D

Below 60 F

### **Assignments, Quizzes and Exams**

The content of this class is organized around Tuesday and Thursday lectures. You are expected to come to class and complete the assignments, which the instructor or the TA will check.

Participate in the discussion sections with the TA. This is part of your participation grade.

You will be expected to post based on the readings and reflect on what you have been learning. Each post should be approximately 250 words and is an important part of your grade. These posts are due on every Monday and Wednesday by 5pm. For each session, you are also required to comment on a fellow classmate's post. The comment should be about 100 words and can either disagree with a point or develop some of the ideas in it. These replies are due by Monday at 10pm and Wednesday at 10 pm. Given that your fellow students might be commenting on your work, I strongly urge you to turn in your discussion posts on time or ahead of time.

There are two quizzes, two exams and one paper in this class. The quizzes will be short answer or multiple choice and given in class. The mid-term exam will be an in-class exam combining short answer and essay questions and the final exam will be a cumulative take home exam, which will consist of essay questions. They consist of open questions, which should give students an opportunity to express what they have learned over the semester.

All students will write a paper, (5-7 pages, 10-15 pages for honors, Times Roman Font 12, double space) on a topic of your choice. Below I list some possibilities, but am open to any topic that is related to East Asia:

How did Confucianism change when it was introduced into Japan and Korea?  
What was Laozi's critique of Confucianism? How would you respond to this critique?

How would you think about the contemporary Chinese or Japanese economic and political policies or economic policies historically?

Why does Japan still have an Emperor System? What is its function and how did it change during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century?

Compare the history of women in China, Japan and Korea during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

What were the origins of the Korean War?

The North Korean economy seemed to be doing well during the 1950s, why is it in so much trouble now?

Notice that each of the above topic poses a question to which there might be different answers. You are encouraged to choose your own topic, but there must be something controversial about your subject. In other words, people should be able to disagree with your position, which will require you to formulate an argument. When you formulate a thesis make sure you consider whether someone could disagree with it. It is only then that your thesis is controversial and worthy of a sustained argument.

You should definitely do some outside research for this paper, but the bulk of the project can be based on secondary works, i.e, books and articles about the topic, many of which you will read for class. The secondary sources should help you find your position, by asking simple questions, such as do you agree with the author's position? Why or why not? In many cases, the discussion questions that I provide at the end of lecture could also serve as a springboard for a paper. I will elaborate more about the paper in a lecture. It is also highly advised that students consult the TA or the Instructor as they are developing their ideas for the paper.

### **Required Texts:**

Charles Holcombe, *A History of East Asia: From the Origins to the Twenty-First Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017 (second edition). The book will be made available to you by bookstore in some form.

Other readings will be available on the Canvas.

Readings are an essential part of the learning experience. Please do the readings before you come to class.

### **Tentative Schedule:**

(Instructor may alter dates and readings during the course of the semester)

### **Week 1 Introduction: What is East Asia?**

Jan. 24: Introduction to the Course: Defining A Region  
Holcombe 1-11

Jan. 26 East Asian Writing Systems, Mythical Origins of East Asia and Begin Confucianism  
John De Francis, *Chinese Language: Fact and Fantasy*, Chapter 3

### **I. Pre-modern East Asia**

### **Week 2 The Formative Era and the Philosophical Classics**

Jan. 31: Confucianism and Daoism  
Holcombe 30-45  
Confucius, *The Analects*, D. C. Lau Trans., 59-80  
Lao Zi, *Tao Te Ching* (Daode jing), D. C. Lau Trans., 57-87  
Chuang Tsu (Zhuangzi), pp. 23-50, 96-111

Feb. 2 Qin Emperor's Unification and the Age of Cosmopolitanism-up to Tang  
Holcombe pp. 45-72  
Jia Yi "Faults of the Qin"  
Yuri Pines, "The Messianic Emperor: A Look at the Qin's Place in China's History"

### **Week 3 Unification of China and the Early Spread of Buddhism**

Feb. 7: Early Korean Kingdoms and Yamato Japan  
Holcombe 81-95  
Farris, *Japan to 1600*, 1-27

Feb. 9: Early East Asia and the Spread of Buddhism  
Holcombe, 72-81  
Robert Buswell, "Thinking about Korean Buddhism"

### **Week 4. Early Japan and the Sui-Tang Unification**

Feb. 14: Sui-Tang Dynasties in Relation to Korea and Japan  
Holcombe 95-126

Feb. 16 : Sui-Tang Dynasties in Relation to Korea and Japan (continued)  
Holcombe, 132-152

### **Week 5 Sui-Tang Continued—Emergence of Samurai**

Feb.21: Film on Wu Zetian—Only Female Chinese Emperor  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aeZ7esmQcm4>  
**Quiz 1 given in Class**

Feb.23: Heian Japan and the Birth of a Warrior Class—Samurai Japan  
Holcombe, 154-158  
Essay on Women and Heian

## **II Early Modern East Asia: Transformations from the 10<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> Centuries**

## **Week 6 Zen Buddhism and the Song Dynasty**

Feb. 28: Esai and Dogen, Buddhism Between China and Japan  
Read Dogen, Shobozenzo and Genjo Koan.

March 2: Song Dynasty, Koryo and Mongols  
Holcombe 132-149  
Holcombe 149-161  
Tackett, *Origins of the Chinese Nation*, Chapter 1

## **Week 7 Early Modern East Asia**

March. 7 : **Quiz 2 given in class.** Birth of the Early Modern World

Holcombe 167-187  
Woodside, *Lost Modernities*, 1-17

March 9: **Film**

## **Week 8 : March 11-19 Spring Break**

### **III Modern East Asia and State Formation**

## **Week 9: Mid-Term and Early Modern State in Japan**

March 21: **Mid-Term Exam Given in Class**

March 23. Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi  
Holcombe 187-199  
Wakita Osamu, State Formation  
Haboush, 1-23

## **Week 10: Tokugawa Intellectuals and Opium War**

March 28: Tokugawa Intellectuals  
Holcombe 217- 225  
Ogyu Sorai, Motoori Norinaga (essays)  
Oliver Ansart, “Rituals as Utopia”

March 30: Opium War and Chinese Modernity  
Holcombe 225-235  
Giovanni Arrighi, *Adam Smith in Beijing*, Chapter 11

### **Week 11: Meiji Restoration**

April 4: Meiji Restoration  
Holcombe 240-259  
Amy Stanley, “Enlightenment Geisha”  
Optional:  
Barker: “Origins of the Meiji Restoration”

April 6: Fukuzawa Yukichi  
Read Fukuzawa Yukichi (selections uploaded)

### **Week 12 Sino-Japanese War and Russo-Japanese War**

April 11 Sino-Japanese War—Russo-Japanese War and the  
1911 Revolution  
Holcombe, 259-270  
Reread Holcombe, 230-240  
Elman, Self-Strengthening Essay, Essays on the Tonghaks

April 13: Opening of Korea and Lu Xun and the May Fourth Movement  
Read Lu Xun, “Diary of a Madman” and “The True Story of Ah Q”  
Holcombe 270-275

### **Week 13 Pan-Asianism and the Chinese Revolution**

April 18: Pan-Asianism and World War II  
Holcombe, 288-295  
Eri Hotta, Essay on Rash Behari Bose  
Yoo Sung-Lee “An Jeung Gun’s on Peace in Asia”

April 20: Mao, 1949 Revolution and the Communist State  
Holcombe, 359-377  
Meisner, *Mao Zedong: A Political and Intellectual Portrait*, 161-193

## **Week 14 Post War Korea and Japan**

April 25: Korean Developmental State  
Essay on Park Chung-hee  
Park Chung-hee on nationalism

April 27 Postwar Japan and Critics of Modernity  
Holcombe, 299-304  
Miyagi, "Postwar Pan-Asianism"  
Takeuchi Yoshimi, "What is Modernity?"  
April 27: Postwar Korea and Japan  
Holcombe, 311-323  
Holcombe, 330-344

## **Week 15 The New Left in China and Democracy in Japan and Korea**

May 2: Neo-Liberalism and the New Left in Post 1990 China  
Wang Hui essay on June 4<sup>th</sup>  
Yiching Wu, The Cultural Revolution at the Margins (Introduction)

May 4: Democracy in Postwar East Asia (Japan and Korea)

Optional: Leo Ching, "Mass Culture and Asianism in the Age of Late Capital"  
Koichi Iwabuchi, "Nostalgia for a (Different) Asian Modernity"  
Paik Nak-Chung, "Barriers to Reconciliation in East Asia"

**final paper due**

**Take Home Final Exam (Cumulative) given on May 4 in class and due by May 9:  
11:59 pm**

**All extra credit assignments due on the last day of class**