IR 788/ GRS 789 International Relations in the Asian-Pacific Region:
Conflict or Cooperation?

Spring 2017

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This course provides an overview of international relations in the Asian-Pacific region. The central issue thematic question is whether the Asian-Pacific region is heading towards greater peace and cooperation, or war and conflict. There is plenty of evidence which could lead one to draw either conclusion. On the one hand, intra-regional trade and investment remains at a highs. There are multiple efforts to build new regional institutions, most notably the ASEAN + 3 (10 + 3) initiative and more recently the creation of an East Asian Community, as well as a flurry of Chinese institution building initiatives that may complement rather than supplant existing arrangements. There has been a limited, but significant spread of democracy. In addition, for the time being, the interests of the major powers seem to be in accord on many important issues. While a long way off from Western Europe, an optimistic observer could point to much that suggests that Asia will continue to grow and prosper in the decades to come.

On the other hand, there are many and growing signs of discord and potential for conflict. The region is confronted with two major, long standing points of crises; one on the Korean peninsula, the other in Taiwan straits, as well as a host of other lesser, but quite serious territorial disputes. All of these disputes are increasing in intensity. Under the Xi Jinping regime the PRC there has shifted to a clearly more nationalist and assertive foreign policy stance. Meanwhile, China’s burgeoning economic power as well as politically motivated efforts to prop up its state owned enterprises (SOEs) is placing new strains on the global trading regime, feeding protectionist tendencies in Europe and the United States. The region as a whole remains vulnerable to a systemic economic crisis of the sort that was seen during the Asian flu of 1997-1998. Under Prime Minister Abe there has been an increased emphasis on nationalism and the military, even as ordinary Japanese appear to be overwhelmingly preoccupied with domestic matters. In the meanwhile, South Korea is suffering through a leadership crisis while the North continues to steadily develop the capacity to hit the United States with nuclear weapons.

In the midst of all this, the chief ordering power in the region, the United States, has suddenly
become a major source of potential instability with the election of President Donald Trump. While much remains uncertain, the President elect appears to have set his sights on China, accusing it of “raping” the United States with its economic policies, threatening to impose tariffs of between 10 and 45% on its exports to United States and announcing that Washington might reconsider its “one China” policy and move towards recognizing Taiwan. The head of the new Council on Trade, Peter Navarro, is the author of a book entitled Death by China. The nominee for Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, hinted in his confirmation hearings that the US might block Chinese access to the fortifications it built in the South China Seas. Even traditional US allies, like Japan and South Korea, are unsettled by the protectionist rhetoric coming out of Washington and concerned by an approach to foreign policy that is both nationalistic and transactional.

As former Secretary of State Madeline Albright put it recently, “the world is a mess.” And nowhere is there a greater potential for the world to get really, really messy than in Asia (given the size of the forces arrayed in the region, a military clash in Asia could easily far outstrip the conflicts in the Middle East in destructiveness). The possibility that one, or a combination of these factors, cited above could pull apart the fragile equilibrium that has kept the peace in the region of nearly thirty years is terribly easy to imagine.

So which will it be, war or peace? To address this question this course aims to give the students a bird’s eye view of the contours of international relations in the region and of some of the central issues. The course begins by briefly reviewing the history of the region from the arrival of the European powers in the 16th century to the end of the Cold War in the late 20th century. The course then proceeds to examine various aspects of international relations in the Asia-pacific space, including: the foreign policies of the three major powers in the region – China, Japan and the United States, the situation in the Taiwan Straits and the Korean peninsula, military security balance, ASEAN and the Construction of regional institutions, and trade.

**Required Texts:**

Alice Ba, *Re*)negotiating East and South-East Asia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009)


In addition to the text books, there will be numerous reading assignments drawn from journals, research reports and the media. For the most part, unless otherwise indicated, these will be available on the internet, either through the supplied web address or Boston University’s Mugar library under e-journals (go to http://www.bu.edu/library/index.shtml and use the search function) Students are expected to have completed reading assignments before class in order to participate in class discussions. Recommended readings marked with are recommended and may be of use to students doing term papers on related topics.

Requirements

Two short, in-class exams will be given based on the lectures and the required readings - 50% identify key terms, 50% short answer. In addition students will be required to write one 15 to 20 page term paper. The term paper is due on the last day of class. The Grade is based 50% on the term paper and 50% on the tests. The term paper must be written in accordance with the guidelines to be provided. In addition, adjustments will be made to the grade based upon class participation.

Students are urged to make an appointment during the first half of the course to discuss possible term paper topics. A brief written summary of the progress made on the term paper, with tentative bibliography, is to be E-mailed to me by the end of the sixth week, just before Spring Break (March 4th). I am willing to look over drafts of the term paper up to one week before they are due and give general comments.

Students are required to hand in their own work. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students are urged to familiarize themselves with the definition of plagiarism to be found in the student handbook.

I. Course Introduction – January 19

Readings: start on Warren Cohen book – Skim chapters 1-5 (182 pages) – try to make sure you know at least the names and dates of the major eras in Chinese, Japanese and Korean history

Recommended:
Suisheng Zhao, Power Competition in East Asia (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997)
Akira Iriye, China and Japan in the Global Setting (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992)
David Kang, East Asia before the West: Five Centuries of Trade and tribute (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010)
Ji-Young Lee, China’s Hegemony: 400 Years of Chinese Domination (Columbia University Press, 2016)
II. History Part I – The Rise and Fall of the Imperial Order – January 24 and 26

Readings: Cohen East Asia at the Center, chapter 7-11 (185 pages)


Recommended:

Gerald Segal, Rethinking the Pacific (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990)
Tan Suisheng Zhao, Power Competition in East Asia (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997)

III. History II - The Cold War in Asia, 1945 to 1989 – January 31, February 2

Cohen East Asia at the Center, chapters 11-14 plus closing thoughts (139 pages)

Recommended Readings:

Manjari Chatterjee Miller, Wronged by Empire: Post-Imperial Ideology in India and China (Stanford, CA; Standord University Press, 2013)
Gerald Segal, Rethinking the Pacific (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990)
IV. Structural Perspectives on the Asia Pacific Region – February 7 and 9

Familiarize with handouts on the size of the populations, GDP, GDP per capita, trade flows, military spending and selected military indicators in East Asia


Recommended:
Richard Bitzinger and Barry Desker, “Why War is unlikely in East Asia,” Survival 50:6 (December 2008-January 2009), pp.105-128 (23)

V. The History Problem – February 14 and 16

2 Chapters plus conclusions by Thomas Berger, War Guilt and World Politics: The Legacy of World War II in Europe and Asia (appx. 170 pages)


Jae Ho Chung, “China’s ‘Soft clash’ with South Korea: The History War and Beyond,” Asian Survey 49:3 (May/June 2009), pp.468-483 (15)

Recommended:
Daniel Chirot, Gi-Wook Shin and Daniel Sneider, Alexis Dudden, Troubled Apologies (Columbia University Press, 2008)
Gerrit W. Gong, ed., Remembering and Forgetting: The Legacy of War and Peace in East Asia (Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1996), Yinan He, Remembering and Forgetting (Cambridge University Press, 2009)
Jennifer Lind, Sorry States: Apologies in International Relations (Cornell University Press, 2008)
Tsuyoshi Hasegawa and Togo Kazuhiko, East Asia’s Haunted Past
Gilbert Rozman and Shin-Wha Lee, “Unraveling the Japan-South Korea ‘Virtual Alliance’: Populism and Historical revisionism in the Face of Conflicting regional Strategic,” Asian Survey 46:5 (September/October 2006), pp.761-784 (23) available through BU libraries, electronic resources
Gi-Wook Shin, Soon-Won Park and Daqing Yang, eds., Rethinking Historical Reconciliation
VI. The Foreign Policy of the United States, Japan and allies – February 23, 28 and March 2


Richard Samuels, Securing Japan – whole book


Min-Hyun Kim, “South Korea’s Strategy towards a Rising China, Security Dynamics in East Asia and International Relations Theory,” Asian Survey Vol 56, No.4, July/August, 2016, pp. 707-730 (23)


David Santoro and John K. Warden, “Assuring Japan and South Korea in the Second Nuclear Age,” The Washington Quarterly Vol. 38, No.1, 2015, pp. 147-165

Recommended:


Michael J Green, By More than Providence: Grand Strategy and American Power in Asia Pacific since 1783 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017) – Would be a text if it came out earlier

Christopher Hughes, Japan’s Reemergence as a “Normal” Military Power (London: Routledge, 2013)

Christopher Hughes, Japan’s Foreign and Security Policy under the “Abe Doctrine”: New Dynamism or Dead End? (Palgrave 2015)

Min-Hyun Kim, “South Korea’s Strategy towards a Rising China, Security Dynamics in East Asia and International Relations Theory,” Asian Survey Vol 56, No.4, July/August, 2016, pp. 707-730

Samuel S. Kim, The International Relations of Northeast Asia chapters 4,5 and 10 (95 pages)


Robert G. Sutter, The United States in Asia (Rowman and Littlefield, 2008)

Gilbert Rozman, Asia’s alliance Triangle: US-Japan-South Korea Relations at Tumultuous Times (New York: Palgrave, 2015)


Friday March 2 – Memo on Term papers dues

Spring Break

Midterm I – March 14

VII. The Foreign Policy of China and Russia March 16, 21 and 23
Thomas Christensen, The China Challenge whole book

Alexander Korolev, Russia’s Reorientation to Asia: Causes and Strategic Implications’ Pacific affairs 89:1 (March 2016) pp.53-73

Ying Fu, “How China sees Russia: Beijing and Moscow are close but not Allies,” Foreign Affairs Foreign Affairs 96, January/February 2016, pp.96-105

Recommended:

Jessica Chen Weiss, Powerful Patriots: Nationalist Protest in China’s Foreign Relations (Oxford University Press, 2014)


Avery Goldstein, Rising to the Challenge: China’s Grand Strategy and International Security (Stanford, CA; Stanford University press, 2005)


Alastair Ian Johnston, “How Assertive is China’s new Assertiveness?” International Security Vol. 37, No. 4 Spring 2013, pp. 7-48


Willem con Kamenev, “China versus the Western Campaign for Iran Sanctions,” The Washington Quarterly 33:3 (July 2010) pp.99-114 (15)


Edward Friedman, “China’s Ambitions, American Interests, Taiwan’s Destiny and the Asia’s Future,” Asian Survey Vol.53, No.2, March/April 2013, pp.225-244 (19)


Chin Hao Huang and Patrick James, “Blue, Green or Aquamarine?: Taiwan and the Status Quo Preference in Cross-Strait Relations,” China Quarterly Volume 219, September 2014, pp. 670-692 (22)


Recommended:


Yun Han Chu, “Taiwan’s National Identity Politics and the Prospect of Cross-Strait Relations,” Asian Survey XLIV:4 (July August 2004), pp.484-512 (28)


Lyle Goldstein and William Murray, “Undersea Dragons: China’s Maturing Submarine
IX. The North Korean Conundrum – April 4 and 6

Victor Cha, The Impossible State whole book

Recommended:
Victor Cha and David Kang, Nuclear North Korea
Andrew H. Kydd, “Pulling the Plug: Can there be a Deal with China on Korean Unification?” The Washington Quarterly Vol. 38, No. 2, 2015, pp. 63-77

X. South East Asia, ASEAN and Regional Institutions – April 11, 13, 18 and 20

Alice Ba, (Re)Negotiating South East Asia Whole Book

Recommended:
Shaun Breslin, “Understanding China’s Regional Rise: interpretations, identities and
Ellen Frost, *Asia’s new Regionalism*
Walter Hatch and Kozo Yamamura, *Asia in Japan’s Embrace*
Krauss and Pempell, eds., *Beyond Bilateralism* chapters 6-9, pp.133-220 (87)
Edward Lincoln, *East Asian Economic Regionalism* (Brookings
Barry Naughton, *The China Circle: Economics and Technology In the PRC, Taiwan and Hong Kong* (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1997), especially chapters 4 and 11

XI. The Politics of Trade and Investment – April 25 and 27


Economic Partnership,” Asian Survey Volume 56, No. 6 December 2016, pp. 1077-1100 (23)

Plus TBA

Recommended:

Saori N. Katada and Mireya Solis, eds., Cross Regional Trade Agreements: Understanding Permeated Regionalism in East Asia (Springer 2010)

XII. Course Conclusions – May 2

Term Papers due on the last day of class
Please submit by e-mail

Some Journals available in the Library and which you may wish to consult for your papers:

Asian Survey
Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars
China Quarterly
Diplomat – relatively up to date and informative
The Economist (weekly)
Foreign Affairs (Flagship of the Council on Foreign Relations and the main stream American Foreign Policy establishment)
International Security (The Premier Journal of North East Asian Studies
The National Interest
Orbis
Survival (particularly good on security issues)
The Washington Quarterly

Others that alas are not available through BY
Current History (each issue focuses on different regions of the world)
Pacific Affairs
Pacific Review

Internet Sources:
http://www.apcss.org/Research/research_publications.html - Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies – Hawaii based think tank with strong ties to the US military
www.asiaobserver.com – a very useful portal with links to every country in the region
http://www.chinaleadershipmonitor.org/ - excellent cite run out of Stanford Univeristy on various aspects of Chinese politics
http://coombs.anu.edu.au/WWWVL-AsianStudies.html - the very large, academic web site for Asian studies maintained by he Australian National University
www.bu.edu/eas - our very own, Boston University site. Especially helpful on local sources, it has a good and easy to use links section (although it needs to be updated)
http://www.mofa.go.jp – The Japanese ministry of foreign relations website. Includes press bulletins and useful overviews, including copies of the official yearly Japanese Bluebook on diplomacy going back to 1994. See also their U.S. mirror site,
http://www.infojapan.org/
http://www.nbr.org/ - The National Bureau of Asian Research – terrific website with forums, downloads on a broad range of topics, etc.
www.newsonjapan.com – useful English translations of major articles on Japan appearing in major newspapers.
www.newsonkorea.com – ditto for South Korea
http://csis.org/pacfor/ - The CSIS Pacific forum – excellent quarterly reviews of various aspects of East interstate relations written by leading experts

Some Possible Paper Topics:

1. Pretend you are a member of the policy planning staff in the the Foreign Ministry of a major East Asian Power (for example the United States, China, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea or Taiwan) and that you have been asked to write a long term policy planning paper regarding a central policy issue (human rights, Korean reunification, trade, Tibet, regional economic integration, nuclear nonproliferation, Hong Kong-Taiwan, foreign aid, relations to another country, etc.). Divide your paper into four or more parts. In part one give an overview of the history of the issue, identifying the salient trends and dilemmas. In part two identify what are the interests that your country has at stake in this particular area. In part three describe a number of different strategies (also known as policy options) that are available to your country. Give some thought to the advantages and drawbacks of each policy option, referring back to the interests that you defined in part two. Finally in part four recommend one of these strategies and explain why you think it is the best option.

2. Discuss the possible implications of Korean reunification for the region. What would different theoretical perspectives lead us to expect – in terms of the way in which reunification may occur and the implications of reunification for the balance of power and/or the development of regional institutions? What are the policy implications of your analysis?

3. Discuss the prospects for improvements in the human rights situation in the East Asian region. Give an overview of the recent U.S. debate on this subject, identify the key analytical issues and then discuss U.S./Western policy options. Some of the outstanding human rights issues that you might want to touch on include: Self-determination (especially a problem in Tibet and East Timor); freedom of speech and political rights (China, Singapore); forced labor (China); child labor (China, India and other South and South East Asian countries); support for human rights
(Japan); women’s rights (the entire region); children’s rights (China, India); cultural rights (Japan, South East Asian countries). Consider the potential costs of an activist human rights policy, as well as the benefits.

4. Will East Asia move towards a balance of power system, a bipolar system, or increased regional integration? Consider some of the forces which might push the region in one direction or the other and identify some possible scenarios. Use IR theory (Realism, Interdependence-Institutionalism, Ideational, Domestic level approaches) where appropriate.

5. Discuss the implications of Nuclear Proliferation in Asia – what are some of the key forces driving the countries in the region to acquire weapons of mass destruction, what are some of the factors that might discourage them. What should the United States and the World Community try to do about it?

6. Discuss the pros and cons of the TMD and NMD initiatives. Should the United States and its allies pursue this option? Why? What are some of the different possibilities that emerge?

6. What are the implications of Asian industrialization for the World Trade Regime? In what ways is the current world trading system centered on WTO likely to change? What should the United States and/or countries do to defend their economic interests?

7. Is Asia moving towards a system of regional integration? If so, what kind of system is likely to emerge? Will it be an Asian common market? A Yen bloc led by Japan? A “Fortress Asia”? Or something entirely different? Discuss and compare with economic integration in other regions, i.e Western Europe, NAFTA, etc.

8. Discuss the geo-political position and foreign policy of a country that has not been covered in the course, for example Singapore, Taiwan, Indonesia, Vietnam or Australia. What are some of the dilemmas that these countries face, what domestic political factors shape their decision making, and how are they likely to influence the development of international relations in the region?

9. How will countries in the Asia-Pacific respond to the emergence of a powerful China? Are they more likely to seek to accommodate to China (bandwagon) or are they more likely to balance against it? Or will they succeed in integrating it into a system of mutual restraint? What factors may affect the outcome?

10. Analyze some major developments in Asian history through the lenses of international relations theory. For instance was the Pacific war inevitable, given the rise in Japanese power? Could a different set of institutional factors help prevent conflict? Was US intervention in regional conflicts during the Cold War a natural attempt to maintain the balance of power, a thinly concealed bid for hegemony, an ideologically driven misunderstanding of regional dynamics, or what?

11. What will be the likely long-term impact of the Asian financial crisis on interregional relations in the region? Has it wrecked the prospects for cooperation? Alternatively, has it increased the incentive of Asian countries to cooperate with the West? Has the crisis strengthened the position of those like Mahatir who would create a separate East Asian Trade bloc? Is the crisis likely to repeat itself, and if so, under what circumstances and with what consequences? What are the practical implications of your