

Fall 2024

**GEOG/ASIA 244-01**  
**The Political Economy of Asia**

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:40-11:10 am  
Class Meeting Location: Carnegie 107

Instructor: I-Chun Catherine Chang  
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 3-4 pm, or by appointment  
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**Course Introduction**

Whether the twenty-first century will be dominated by the “rising Asia” has spurred recurring debates in policy and academic circles. But what is Asia? How can we understand this diverse region where more than half of the world’s population resides? In this course, we will first deconstruct the idea of Asia as a cartographic entity to excavate the layered social-cultural meaning and geographical diversity of the “Asias.” We will also place the “Asias” in a global context to reveal how contemporary Asia anchors the changing world political economy and cultural imaginations outside the West. We will begin with important theoretical debates on (East) Asian development that prevailed in the 1980s and 1990s, including discussions about the colonial past, the path-dependency of development and uneven industrialization, regional disparities and mega-urbanization. We will then use these debates as the foundation to explore the contemporary globalizing Asia. What are the important connections between Asian countries, and with other parts of the world? What are the roles of the “Asias” in international governance and geo-politics? Can China replace the United States as the dominant geo-economic power? These are the questions we will explore in this course.

**Learning Objectives**

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

- Identify major historical events shaping contemporary Asia;
- Describe and appreciate the complexity and diversity of “the Asias”;
- Apply geographical approaches and concepts to examine the uneven development in Asia;
- Analyze how globalization influences Asia and interacts with its local social, cultural and political contexts;
- Identify positive and negative effects of global economy on Asia, including national economies and individual livelihoods;
- Compare different visions and perspectives on Asia proposed by academics, governments, and non-profit organizations;
- Critically discuss problems pertaining contemporary Asia, and analytically assess the merits of proposed solutions.

## Attendance

*Attendance is required.* This course focuses on student-oriented learning. You will learn through lectures, in-class discussions, and various activities designed to help you form a better understanding of Asia, and acquire basic research skills for studying the political economy of the region. Handouts and supplement materials will be distributed from time to time in class.

I recognize that there are unavoidable circumstances that sometimes make it impossible for you to attend class. If you will not be in class for any reason, it is your responsibility to inform me in advance via email. It is also your responsibility to catch up with the course materials and make up the work you missed in your absence. The instructor is not responsible for providing handouts for students who have been absent from class. Students with special needs should discuss their accommodations with me early in the course to work out a plan that aligns with maintaining course expectations and learning goals.

## Participation

Participation is distinct from attendance and is also an essential part of this course. In-class discussions and activities, responses to brief ungraded writing assignments, etc. will be factored into your participation grade. Engaging with various forms of classroom space and helping to create an environment where all of us can learn and think well about one another will also be factored into participation. Students with any concerns, questions, or need for consideration for flexibility should connect with me as soon as possible to determine an appropriate plan.

## Producing a Positive Learning Environment

To give students the opportunity to think about Asia from new perspectives, we need to work together to create a positive learning environment. For this to happen, I expect your cooperation in at least three ways:

- Respect the rights of other students to learn.
- Acknowledge and respect the diversity of participants in this class. Discussion of controversial issues is encouraged. Even if you don't agree with the points of view of others, as citizens of this class we all share a responsibility for respecting all individuals as fair-minded persons. Diversity is a strength in our society at large and here at Macalester College. In this class you will be asked to maintain an open mind to the differences around you, and place positive value on that diversity.
- Your regular attendance and participation.

In return, I promise to be on time, to address your questions and concerns, to give you feedback on your performance, and to return graded materials in a timely manner. You can expect me to reply to your emails within 48 hours. You are encouraged to meet with me to discuss your questions and concerns during office hours.

*Students with special needs:* All of us learn in different ways and with varying degrees of success. If you know of any factors in your life that may hinder your abilities to learn up to your potential

in this course, please notify me as soon as possible. You should also contact Disability Services (phone: 651-696-6874; email: [disabilityservices@macalester.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@macalester.edu)) or the MAX Center's Disability Accommodations (phone: 651-696-6121, coordinator's email: [lucking@macalester.edu](mailto:lucking@macalester.edu)), who have more expertise than I do in determining what special steps need to be taken to enable you to participate fully.

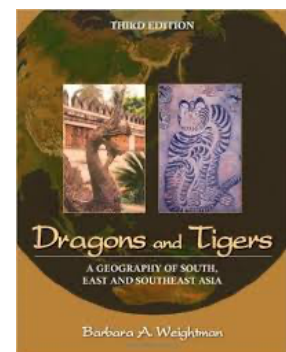
*Mental health and wellbeing:* All of us may feel anxious and stressed from time to time during the semester. If you need support for mental health and wellbeing, visit the Laurie Hamre Center for Health and Wellness in the Leonard Center, or call 651-696-6275 to reach them by phone.

## Required Readings

The in-class discussions, activities and lectures will make most sense if each week's readings are completed *before* the relevant discussions, lectures and activities.

There is a required text for this course:

Weightman, B. 2011. *Dragons and Tigers: A Geography of South, East and Southeast Asia*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Wiley.



Other required readings and supplement materials will be posted on the course Moodle site. You should print out each week's readings in advance of, and read them prior to, their assigned date in the syllabus and bring them with you to class in order to facilitate your full class participation. Unless otherwise stated, audio or video clips used in class will also be available on the course Moodle site.

## Academic Honesty

It is necessary to remind everyone that academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. Honesty and integrity are expected at all times. The use of AI or AI assisted writing tools is not allowed in this course. Cases of academic dishonesty will be handled according to the College's guidelines. You are responsible for learning about these policies (<http://www.macalester.edu/academicprograms/academicpolicies/academicintegrity/>) so that you can meet this responsibility. By participating in this course, *you agree to submit your assignments in digital form if requested*, enabling the instructor to ensure they are not plagiarized from other materials available on the Internet and elsewhere.

## Grading

Students taking the course on an A-F basis will be graded as follows:

- A – achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
- B – achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
- C – achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.

- D – achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.
- S – achievement that is satisfactory (equivalent to a letter grade of at least C-).
- F – NC, signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit (e.g., academic dishonesty, above), or (2) is incomplete, with no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an “I”.
- I – Incompletes. A grade of incomplete may be awarded at the discretion of the instructor, if requested by the student, under the following conditions: 1) at least three-quarters of the required work for the course has been completed, 2) unforeseen circumstances beyond the student's control (usually restricted to illness or family emergency) preclude completion of the remaining work for the course by the semester deadline, 3) the student is not on strict academic probation. Note that poor planning or having a lot of work to complete at the end of the term are not, in fairness to other students, considered circumstances beyond a student's control.

Grades for the course will be assigned based on the following scale:

A 93-100%	B+ 87-89.9%	C+ 77-79.9%	D+ 67-69.9%	F 0-59%
A- 90-92.9%	B 83-86.9%	C 73-76.9%	D 63-66.9%	
	B- 80-82.9%	C- 70-72.9%	D- 60-62.9%	

### Assignments

In this course, you will be expected to submit four written assignments. Detailed instructions for the assignments will be handed out and discussed in class. All written assignments must be printed out and turned in during class. It is your responsibility to ensure that all of the assignments are submitted on time.

### Grade Allocation and Deadlines

Class participation	15%	Attendance and in-class activities
Pop quizzes and discussion entries	10%	
Assignment 1: Current issues		
Presentation	5%	Due 12/03 in class
Paper	20%	Due 12/10 in class
Assignment 2: Analyzing an Asian dish		
Presentation	5%	Due 10/15 in class
Paper	10%	Due 10/15 in class
Assignment 3: Sub-region profile		
Presentation	5%	Due 11/05 in class
Paper	10%	Due 11/05 in class
Assignment 4: Asian Migration		
Presentation	5%	Due 12/05 in class
Paper	15%	Due 12/10 in class

*These dates and deadlines are non-negotiable with the exception of extraordinary circumstances*

*such as a personal or family medical emergency* (in which case official documentation to the effect must be provided). Should you have any concerns regarding academic disputes, scholastic misconduct, or sexual harassment, you may contact the Office of Student Affairs located at 119 Weyerhaeuser Hall (phone: 651-696-6220; email: [studentaffairs@macalester.edu](mailto:studentaffairs@macalester.edu)), and the Academic Programs Office at 215 Weyerhaeuser Hall (phone: 651-696-6036). The Office of Student Affairs and the Academic Programs Office websites, with the College's policies on these issues, are at:

<https://www.macalester.edu/studentaffairs/>

<http://www.macalester.edu/academicprograms/academicpolicies/>

*See next page for course schedule.*

## Course Outline and Readings

*Any suggestions that will enhance the learning are welcome.  
Please note that the class schedule and readings may be subject to change.  
It is your responsibility to keep up with any changes.*

[\*optional readings]

### 09/03: Course overview

No assigned reading. Read the syllabus carefully.

### Topic 1: What is Asia? Why Asia?

#### 09/05: Defining the region and the political economy

Weightman, B. 2011. The big picture, in *Dragons and Tigers*, Wiley, 1-25. (chapter 1)  
Sheppard, E. 2011. Geographical political economy, *Journal of Economic Geography*, 11  
(2): 319-331

#### 09/10, 09/12: Conceptualizing Asia

Duara, P. 2010. Redux: Conceptualizing a region for our times, *Journal of Asian Studies*,  
69 (4): 963-983.

Special topic on “Emerging Asias”, *The Professional Geographer* 68 (2): 309-338.

\*Hui, W. 2010. The idea of Asia and its ambiguities, *Journal of Asian Studies*, 69(4):  
963-983.

\*Andaya, B. A. 2010. Response to Prasenjit Duara, “Asia Redux”, *Journal of Asian  
Studies*, 69:4, 1015-1020.

\*Mrázek, R. 2010. Foating. No gears shifting, *Journal of Asian Studies*, 69:4, 1021-1025

\*Duara, P. 2010. Response to comments on “Asia Redux”, *Journal of Asian Studies*, 69:4,  
1027-1029.

Boston University “what is Asia?” workshop recording  
*Introducing assignment 1: Current issues in Asia*

### Topic 2: The Basics

#### 09/17, 09/19: Environment, agriculture, and food

Weightman, B. 2011. Environment and people, in *Dragons and Tigers*, Wiley, 26-59.  
(chapter 2)

Weightman, B. 2011. Agriculture, food and food security, in *Dragons and Tigers*, Wiley,  
119-149. (chapter 5)

*Introducing assignment 2: Analyzing an Asian dish*

#### 09/24, 09/26: Population and development

Weightman, B. 2011. Population, gender and disparity, in *Dragons and Tigers*, Wiley,  
60-85. (chapter 3)

Weightman, B. 2011. Development, urbanization, migration, and quality of life, in  
*Dragons and Tigers*, Wiley, 86-118. (chapter 4)

10/01, 10/03, 10/08: Urbanization patterns

- Chatterjee, I., Pomeroy, G. and Dutt, A. 2012. Cities of South Asia, in Brunn, S., Hays-Mitchell, M., and Ziegler, D. (eds) *Cities of the World*, Rowman & Littlefield Education, 381-424. (chapter 9)
- Tyner, J. and Ortega, A. 2012. Cities of Southeast Asia, in Brunn, S., Hays-Mitchell, M., and Ziegler, D. (eds) *Cities of the World*, Rowman & Littlefield Education, 425-470. (chapter 10)
- Chan, K. W. and Boland, A. 2012. Cities of East Asia, in Brunn, S., Hays-Mitchell, M., and Ziegler, D. (eds) *Cities of the World*, Rowman & Littlefield Education, 471-522 (chapter 11)
- 10/03: online learning. *Catherine is away.*

10/10: International Roundtable, not meeting in class

10/15: Assignment 2 presentations and discussions (Assignment 2 paper due in class)

Introducing assignment 3: Sub-region profile

10/17: Fall break

10/22, 10/24: The East Asian miracle

- Wan, M. 2008. The East Asian miracle, in *The Political Economy of East Asia: Striving for Wealth and Power*, Washington D.C.: CQ Press, 131-169. (chapter 5)
- Krugman, P. 1994. The myth of Asia's miracle, *Foreign Affairs*, Nov/Dec: 62-78.
- \* The East Asian miracle, Policy Research Report of the World Bank, 1993, pp. 1-26 (Introduction).
- \*Routley, L. 2012. Developmental states: A review of the literature, *ESID Working Paper*, 03/Feb: 1-25.
- \*Johnson, C. 1999. The developmental state: odyssey of a concept, in Woo-Cumings, M. (ed.) *The Developmental State*, 32-60.

Topic 3: Uneven geographies of Asian development

10/29, 10/31: Asian financial crisis: end of the economic miracle?

- Wan, M. 2008. The Asian financial crisis, in *The Political Economy of East Asia: Striving for Wealth and Power*, Washington D.C.: CQ Press, 171-198. (chapter 6)
- Hale, G. 2011. Could we have learned from the Asian financial crisis of 1997-98? *Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco Economic Letter*, February 28. (<http://www.frbsf.org/economic-research/publications/economic-letter/2011/february/asian-financial-crisis-1997-1998/>)
- Asian financial crisis timeline:  
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/crash/etc/cron.html>
- \*Robins, Fred. 2000. Asia's 1997 Crash: its Character, Causes and Consequences, in *The East Asian Development Model: Economic Growth, Institutional Failure and the Aftermath of the Crisis*, Palgrave, 17-52.
- \*Feng, Y. 2000. Political foundations of economic management: An interpretation of economic development and economic crisis in East Asia, in Richter, F. (ed) *The*

*East Asian Development Model: Economic Growth, Institutional Failure and the Aftermath of the Crisis*, Palgrave, 71-96.

\*Lingle, C. 2000. The institutional basis of Asia's economic crisis, in Richter, F. (ed) *The East Asian Development Model: Economic Growth, Institutional Failure and the Aftermath of the Crisis*, Palgrave, 53-70.

10/29: at home documentary *The Crash. Catherine is away.*

11/05: Assignment 3 presentations and discussions (Assignment 3 paper due in class)

11/07, 11/12, 11/14: The "factory of the world"

Wan, M. 2008. The political economy of East Asian production, in *The Political Economy of East Asia: Striving for Wealth and Power*, Washington D.C.: CQ Press, 199-236. (chapter 7)

Saptari, R. 2000. Production processes and the gendering of industrial work in Asia, *Asian Studies Review*, 24(2), 147-159.

Matthews, R. and Nee, V. 2000. Gender inequality and economic growth in rural China, *Social Science Research*, 29(4): 606-632.

Seguino, E. 1997. Gender wage inequality and export-led growth in South Korea, *Journal of Development Studies*, 34(2): 102-132

NPR Planet Money T-Shirt project (<http://www.npr.org/tags/190719989/planet-money-t-shirt>)

Documentary: China blue

Topic 4: Globalizing Asia

11/19, 11/21, 11/26: Asian diasporas

McKeown A. 2013. Asian migration in the longue durée, in Gold, S. and Nawyn, S. (eds) *Routledge International Handbook of Migration Studies*, New York: Routledge, 75-86.

Parrenas, R. and Siu, L. 2007. Introduction: Asian diasporas, in Parrenas, R. and Siu, L. (eds) *Asian Diasporas: New Formations and New Conceptions*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1-28.

Lan, P. 2007. Legal servitude and free illegality, in Parrenas, R. and Siu, L. (eds) *Asian Diasporas: New Formations and New Conceptions*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 253-278.

In-class documentary: Philippines's labor export

Guest lecture on Asian Americans (Dr. P. Aspen Chen)

*Introducing assignment 4: Asian Migration*

11/28: Thanksgiving, no class

12/03: Presentations on assignment 1

12/05: Presentations on assignment 4

12/10: Concluding the course (Assignment 1 & 4 paper due in class)