

Syllabus
ECONOMY, SOCIETY, AND POLITICS IN ASIA
SOCI 406 & HIST 426
Spring 2025
(Updated on 11 February 2025)

Class time: Tuesday & Thursday, 1:00 PM–2:10 PM

Location: ENG B15

Instructor: Burak Gürel

Office hours: Tuesday, 2:30 PM–4:30 PM

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Teaching assistant: Merve Yahşi (myahsi22@ku.edu.tr)

Course Description

This course explores economic, social, and political changes in East and South Asia through a comparative and historical lens. It examines capitalism, modernization, colonialism, nationalism, socialism, developmentalism, and neoliberalism through the experiences of China, India, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan.

Course Organization and Requirements

Position papers: Each student is required to write a total of **four** position papers on the reading materials from weeks of their choosing. Each paper should be between 700 and 1,000 words in length. Position papers must be submitted via email to the instructor and teaching assistants by **Tuesday at 10 AM** each week. Papers on readings from previous weeks will not be accepted. Students are expected to carefully read all assigned materials for the chosen week and discuss all of them in their position paper. The instructor **may** ask students to briefly present their position papers in class, so they should be prepared to do so.

Midterm exam: The midterm exam consists of two short essay questions and ten multiple-choice questions. A make-up exam is permitted only with a documented medical emergency.

Final exam: The final exam consists of two short essay questions and ten multiple-choice questions. A make-up exam is permitted only with a documented medical emergency.

Participation: Attendance is **not** mandatory, but your level of participation will significantly impact your participation grade. You are expected to engage thoughtfully in class discussions. Participation should be informed, meaning you must complete the assigned readings in advance and base your comments and questions on them.

Grade Distribution

Midterm exam: 30%

Final exam: 30%

Position papers: 20% (5% × 4 papers)

Participation: 20%

Grading Scale

Letter grade	Grade range
A	90–100
A–	87–89
B+	83–86
B	80–82
B–	77–79
C+	73–76
C	70–72
C–	67–69
D+	64–66
D	60–63
F	0–59

Reading List & Schedule

Week 1. Introduction (February 18 & 20)

Week 2. Asia Before and After the Rise of the West (February 25 & 27)

Giovanni Arrighi, *Adam Smith in Beijing: Lineages of the Twenty-First Century*, London & New York: Verso, 2007, pp. 76–77, 314–344.

Andre Gunder Frank, *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, pp. 84–92, 104–117, 126–130.

Ho–fung Hung, *The China Boom: Why China Will Not Rule the World*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2016, pp. 15–42.

Week 3. Rising Japan within Declining Asia (March 4 & 6)

William John Macpherson, *The Economic Development of Japan, 1868–1941*, Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995, pp. 17–36.

William Gerald Beasley, *Japanese Imperialism, 1894–1945*, Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1987, pp. 27–40, 85–100, 142–155, 198–219.

Week 4. Chinese Revolution (March 11 & 13)

Lucien Bianco, *Origins of the Chinese Revolution, 1915–1949*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1971, pp. 1–26, 82–139, 199–208.

Week 5. China's Transformation in the Mao Era (March 18 & 20)

Maurice Meisner, *Mao's China and After: A History of the People's Republic*, New York: The Free Press, 1999, pp. 352–375, 413–426.

James E. Nickum, "Labor Accumulation in Rural China and Its Role since the Cultural Revolution," *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1978, pp. 273–286.

Ho-fung Hung, *The China Boom: Why China Will Not Rule the World*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2016, pp. 43–51.

Felix Wemheuer, *A Social History of Maoist China: Conflict and Change, 1949–1976*, Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019, pp. 15–47.

Week 6. Chinese Capitalism (March 25 & 27)

Joel Andreas, "Changing Colours in China," *New Left Review*, No. 54, 2008, pp. 123–142.

Chris Bramall, *Chinese Economic Development*, London & New York: Routledge, 2009, pp. 469–496.

Ho-fung Hung, "China's 'State Capitalism' in Comparative and Historical Perspectives," *Economy and Society*, Vol. 53, No. 3, 2024, pp. 376–399.

Minqi Li, "From '996' to 'Lying Flat': China's Regime of Accumulation," *Socialist Register 2023*, pp. 190–209.

Isabela Nogueira and Hao Qi, "The State and Domestic Capitalists in China's Economic Transition: From Great Compromise to Strained Alliance," *Critical Asian Studies*, Vol. 51, No. 4, pp. 558–578.

RAMAZAN BAYRAMI/SPRING BREAK (MARCH 31–APRIL 4)

Week 7. Midterm Exam

Midterm review (April 8)

Midterm exam (April 10)

Week 8. China's Rise and Heightening Global Competition (April 15 & 17)

Richard Baldwin, "China is the World's Sole Manufacturing Superpower: A Line Sketch of the Rise," 17 January 2024, <https://cepr.org/voxeu/columns/china-worlds-sole-manufacturing-superpower-line-sketch-rise>

Chad P. Bown and Dan Wang, "Semiconductors and Modern Industrial Policy," *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 38, No. 4, 2024, pp. 81–110.

Steve Tsang and Olivia Cheung, “Xi Jinping’s Approach to Acquire Strategic Technology from the West,” *East Asia*, Vol. 41, 2024, pp. 301–323.

Eva Dou, “How Huawei Brought on a Sputnik Moment in World Trade,” *The Washington Post*, 4 January 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2025/01/04/huawei-export-controls-us-china-trade-chips-telecommunications/>

Evgeny Morozov, “The Huawei War,” *Le Monde diplomatique*, November 2020, <https://mondediplo.com/2020/11/10huawei>

Eleanor Olcott and Zijing Wu, “How Small Chinese AI Start-up DeepSeek Shocked Silicon Valley,” *Financial Times*, 25 January 2025, <https://on.ft.com/4aBs2e3>

“Which Countries Have Banned DeepSeek and Why?” 6 February 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/2/6/which-countries-have-banned-deepseek-and-why>

Week 9. Japan in the post–WWII era (April 22 & 24)

Chalmers Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925–1975*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982, pp. 305–324.

Simon Partner, “Taming the Wilderness: The Lifestyle Improvement Movement in Rural Japan, 1925–1965,” *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 56, No. 4, 2001, pp. 487–520.

Peter J. Katzenstein, “Japan, Technology and Asian Regionalism in Comparative Perspective,” in Giovanni Arrighi, Takeshi Hamashita and Mark Selden (eds.), *The Resurgence of East Asia: 500, 150 and 50 Year Perspectives*, London & New York: Routledge, 2003, pp. 214–258.

Week 10. Political Economy of South Korea (April 29)

Manuel Castells, “Four Asian Tigers with a Dragon Head: A Comparative Analysis of the State, Economy, and Society in the Asian–Pacific Rim,” in R. P. Appelbaum & Jeffrey Henderson (eds.), *States and Development in the Asian–Pacific Rim*, London: Sage, 1992, pp. 37–41 (**not the entire article, just this assigned part**).

Vivek Chibber, *Locked in Place: State-Building and Late Industrialization in India*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003, pp. 51–84.

Kristen E. Looney, *Mobilizing for Development: The Modernization of Rural East Asia*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2020, pp. 80–116.

John Minns, “Of Miracles and Models: The Rise and Decline of the Developmental State in South Korea,” *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No. 6, 2001, pp. 1025–1043.

May 1: May Day (Holiday)

Week 11. Political Economy of Taiwan (May 6 & 8)

Manuel Castells, “Four Asian Tigers with a Dragon Head: A Comparative Analysis of the State, Economy, and Society in the Asian–Pacific Rim,” in R. P. Appelbaum & Jeffrey Henderson (eds.), *States and Development in the Asian–Pacific Rim*, London: Sage, 1992, pp. 41–45 (**not the entire article, just this assigned part**).

Oliver Kim and Jen-Kuan Wang, “Land Reform in Taiwan, 1950-1961: Effects on Agriculture and Structural Change,” 31 October 2024,
https://oliverwkim.com/papers/KimWang_Taiwan.pdf

Kristen E. Looney, *Mobilizing for Development: The Modernization of Rural East Asia*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2020, pp. 49–79.

Kuan-Chi Wang and Daniel Buck, “Relocating Agrarian Development in Asia: Food Regimes, R&D Programs, and the Long Twentieth Century,” *Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 51, No. 1, 2024, pp. 212–236.

Robert Wade, *Governing the Market: Economic Theory and the Role of Government in East Asian Industrialization*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990, pp. 73–112.

Chris Miller, *Chip War: The Fight for the World’s Most Critical Technology*, New York: Scribner, 2022, pp. 163–169.

Paul Mozur and John Liu, “The Chip Titan Whose Life’s Work Is at the Center of a Tech Cold War,” *The New York Times*, 4 August 2023,
<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/04/technology/the-chip-titan-whose-lifes-work-is-at-the-center-of-a-tech-cold-war.html>

Week 12. The Colonization and Decolonization of India (May 13 & 15)

Perry Anderson, *The Indian Ideology*, London & New York: Verso, 2013, pp. 7–46.

Francine Frankel, *India’s Political Economy: A Gradual Revolution*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 28–70.

Week 13. Persistent Underdevelopment of the Indian Economy (May 20 & 22)

Vivek Chibber, *Locked in Place: State-Building and Late Industrialization in India*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003, pp. 85–109, 161–192.

Gunnar Myrdal, *Asian Drama: An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations/ Volume II*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968, pp. 1356–1384.

Utsa Patnaik, “The Agrarian Question and Development of Capitalism in India,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 21, No. 18, 1986, pp. 781–793.

Burak Gürel, “The Role of Collective Mobilization in the Divergent Performance of the Rural Economies of China and India (1950–2005),” *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 5, 2019, pp. 1021–1046.

Week 14: Caste, Class, Religion, and Inequality in India (May 27 & 29)

Alpa Shah and Jens Lerche, “Tribe, Caste and Class– New Mechanisms of Exploitation and Oppression,” in Alpa Shah, Jens Lerche, Richard Axelby, Dalel Benbabaali, Brendan Donegan, Jayaseelan Raj, Vikramaditya Thakur, *Ground Down by Growth: Tribe, Caste, Class and Inequality in Twenty–First Century India*, London: Pluto Press, 2018, pp. 1–31.

K.P. Kannan, “Macro–Economic Aspects of Inequality and Poverty in India,” in Alpa Shah, Jens Lerche, Richard Axelby, Dalel Benbabaali, Brendan Donegan, Jayaseelan Raj, Vikramaditya Thakur, *Ground Down by Growth: Tribe, Caste, Class and Inequality in Twenty–First Century India*, London: Pluto Press, 2018, pp. 32–48.

Ashwini Deshpande and Rajesh Ramachandran, “Dominant or Backward? Political Economy of Demand for Quotas by Jats, Patels, and Marathas,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 52, No. 19, 2017, pp. 81–92.

Imtiaz Ahmed, “Political Economy of Communalism in Contemporary India,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 19, No. 22–23, 1984, pp. 903–906.

Christophe Jaffrelot, “The Fate of Secularism in India,” in *The BJP in Power: Indian Democracy and Religious Nationalism*, Milan Vaishnav (ed.), Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2019, pp. 51–62.

The time and location of the final exam will be announced by the Registrar’s Office.