ETHNOGRAPHIC EAST ASIA

ANT 290 TTH 12:15-1:30 CHAMBERS 1006 moodle.davidson.edu
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Fall 2016 office hours: TR 2-3:30pm (Elm); W 8:30-11:30am (on-campus Summit); or by appt.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course introduces students to the major themes in the anthropology of China, Japan, South Korea, and North Korea. Through studying recent transformations in kinship, political economy, constructions of gender, and national identities, students will also gain a basic grounding in the geography and twentieth-century history of the region as a whole.

While globalization, and its accompanying birds-eye-view analyses in scholarship, are an important perspective on this region of the world, the premise of this course is that the basic principles of ethnographic research and analysis – local, lengthy research couched in broader explanatory frameworks – remain vital to understanding the societies and cultures of East Asia. Accordingly, we'll consider ethnographic monographs, journal articles, and films drawn primarily from the late twentieth and early twenty-first century – the millennial era.

One notable feature of this chronologically recent focus is that none of the four major texts used in this course feature traditional village- or rural-based studies of a single community. With few exceptions, to be an East Asian anthropologist in this era is to do urban ethnography; we will consider how this affects the methodologies and theoretical underpinnings of the work we read and view.

LEARNING GOALS:

In this course, students will:

- identify trends in anthropological thinking about Northeast Asia through the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.
- describe how household structure and kinship shape other aspects of the cultures that we study.
- compare and critique ethnographic representations of China, Japan, South Korea, and North Korea.
- demonstrate – through class discussion and in writing assignments -- the ability to think critically about the arguments and assumptions of the texts we read and view.
REQUIRED TEXTS:

These four textbooks are available for purchase at the college bookstore:


Additional readings will be made available on or through our Moodle course. Films shown in class or assigned for viewing are the same as required readings.

YOUR COURSE GRADE WILL BE BASED ON:

50 pts – Attendance, participation, and professionalism. Each class meeting: Don’t be tardy; be visibly and vocally engaged; step up/step back as needed.

45 pts – Three country quizzes @ 15 pts each. In-class quizzes covering straightforward factual information on each country’s geography, history, etc. China/Hong Kong 9/27; Japan 10/20; Koreas 11/15

60 pts – Six discussion posts @ 10 pts each. At least one post for each book; an additional post for two books of your choice; submitted during that book’s unit. Must demonstrate familiarity with recent readings, not just concepts discussed in class. Scored either/or, no partial credit. Due on Mondays before 8pm.

100 pts – Two roundtables. Each roundtable involves writing one 2- to 3-page response paper (25 pts), comments on a classmate’s paper (10 pts), & roundtable presentation (15 pts). Details below.

100 pts – Review #1 on Thursday, October 6 and Review #2 on Tuesday, December 6. Written wherever you like during that day’s class time and submitted on Moodle. Possible questions provided beforehand.

145 pts – Final project in lieu of final exam): analytical reading of a recent East Asia-related ethnography.

25 pts – **project proposal.** One paragraph identifying your chosen ethnography, how and when you will obtain it, the reasons it interests you, and how it relates to the learning goals of this course. **Due Thursday, October 20.**

40 pts – **project outline.** Overview of the structure of your ethnography and the course readings you plan to use in your analysis. **Due Thursday, November 17.**

80 pts – **final draft.** 8- to 10-page essay that makes a coherent and substantive argument about your chosen ethnography as it relates to the broader field of East Asian anthropology. **Due Monday, December 12.**

*Point total = grade:  500-466 pts = A 465-451 pts = A-
400-386 pts. = C+ 385-366 pts. = C 365-351 pts. = C-
350-336 pts. = D+ 335-316 pts. = D 315-301 pts. = D- 300 or below = F*
READING

Being prepared for class means having done the assigned readings thoroughly enough to analyze and critique them in class discussion.

With a fairly heavy reading load – four monographs, an assortment of articles/chapters, plus your chosen ethnography for the final project – students must read strategically with a focus on argument and context, rather than reading everything hyper-closely. If this approach to reading is new to you, this course will help you to develop this essential academic skill.

RESPONSE PAPERS AND ROUNDTABLES:

Each student will participate in two roundtables with 2 or 3 partners (no solo or duo roundtables.) To prepare:

1. the group should meet to discuss the readings and how they relate to the rest of the course; your participation in this group meeting will be evaluated by your partners and be considered in your roundtable grade;
2. each partner will write a 400- to 600-word response paper on the assigned reading, will share that paper with the other partners in a private Google Drive folder, and will post brief but thoughtful comments in response to the other partners’ papers;
3. partners must agree together on the deadline for posting their papers;
4. all papers and comments must be posted by 8pm the day before the roundtable, so that I can prepare for my role as roundtable moderator.

This prior exchange of ideas and the questions or insights it generates can then form the basis of the roundtable and ensuing class discussion. Avoid summarizing the reading in either the response paper or the roundtable. The goal of the entire exercise is to facilitate peer-to-peer exchange of ideas including constructive critique of same.

Response papers, comments, and roundtable performance will all be graded individually.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Your punctual attendance and engaged, collegial participation at each class meeting are absolutely vital to the success of our course. If you are repeatedly tardy, absent, unprepared, or inattentive, your A/P/P grade will suffer. If you demonstrate a lack of professionalism through a serious inability or unwillingness to treat others with respect, in person or online, your A/P/P score will suffer. If you have more than six unexcused absences, you will fail the course. Occasional small tasks or exercises may be assigned as homework to be brought to class or as in-class work; these too will fall under your A/P/P score.
EMAIL & APPOINTMENT POLICY

Except during office hours held in Elm, email is usually the fastest way to reach me. My intention and typical practice is to reply to student emails within 24 weekday non-holiday hours. If you don’t hear back from me by that time, then it is your responsibility to email me again. I never take offense at a politely-worded reminder/nudge sent after 24 weekday hours. I try to avoid writing lengthy emails, and so my response may be: “Please arrange to call me or meet with me in person to discuss this.”

To see me during office hours, just show up. If I’m with another student, catch my eye so I know you’re waiting for me. To make an appointment to see or call me outside of office hours, use Outlook’s calendar to invite me to an appointment time when I appear to be available. As with other email messages, give me 24 hours to respond and then nudge if needed. Our appointment does not exist until I accept or confirm it.

LATE WORK POLICIES

Discussion posts (worth 10 points) receive no score if posted late (after 8pm.)

For your roundtable, your response paper is due at a time you will set with your partners. Papers posted after the deadline but before class will be penalized 15 points. Papers will not be accepted after class begins. Your comments on your partners’ papers are due at 8pm the day before the roundtable; comments posted after this deadline – assuming the paper(s) on which you are commenting were posted on time – will not be accepted. If a medical or family emergency prevents you from submitting the written work for a presentation, communicate with Prof. Ruhlen as soon as possible so that you can be assigned to an alternate presentation date.

For your final project, work submitted after the deadline will be penalized as follows: 5 pts per calendar day for the proposal and outline; 20 pts per calendar day for the final draft (up to two days). Extensions may be granted in the case of illness or family emergency.

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SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. Davidson College is committed to creating and maintaining an environment that is free of sexual misconduct, stalking, and relationship abuse and violence, and that promotes a healthy spirit of responsibility, dignity, and respect in matters of sexual conduct and interpersonal relationships. The college does not condone and will not tolerate sexual misconduct, stalking, or relationship abuse or violence. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources at http://www.davidson.edu/offices/dean-of-students/sexual-misconduct
DISABILITY POLICY

Full accommodations are the legal right of students with all kinds of disabilities, whether learning disabilities or physical disabilities. If you are a student with a learning disability documented by Davidson College who might need accommodations, please identify yourself to me within the first week or two of class so that I can learn from you as early as possible how to best work with your learning style. Students with other disabilities are also encouraged to self-identify if there is any way in which I can make accommodations that will enhance your learning experience. All such discussions will be fully confidential unless you otherwise stipulate.

COURSE OUTLINE

Note: I reserve the right to change the course outline, including assigned readings and topics covered. Every effort will be made to preserve deadlines as planned. Any changes to the syllabus will be announced in class and on Moodle, and for major changes a revised syllabus will be posted on Moodle.

WEEK 1

August 23 Intro to course; modern East Asian history
August 25 Central questions in East Asian anthropology; how to read ethnography

UNIT ONE: CHINA

WEEK 2 – Sign up for roundtables

August 30 Modern China overview; view “Small Happiness” (58 minutes)
   September 1 Begin In Search of Paradise
   Zhang Introduction and Chapter 1

WEEK 3

September 6
   Zhang Chapters 2 and 3
September 8
   Zhang Chapters 4 and 5
WEEK 4

September 13 View film: “Demolition” (62 minutes)
Zhang Chapter 6

September 15 Roundtable #1
Zhang Chapter 7 and Epilogue

UNIT TWO: HONG KONG

WEEK 5

September 20
Mathews Prelude and Chapter 1

September 22
Mathews Chapter 2

WEEK 6

September 27 Map/history quiz #1: China, including Hong Kong
Mathews Chapter 3

September 29
Mathews Chapter 4

WEEK 7

October 4 Roundtable #2
Mathews Chapter 5

October 6 Review #1

UNIT THREE: JAPAN

WEEK 8

FALL BREAK – NO CLASS – October 13


October 13
Nakamura “A Note on Language” and Chapter 1

WEEK 9

October 18
Nakamura Chapters 2 and 3

October 20 Map/history quiz #2: Japan
Nakamura Chapters 4 and 5

Final project proposal due 10/20, before midnight.
WEEK 10

October 25  Film: “Bethel: Community and Schizophrenia in Northern Japan” (41 minutes)
Nakamura Chapter 6

October 27  Roundtable #3
Nakamura Chapters 7 and 8

UNIT FOUR: SOUTH KOREA, NORTH KOREA

WEEK 11

November 1


November 3
Prébin Introduction; Chapters 1-2

WEEK 12

November 8 NO CLASS (Election Day)

November 10
Prébin Chapters 3-5

WEEK 13

November 15 Map/history quiz #3: Koreas
Prébin Chapters 6 and 7

November 17 View film “Bittersweet Joke” (52 minutes)
Prébin Chapters 8 and 9

Final project outline due 11/17, before midnight.

WEEK 14

November 22 Roundtable #4
Prébin Chapter 10; Conclusion

November 24 THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASS
UNIT FIVE: NORTH KOREA

WEEK 15

November 29 Start viewing “The Great North Korean Picture Show” (94 minutes)

December 1 Finish viewing “The Great North Korean Picture Show”

WEEK 16

December 6 Review #2

Monday, December 12: Final draft of final project due before midnight. Use Chicago style: in-text author-date citations and a list of references, with occasional footnotes only for additional commentary. Standard fonts, margins, and spacing are required for legibility. Submit on Moodle.

No final examination