

PSCI 4312.001 Politics of East Asia
Spring 2026

Professor	Dr. Yeon Soo Park	
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Meeting Time	Tue/Thu, 2:00pm - 3:45pm	
Meeting Location	FN 2.202	

Catalog Description

This course examines and compares the politics of East Asian nations in their political institutions, actors and issues. Students will study extensively the history, political geography, political economy, development and democratization of the countries in the region.

Course Description

This course examines post-colonial governments and politics in Northeast Asian and Southeast Asian countries. Particular focus will be placed on nation-building processes, political regimes, economic development, and contemporary issues.

This class specifically surveys three sets of questions. 1) What are the consequences of the colonial experience? How did each country get through the nation-building process? 2) How did authoritarian governments maintain power and plan economic development? Why have some countries been able to attain political democratization and/or economic development while others have not? What can explain democratization in Asian countries? What are the causes and consequences of the 1998 Asian financial crisis? What are the legacies of communism, imperialism, and authoritarianism? 3) What are contemporary issues and challenges in Asia? What are the political consequences of ethnic and religious conflicts? Under which conditions do gender matter in politics?

While the lectures will explore important topics in political science, especially comparative politics, using Asian country cases, however, the time is very limited to examine every single East Asian country for each topic in the classroom. Thus, students will explore selected countries through the group project and share their findings with colleagues in other groups by presentation.

Student Learning Objectives

This class will provide you with knowledge about post-colonial politics in Asia. By the end of the semester, you will also understand the implications of political economic development and how domestic and international dynamics have occurred in Asia. Specific learning objects include:

- to define to understand post-colonial politics in Asia.
- to apply a body of political science knowledge to understanding Asian government and politics.
- to assess the major issues and challenges including politics, society, and regional security in Asia.

· develop critical thinking and analytical skills to assess political phenomena in Asia.

Required Textbooks and Materials

There are no required textbooks to purchase for this course. The required readings can be accessed in the eLearning (book chapters) and at <http://www.utdallas.edu/library/>. Students are responsible to ensure they have access to the reading materials.

Evaluation

Assignment	Weight
Participation	10%
Today's East Asian Politics	5%
Reading Quizzes	15%
Group Project	30%
Midterm	20%
Final	20%
Total	100%

Class Participation (10%): Your participation grade is based on how you contribute during class. Effective participation is measured by the quality of your contributions, not simply how often you speak. You are expected to come to class having completed the readings. To foster meaningful conversations, I may occasionally call on students to answer questions about the readings, so please be prepared to respond. Participation will be evaluated twice during the semester: in Week 8 and the final week. Each evaluation is worth 5% of your total course grade, for a total of 10%.

Today's East Asian Politics (5%): You are expected to keep up with current events in East Asian countries by reading the news daily before class. Once during the semester, you will be required to present Today's East Asian Politics. You will identify an important news story related to East Asian politics from the most recent six months and prepare a one-slide, three-minute presentation, along with a 250-word written summary. You will present your topic to the class.

Please email me (1) your slide (a single page), (2) the source(s) used for your presentation (e.g., news articles), and (3) a brief summary explaining the article and why it is relevant to the course materials by 5:00 PM on the day before your presentation. Be sure to identify the class in the email subject line (e.g., [PSCI 4312.001] Today's East Asian Politics Submission).

Reading Quizzes (15%): There will be four short quizzes, administered at the beginning or end of selected class sessions. These quizzes are designed to assess whether you have completed the assigned readings, are prepared for class discussion, and are attending class. The first quiz will cover the syllabus and an East Asian map. Of the four quizzes, your lowest score will automatically be dropped. If you miss a quiz, that quiz will count as your dropped score. Only your best three quiz scores will count toward your final grade.

Group Project (30%): For this assignment, you will work in a small team (4–5 students per group) to produce a comprehensive report on a country, covering the following topics: nation-building; political regime change; political parties; politics and economic growth; economic inequality; gender equality; and contemporary issues.

Although the project will be completed and presented as a group, you will be graded individually. Your final grade will be based on my evaluation of the group presentations, as well as self- and peer assessments of your individual contributions to the group project. The project will be completed in multiple stages (see the course schedule for details).

This project accounts for 30% of your final grade: 10% total for the first two stages (5% each) and 20% for the final presentation.

Detailed guidelines will be provided in class. Each stage of the presentation must be submitted by email by 5:00 PM on the Monday prior to your presentation. Please identify the class and the team in the email subject line (e.g., [PSCI 4312] Group Thailand – Stage 1 Submission).

Exams (40%): There will be two in-class exams: the midterm (20%) and the final exam (20%). Exams are closed book and based on the readings, lectures, and class discussions including your colleagues' presentation.

Grading Scale

Consistent with UT Dallas policy, students are graded on a plus/minus scale. Grades are not rounded in this course. No negotiation on the final calculation. Please see the grade table below:

Grade	Top of Range	Bottom of Range
A+	100	≥ 97
A	97 >	≥ 94
A-	94 >	≥ 90
B+	90 >	≥ 87
B	87 >	≥ 84
B-	84 >	≥ 80
C+	80 >	≥ 77
C	77 >	≥ 74
C-	74 >	≥ 70
D+	70 >	≥ 67
D	67 >	≥ 64
D-	64 >	≥ 60
F	60 >	

Course Outline

I. Introduction

Week 1: Introduction: History, Society, and Culture– Jan 20; 22

- Syllabus
- Jeopardy Thursday about East Asian Countries
- McDougall, Derek. 2016. "Understanding Asia Pacific International Politics" in *Asia Pacific in World Politics* (Second edition). Lynne Rienner Publishers: 1-26

Supplementary Materials:

- Bates, Robert. H. 2009. "From Case Studies to Social Science: A strategy for political research" in *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*, eds. Charles Boix and Susan C. Stokes. Oxford University Press: 173-185.

- Huotari, Mikko, and Jürgen Rüländ. 2018. "Context, Concepts, and Comparison in Southeast Asian Studies." in *Comparative Area Studies: Methodological Rationales and Cross-Regional Applications.*, eds. Ahram, Ariel Ira, Patrick Köllner, and Rudra Sil. Oxford University Press: 85-102.
- Kim, Soyoung. 2010. "Do Asian Values Exist? Empirical Tests of the Four Dimensions of Asian Values". *Journal of East Asian Studies* 10(2): 315-344.

Week 2: Nation-Building and National Identity – Jan 27; 29

- Syllabus and Map Quiz
- Anderson, Benedict. 1983. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism.*
- Hur, Aram. 2020. "Citizen Duty and the Ethical Power of Communities: Mixed-method evidence from East Asia." *British Journal of Political Science* 50(3): 1047-1065.

Supplementary Materials:

- Brazinsky, Gregg A. 2009. *Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy.* University of North Carolina Press.
- Chu, Yun-han, and Jih-wen Lin. 2001. "Political Development in 20th-century Taiwan: State-building, regime transformation and the construction of national identity." *The China Quarterly* 165: 102-129.
- Slater, Dan. 2010. *Ordering Power: Contentious politics and authoritarian leviathans in Southeast Asia.* Cambridge University Press.
- Kim, Diana S. 2023. *Empires of Vice: The rise of opium prohibition across Southeast Asia.* Vol.11. Princeton University Press.

II. Political Economy of East Asia

Week 3: Authoritarianism – Feb 3; 5

- Geddes, Barbara. 2003. "Big Questions, Little Answers: How the Questions You Choose Affect the Answers You Get" in *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory building and research design in comparative politics.* University of Michigan Press. (Read pp.43-85)

Supplementary Materials:

- Im, Hyug Baeg. 1987. "The Rise of Bureaucratic Authoritarianism in South Korea." *Comparative Politics* 36(1): 81-101.
- Ong, Elvin. 2015. "Complementary Institutions in Authoritarian Regimes: The Everyday Politics of Constituency Service in Singapore." *Journal of East Asian Studies* 15(3): 361-390.
- Slater, Dan. 2003. "Iron Cage in an Iron Fist: Authoritarian institutions and the personalization of power in Malaysia." *Comparative Politics* 36(1): 81-101.
- Wahman, Michael, Jan Teorell, and Axel Hadenius. 2013. "Authoritarian Regime Types Revisited: Updated data in comparative perspective." *Contemporary Politics* 19(1): 19-34.
- Democracy-Dictatorship (DD): <https://sites.google.com/unav.es/martin-rode/home/data>
- Polity IV / Polity5: <https://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html>
- Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem): <https://www.v-dem.net/>
- Freedom House: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world>

Week 4: Developmental State ("The East Asian Miracle") – Feb 10; 12

- Stubbs, Richard. 2009. "What Ever Happened to the East Asian Developmental State? The Unfolding Debate." *The Pacific Review* 22(1): 1-22.
- Doner, Richard F., Bryan K. Ritchie, and Dan Slater. 2005. "Systemic Vulnerability and the Origins of Developmental States: Northeast and Southeast Asia in comparative perspective." *International Organization* 59(2): 327-361.

Supplementary Materials:

- Cheng, Tun-jen. 1990. "Political Regimes and Development Strategies: South Korea and Taiwan." In *Manufacturing Miracles: Paths of Industrialization in Latin America and East Asia*: 139-178.
- Przeworski, Adam. 2000. *Democracy and Development: Political institutions and well-being in the world, 1950-1990*. Cambridge University Press.
- Movie "[Ode to My Father](#)"

Week 5: Stage 1 Group Project Presentation – Feb 17; 19

- No Reading Assignment
- Each group will present its Stage 1.
- Presentation slides are due by Monday, Feb 16, at 5:00 PM
- Discussion will be graded as a part of the class participation.

Week 6: Democratization and Democracy – Feb 24; 26

- Clark, William R., Matt Golder, and Sona N. Golder. 2017. "Democratic Transitions" in *Principles of Comparative Politics*. CQ Press.
- Reilly, Benjamin. 2007. "Democratization and Electoral Reform in the Asia-Pacific region: Is There an "Asian Model" of Democracy?" *Comparative Political Studies* 40(11): 1350-1371.

Supplementary Materials:

- Im, Hyug Baeg. 2020. "Politics of Democratic Transition from Authoritarian Rule in South Korea." in *Democratization and Democracy in South Korea, 1960–Present*, Springer Nature. Chapter 4.
- Thompson, Mark R. 1996. "Off the Endangered List: Philippine Democratization in Comparative Perspective." *Comparative Politics* 28(2): 179-205.
- Morgenbesser, Lee, and Thomas B. Pepinsky. 2019. "Elections as Causes of Democratization: Southeast Asia in Comparative Perspective." *Comparative Political Studies* 52(1): 3-35.
- Scheiner, Ethan. 2006. *Democracy without Competition in Japan: Opposition failure in a one-party dominant state*. Cambridge University Press.
- Movie "1987: When the Day Comes"

Week 7: Catch up, Review, and Midterm – Mar 3; 5

- No assigned readings
- [Midterm is scheduled for March 5 and will take place in class.](#)

Week 8: The 1998 Asian Financial Crisis – Mar 10; 12

- Haggard, Stephan. 2010. "Introduction: The Political Economy of the Asian Financial Crisis" in *The Political Economy of the Asian Financial Crisis*, Columbia University Press: 1-14.
- Thurbon, Elizabeth. 2001. "Two paths to financial liberalization: South Korea and Taiwan." *The Pacific Review* 14(2): 241-267.

Supplementary Materials:

- "The End of the Miracle." *The Economist* vol. 345, no. 8045, November. 1997: 21.
- Pepinsky, Thomas. 2009. *Economic Crises and the Breakdown of Authoritarian Regimes: Indonesia and Malaysia in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge University Press.
- Movie "[Default](#)"

Week 9: Dead But Not Gone: Contemporary Legacies of Authoritarianism – Mar 24; 26

- Hong, Ji Yeon, Sunkyoung Park, and Hyunjoo Yang. 2023. "In Strongman We Trust: The Political Legacy of the New Village Movement in South Korea." *American Journal of Political Science* 67(4): 850-866.

Supplementary Materials:

- Dell, Melissa, Nathan Lane, and Pablo Querubin. 2018. "The Historical State, Local Collective Action, and Economic Development in Vietnam." *Econometrica* 86(6): 2083-2121.
- Simpson, Alberto, Dan Slater, and Jason Wittenberg. 2018. "Dead But Not Gone: Contemporary Legacies of Communism, Imperialism, and Authoritarianism." *Annual Review of Political Science* 21: 419-439.

Week 10: Stage 2 Group Project Presentation – Mar 31; Apr 2

- No Reading Assignment
- Each group will present its Stage 2.
- Presentation slides are due by Monday, Mar 30, at 5:00 PM
- Discussion will be graded as a part of the class participation.

III. Contemporary Issues in East Asia

Week 11: Politics of Diversity – Apr 7; 9

- Lee, Boyoon. 2023. "Educational Content, Exclusive National Identity, and Anti-Immigrant Attitudes" *Journal of Politics* 85(4): 1182-1197.

Supplementary Materials:

- Brooke, Steven, David Buckley, Clarissa David, and Ronald Mendoza. 2023. "Religious Protection from Populist Violence: The Catholic Church and the Philippine Drug War." *American Journal of Political Science* 67(1): 205-220.
- Hamayotsu, Kikue. 2002. "Islam and nation building in Southeast Asia: Malaysia and Indonesia in comparative perspective." *Pacific Affairs*: 353-375.
- Sidel, John T. 2007. *Riots, Pogroms, Jihad: Religious violence in Indonesia*. NUS Press.
- Pepinsky, Thomas B. 2009. "The 2008 Malaysian Elections: An End to Ethnic Politics?" *Journal of East Asian Studies* 9(1): 87-120.

Week 12: Women and Politics – Apr 14; 16

- Kim, Jeong Hyun, and Yesola Kweon. 2022. "Why do young men oppose gender quotas? Group threat and backlash to legislative gender quotas." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 47(4): 991-1021.
- Liu, Shan-Jan Sarah. 2018. "Are female political leaders role models? Lessons from Asia." *Political Research Quarterly* 71(2): 255-269.

Supplementary Materials:

- Estévez-Abe, Margarita, and Yeong-Soon Kim. 2014. "Presidents, Prime Ministers and Politics of Care—Why Korea Expanded Childcare Much More than Japan." *Social Policy & Administration* 48(6): 666-685.
- Kweon, Yesola, and Josh M. Ryan. 2022. "Electoral systems and the substantive representation of marginalized groups: Evidence from women's issue bills in South Korea." *International Political Research Quarterly* 75(4): 1065-1078.
- Paxton, Pamela M., Melanie M. Hughes, and Tiffany D. Barnes. 2020. *Women, Politics, and Power: A Global Perspective*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. Chapter 14.

IV. Conclusion: Catch Up, Review, and Final Project

Week 13: Group Project Presentation 3-1 – Apr 21; 23

- No Reading Assignment
- Half of the groups will present their semester-long research projects, including Stage 3
- Presentation slides are due by Monday, Apr 20, at 5:00 PM
- Discussion will be graded as a part of the class participation.

Week 14: Group Project Presentation 3-2 – Apr 28; 30

- No Reading Assignment

- The remaining groups will present their semester-long research projects, including Stage 3
- Presentation slides are due by Monday, Apr 27, at 5:00 PM
- Discussion will be graded as a part of the class participation.

Week 15: Catch up, Review, and Final – May 5; 7

- No assigned readings
- Final is scheduled for May 7 and will take place in class.

Course Policies

Make-up Exams

Make-up exams are only scheduled for official UT Dallas-sponsored activities and religious holy days. Make-up exams will only be scheduled when the professor is given sufficient notice of the absence prior to the exam. In this instance, sufficient notice is defined as written (email) notice sent at least 10 business days prior to the start of the exam period. If documentation is required, such as an excuse letter, then sufficient notice is not considered complete until all documentation is received. **Plainly, all documentation and notice must be sent to the faculty member by email at least 10 business days prior to the opening of the exam.** Students that have a religious holy day observance that conflicts with an exam must notify the faculty member by the end of the second week of the semester so that accommodations can be made.

- Make-up exams will cover the same content as the regularly scheduled exam.
- The excuse letter for UT Dallas-sponsored activities must come from the faculty or staff member serving as an organizational sponsor. If no such letter can be produced, then the event is not considered an official UT Dallas sponsored activity and is not covered by this policy.
- Pre-planned events including but not limited to vacations, family trip service trip, mission trip, or non-official UT Dallas sponsored activity, are not covered by this policy and therefore are not grounds for requesting a make-up exam.
- **Unexpected events including but not limited to negligence, illness, car trouble, bereavement, pet issues, technical issues are not covered by this policy and therefore are not grounds for requesting a make-up exam.**

Communication

- Emails about the course must be sent using your UT Dallas email and identify the class and section in the email subject (e.g., [PSCI4312] Group Project Question) Per UT Dallas policy, I will not respond to student emails sent from non-UT Dallas email accounts.
- Expect all email messages to be responded to within two business days. Business days are defined as Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM while the university is open. Weekends and university closures are not considered business days. For example, if you email on Friday evening after 5:00 PM, then the expected reply window is up to 5:00 PM on the following Tuesday.
- Office hours are confidential meetings. If meeting by Teams, students are expected to take the meeting in a private setting, and the professor will require the meeting to be rescheduled if they believe hosting the meeting may violate FERPA with the presence of a third party.

Late Work: Late work is not accepted.

Extra Credit: There is no extra credit offered in this course.

Grade Calculations

All assignment grades are recorded in eLearning and converted into percentages by the Learning Management System (LMS). Final course grades are calculated solely through the LMS, and no

alternative grade calculations will be accepted. Grades are assigned according to the Grading Scale provided in this syllabus. **Please note that final grades will not be adjusted, rounded up, or “bumped up.”**

Incomplete Grades

Incomplete grades are at the discretion of the professor AND may only be considered if a student has completed at least 70% of the coursework. In this course, 70% of the coursework is determined based on the number of assignments completed, not the relative weight of the assignments to the final grade. Additionally, when determining whether 70% of the assignments are completed, the assignment drop policies DO NOT apply and any recorded 0 on assignments will be treated as incomplete coursework. By default, if the course drop policies provide sufficient relief, then an incomplete grade will not be awarded. Additionally, students are not entitled to an incomplete grade and the professor will exercise discretion based on the circumstances and totality of the student’s participation in class including efforts to complete exams, homework, and attending class. See the UT Dallas Undergraduate Catalog for additional details.

Academic Integrity

Every student at UT Dallas is expected to exercise independent thought and expression as he or she strives for academic achievement. Incorporated in the quest for intellectual growth are the expectations of honesty, originality in written and oral expression, a respect for the exchange of ideas, and acknowledgement and recognition of the abilities and contributions of others. Please see the university’s [academic integrity](#) page for details and tips.

Academic dishonesty is unacceptable under any circumstances. This includes but is not limited to plagiarism, collusion, cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, failure to contribute to a collaborative project, and sabotage. **All work submitted in this course must be your own; you may not engage in unauthorized collaboration or make use of ChatGPT or other AI composition software.** If a student is thought to be engaging in academic dishonesty, they will be referred to the Office of Community Standards and Conduct (OCSC). For additional details on what may constitute academic dishonesty, please refer to the [university’s webpage](#).

Comet Creed

This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same:

“As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do.”

Academic Accommodation Information

It is the policy of The University of Texas at Dallas to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and state and local regulations regarding students and applicants with disabilities. In compliance with these laws, the Office of Student AccessAbility (OSA) is dedicated to maintaining an environment that guarantees students with disabilities full access to educational programs, activities and facilities.

It is the student’s responsibility to identify himself/herself to OSA and to provide documentation of a disability. Strict documentation guidelines exist for different types of disabilities. See the [OSA website for details](#). The student meets with OSA, who determines appropriate accommodations after reviewing documentation prepared by a licensed professional.

Professors are under no obligation to provide accommodations for a student who does not identify himself/herself as a student with a disability. If a student requests accommodations for a disability but has not provided the faculty member with an Accommodation Letter from OSA, the professor will immediately refer the student to OSA. Any documentation received from OSA must cover the current semester. Letters from OSA which do not cover the current semester must be updated before the accommodations will be implemented. Failure to have a current letter on-file is not sufficient grounds to reopen or make-up assignments that would otherwise be covered by an OSA accommodation.

Class Recordings

Students are expected to follow appropriate University policies and maintain the security of passwords used to access recorded lectures. Unless the Office of Student AccessAbility has approved the student to record the instruction, **students are expressly prohibited from recording any part of this course.**

Recordings may not be published, reproduced, or shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved Office of Student AccessAbility accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

The professor may record meetings of this course. These recordings will be made available to all students registered for this class if the intent is to supplement the classroom experience. If the professor or a UTD school/department/office plans any other uses for the recordings, consent of the students identifiable in the recordings is required prior to such use unless an exception is allowed by law.

Academic Support Resources

Please visit the [Academic Support Resources](#) page to view the University's academic support resources for all students.

Mental Health Services

Students experiencing anxiety or distress, either from the topics discussed in this class or from other stressors, are encouraged to seek self-care via the on-campus services provided:

- Student Counseling Center Phone: 972-883-2575
- Location: Student Services Building SSB 4.600

If you are having a mental health crisis you can call the 972-UTD-TALK (972-883-8255) or 911 24 hrs/7 days a week

University Syllabus Policies

Please visit the [Syllabus Policies](#) page to view the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus.

Please review the catalog sections regarding the [credit/no credit](#) or [pass/fail](#) grading option and withdrawal from class.

The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the professor