Meeting Time: MTWR 1:30-3:35 PM  
Room: Thompson Hall L004  
Instructor: Erica Seng-White  
Email: esengwhi@masonlive.gmu.edu  
Office Hours: MTWR from 12:00 pm-1:00 pm and by appointment  
Office Location: Research Hall 359

Course Overview

This course will explore the intra-state and the inter-state politics of Asian states. As such, we will employ a broad range of theories from comparative politics and international relations to analyze the political dynamics of Asian states, Asian regional institutions, the Asia-Pacific regional system, and Asia in the international system. Although the primary focus of this course is politics, we will also draw upon economics, history and cultural area studies in our examination of this region. This will better allow us to ascertain the institutional structure of Asia today.

We will begin this course by examining the birth of modern nation-states in Asia. This unit will explore both the variation in pre-Westphalian systems of regional order. We will also briefly touch upon the variations in the structure of different political regimes prior to the colonization of the region. We will delve into the onset and the legacy of colonization for the Asia-Pacific region. World War II had a profound impact on Asia. We will explore the political, economic and social impact of this critical juncture in-depth. Finally, we will explore variations in approaches to the creation of modern nation-states.
Our next unit will look at the variation in modern domestic political structures of Asian states. We will analyze different political regime types, such as democracies, hybrid regimes and authoritarian regimes. We will also examine their implications for governance in Asia. We will utilize a series of case studies for this purpose. Finally, we will look at life at the grassroots level for the average citizen.

Once we have successfully analyzed the individual components of Asia, we will explore the structure of Asian international relations. We will examine the development of the modern regional order in Asia. We will look at the birth and evolution of regional organizations, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). We will also explore the role of international trade for the region as a whole and individual states.

After we have come to a better understanding of the various nation states and the regional order in Asia, we will look at current flashpoints and security risks within the region. We will look at intractable bilateral feuds, such as those between India and Pakistan. We will also look at maritime security, ranging from disputes in the South China Sea to piracy. This unit will conclude with an overview of non-traditional security threats, such as those to the environment and refugee flows.

For our final unit, we will look at paradoxes and evolutions in Asia. We start by looking at the concept of sovereignty and human rights within the context of Asia. Our class will also analyze the tensions with development in Asia and the paradigm of neo-liberalism. Finally, we will explore the dynamics of changes in the distribution of power in Asia.

**Course Objectives**

This course is designed to give students a nuanced understanding of the complexity of politics in Asia. As such, we will draw on theories and concepts from the field of international relations and comparative politics. This class explores interstate relations, the structure of the regional order, the role of non-state actors and the implications of domestic structures, specifically for Asia. It stresses the themes of IR theories, states international institutions, conflicts, political economy and non-state actors. We also explore the role of domestic socio-political institutions, path
dependency and identity which are prominent in the literature on comparative politics. Students will explore different approaches and actors to phenomena of importance in Asia.

This course is designed to foster the following skills:

- Analysis of interstate relations from different theoretical perspectives
- Understanding the implications of different institutions
- Familiarity with positivist research and the use of different research methods
- Articulating findings and interpretations of various dilemmas in group work, writing and speaking

**Class Discussions (30%)**: Students will be expected to regularly participate in class discussions. This class-wide conversation will incorporate both theory and current events. It is essential that everyone comes prepared by completing the required readings and reviewing current events. Students are also encouraged to pose questions both in advance and during the lecture that they would like to discuss as a class.

**Weekly Quizzes (30%)**: There will be a quiz once a week. These quizzes will consist of a short writing prompt (no longer than 4-5 sentences). Students will be given fifteen minutes to prepare and fifteen minutes to write the paragraph. These quizzes will help you parse through the course material to better understand core insights. They will also help you become a faster writer.

**Final Paper (40%)**: You will write your final paper (INDEPENDENTLY) from ONE of the three prompts given in the final exam questionnaire. You may select a topic that is not included on this list, but you must check with me for approval prior to its submission. You will be expected to conduct research on this topic. Make sure to answer each part of the question. Your paper will require content based upon resources and concepts from class, but you must also include citations from readings that are not on this syllabus. Final Papers are due on July 26, 2019 by 11:59 pm.
Participation: Attendance and participation are mandatory for this class. You are expected to attend every session unless you have a documented excuse for being absent (ex: a doctor’s note). Perfect attendance is worth three extra credit points. Topics covered during lecture and mandatory readings are fair game for daily quizzes. Your worst quiz grade will be dropped from your final grade.

Required Readings

- Additional readings will be assigned and made available through the Blackboard course site.
- Students are strongly encouraged to visit one of the following sources on a regular basis:
  - *The Washington Post*
  - *The New York Times*
  - The *BBC* or *CNN*
  - *NPR* (available online and at 88.5 FM)

Schedule of Readings

*June 24: Non-Westphalian Regional Orders and Polities*

*June 25: Colonization*

*June 26: The Pacific Front of World War II*
June 27: The Rise of Nation-States


July 1: East Asian States


July 2: South and Central Asian States

- Eric McGlinchey, “Kazakh President Nazarbayev has Resigned. Here are Three Things to Watch,” *Washington Post* (March 20, 2019),

July 3: Southeast Asian States


**July 4: HAPPY FOURTH OF JULY**

**July 8: Non-Aligned Movement**


**July 9: Great Powers in Asia**
• Alice D. Ba, (*Re*)Negotiating East and Southeast Asia: Region, Regionalism, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Stanford University Press, 2009).

**July 10: Association of Southeast Asian Nations and Regional Organizations**

**July 11: Asian Development**
July 15: Persistent Bilateral Tensions:
- Ralph A. Cossa, “Security Dynamics in Asia”

July 16: Nuclearization in North Korea
- Scott Snyder, “The Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asian Stability”

July 17: Maritime Security and Disputes

July 18: Non-Traditional Security Threats
- Mely Caballero-Anthony, Negotiating Governance on Non-Traditional Security in Southeast Asia and Beyond (Columbia University Press, 2018), chapters 4-5.

July 22: Sovereignty and Human Rights

July 23: Economic Obstacles:
- Edward J. Lincoln, “The Asian Regional Economy”

July 24: Great Powers Redux:
- Robert Sutter, “The United States in Asia: Durable Leadership”

July 25: Rising Regional Powers: Belt and Road Initiative and Shifting Regional Dynamics
- Philip C. Saunders, “China’s Role in Asia: Attractive or Assertive?”

July 26: FINAL PAPERS ARE DUE AT 11:59 PM ON BLACKBOARD
Course Policies and Grading

Grades:

93%-100% = A
90%-92.9% = A-
86%-89.9% = B+
83%-85.9% = B
80%-82.9% = B-
76%-79.9% = C+
73%-75.9% = C
70%-72.9% = C-
66%-69.9% = D+
63%-65.9% = D
60%-62.9% = D-
0%-59.9% = F

A Outstanding work; the student has demonstrated a clear mastery of course skills and concepts.

B Good; the student has demonstrated a solid understanding of course skills and concepts.

C Acceptable; the student has demonstrated a general understanding of course skills and concepts.
D  Pass; the student has demonstrated a general understanding of course skills and concepts

F  Failure; the student has not demonstrated a sufficient understanding of course material

Students are encouraged to come and speak with the instructor if they have any question about your grades. Please bring your graded assignment to your meeting with the instructor for reference. The instructor will re-grade any assignment but reserves the right to either raise or lower the student’s score based upon the new assessment. Please make sure you have a clear rationale for why your grade should be raised. Students may not submit an assignment for a re-grade more than once.

**Course Reading Policy:** All mandatory readings must be completed BEFORE CLASS. Please contact the instructor if you have any questions after reading the course materials.

**Attendance Policy:** Attendance is mandatory. Please make sure that you sign in at the beginning of each class. You must sign-in in order to be eligible to take a pop quiz.

**Late Work Policy:** If there is a documented reason that you cannot submit an assignment on the scheduled date, you must contact the instructor as soon as possible. Every day late will result in a half-grade reduction in the final grade for the assignment. Late work will not be accepted if it is more than a week late.

**Class Discussion Policy:** Students at George Mason University represent a diverse range of experiences. Although we may not always agree with one another, it is important that we respect one another and express said disagreement in a professional manner. Personal attacks and hate speech have no place in an academic setting. Failure to adhere to this requirement will result in a student being asked to leave the lecture and will adversely affect participation grades.

**Electronic Device Policy:** Students are welcomed to use laptops for purposes of note taking ONLY. Students should keep cell phones out of sight for the duration of the class. All electronic
devices must be stowed during quizzes and exams. Students with cell phones on their desks or seats during a quiz or exam will receive an automatic zero.

**Academic Integrity:** Students are strongly encouraged to review the [Mason Honor Code](#) prior to the start of this semester. Never turn in work that is not your own. If you borrow ideas from others, you must give them credit. Failure to do so is plagiarism and is grounds for failing this course. Make sure that all citations and data are accurate. Be honest with the instructor if you are missing assignments and/or exams.

**Disability Accommodations:** Students will get the most out of this course if they have access to the appropriate tools to better foster their success. Students with a documented disability must reach out to the [Disability Services](#) (SUB I 2500) and meet with the instructor to ensure that their needs are met.

**Privacy:** The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) was designed to ensure that student privacy rights are protected. This has important implications for our course. In order to enforce this regulation, George Mason University requires that we communicate through your Mason email account. It also requires that the instructor return your assignments to the student and only the student who completed the assignment.