

China University of Political Science and Law
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Course name: East Asian Politics and Development

This course introduces students to politics and government in East Asia. It focuses primarily on China, Japan and Korea, and examines the political history and culture, major institutions and policy processes, economic and social development, and foreign policies of these countries.

Course Outline

Class 1: Introduction to East Asian Politics and Development

This session introduces the study of East Asian Politics by overviewing the major approaches to understanding development in the region and puts forward the key concepts and analytical tools of comparative politics and institutionalism.

Class 2: Historical context

This session overviews key political developments in East Asia from premodern times, through the colonial era and into the post-war years. It introduces key debates on state building and state formation in premodern times and distinguishes developments in Northeast and Southeast Asia before looking at the impact of the colonial era and the different models of nation building in the post-colonial era.

Class 3: States and the political executive

This session explores the types of states in East Asia and the centralization of power and authority. It explores the institutional and cultural underpinnings of why states in East Asia are predominantly unitary as opposed to federal states with a strong executive branch.

Class 4: Government, legislatures and judiciaries

We then discuss the remaining two branches of government, the legislature and the judiciary by overviewing the forms of government in East Asia, the process of making law, rule of law, judicial review and the limits to executive power.

Class 5: The politics of bureaucracy

This seminar analyses the bureaucracy, public administration and government service in East Asia. It starts by exploring the traditional role of bureaucrats

before analysing the shift toward a bureaucracy responsive to public interest, the issue of corruption and measures of good governance.

Class 6: State and economy

In this session we explore the politics of economic growth and development. We start with the developmental state literature with particular reference to Japan before moving onto industrial policy, sound public policy and the role of the market. We ask if there is an East Asian model of development.

Class 7: Parties and elections

This seminar presents the evolution of party and electoral systems in East Asia. It shows how these systems have evolved since their introduction in the early 20th century and covers the ongoing issues of regionalism, factionalism and pork barrel politics with examples from Japan, Korea and Southeast Asia.

Class 8: Social change

This session debates the incredible social changes East Asia has experienced in the postcolonial era, including the transformative shift to urban and industrial societies, the introduction of nuclear families, science and technology, rationalism and materialism.

Class 9: Ideology, identity and political communication

In this session we ask what ideas have shaped development in East Asia, how identity shapes politics, particularly in Southeast Asia, and the role of political communication in East Asian politics.

Class 10: Modernization

This session focuses on modern state building in East Asia by identifying traditional forces of public authority in premodern times and their impact on the evolution of the modern state. We will discuss debates on forms of Asian democracy and the Asian values debate.

Class 11: Globalization and regionalism

In this session we explore the role of East Asian states in the region and international system. We chart how East Asian states entered the international community, their role in international organizations today and the process of regional integration in East Asia. We ask if this is the Asian century.

Class 12: Review and revision

During this session we review the main ideas and concepts discussed during the course through a series of questions and activities.