Crossing Cultures: International Culture in East Asia  
ASIA 489 - HIST 489 - PLSC 486  
Spring 2014

T/Th 1:00 - 2:15 p.m.  
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The 2002 World Cup soccer tournament, co-hosted by Korea and Japan, inspired a media frenzy of excitement about opportunities to improve bilateral relations. But was this soccer diplomacy really a new category of diplomatic relations between peoples and nations? This course will examine the place of culture in international history through a comparative look at the role of cultural circulation and exchange in relations among China, Korea, and Japan (and between East Asia and the West) from the propagation of Buddhism in the first century A.D. to present-day circulation of popular music, movies, and comics. We will explore the international politics of culture and the politics of international culture, considering questions of what constitutes culture, whether it is ever entirely separate from politics, and how that separation has evolved over time. These larger themes of the course will be tackled by following the historical movement of people, ideas, and concrete objects throughout the region. This is a course in international history; historical events, problems, and issues will be at the center of our weekly discussions. But it is also a course in the theory of international relations; it poses a challenge to realpolitik views of international relations, which tend to ignore the significant effects of culture on all aspects of multilateral interaction.

Requirements:

Participation: This course will consist of both lecture and discussion. Students are required to complete all of the assigned readings, think carefully about them, and share their ideas in class. Most of the required readings for the class are posted on Angel in pdf format.

Reading responses: At least ten times during the semester, students must post (on Angel) their thoughts on the assigned reading material. This may (but need not) take the form of answers to posted reading questions. Three of the ten postings must be a thoughtful response to a classmate’s posting (click “Reply” from the initial post); replies must engage with both the readings and the original posting. Postings should be about 100 words and must be completed by midnight before the day for which the readings being discussed were assigned. Responses must be completed by noon on the day the readings are being discussed. You may do more than ten postings for extra credit points (for a maximum of 5 extra points).

Class presentation: Each week, two or three students will research a phenomenon taking place outside of East Asia that is similar to the week’s topic and present their findings to the class. Students may present individually or as a group, though group presentations must be more substantial. Presentations should be about 10 minutes (20-30 minutes for a group) and must include a handout or a slide show.

Short essays: Two three-page essays using course materials to answer assigned questions. Due at the start of class on February 4 and March 18.

Research project: Research papers (or alternative research project, pending instructor’s approval) should further develop one of the themes or sub-themes of the course using both assigned readings (if relevant) and additional materials. Students must meet with the instructor to discuss their topics by February 20. Preliminary bibliographies are due on February 27. Papers are due during finals week. See assignment sheet for details.
Grades will be determined as follows. (Percentages are flexible.)

- Participation: 10% of grade
- Reading responses (at least ten): 10%
- Short essay 1 (February 4): 15%
- Short essay 2 (March 18): 15%
- Class presentation: 15%
- Research project (including preliminary bibliography): 35%

**SCHEDULE**

**SECTION I: Culture and the Making of a Region**

**WEEK 1: The Sinification of East Asia**

Jan. 14  Introducing the course and ourselves

Jan. 16  Culture and the Making of a Region


**WEEK 2: Shared and Transformed Religions**

Jan. 21  Sinified Buddhism in East Asia

Holcombe, *Genesis of East Asia* [from Ch. 4 “Buddhist Internationalization” 94-108].

“The Coming of Buddhism to China,” *Sources of Chinese Tradition* [420-426].

Jan. 23  Confucianism and State-Formation in Japan

“The Seventeen-Article Constitution of Prince Shōtoku,” (including editor’s comments)

*Sources of Japanese Tradition*, vol. 1 [40-42, 50-55].


**WEEK 3: Language and Writing**

Jan. 28  Characters and Alphabets


“Invention of the Korean Alphabet,” *Sources of Korean Tradition* [294-296].

Jan. 30  Modernization and Language Reform


*Sources of Chinese Tradition* Vol. 2 “Advocates of Script Reform” [302-308].

SECTION II: The West in the East, the East in the West

WEEK 4: The West in China

Feb. 4 Science and Technology – FIRST SHORT ESSAY DUE IN CLASS

Feb. 6 Religion

WEEK 5: The West in Japan

Feb. 11 The Dutch Connection
   Timon Screech, The Lens Within the Heart: The Western Scientific Gaze and Popular Imagery in Later Edo Japan (Hawai‘i, 2002) [31-60].

Feb. 13 Opening the Floodgates
   “Introduction” and “Gifts” from “Black Ships & Samurai” MIT Visualizing Cultures website.

WEEK 6: Art & Literature from East to West

Feb. 18 Chinoiserie and Japonisme
   Ellen Conant, Challenging Past and Present [TBA].

Feb. 20 Guest lecture: Prof. Christopher Reed

SECTION III: Culture and Hegemony

WEEK 7: Culture and Colonization
Feb. 25  Culture in International Relations

Feb. 27  Educating Imperial Subjects

WEEK 8: Culture and Imperialism
Mar. 4  No class meeting: second essay question available on Angel.

Mar. 6  Cultural Cooperation and Cultural Imperialism
Publications of the Kokusai Bunka Shinkōkai (Soc. for International Cultural Relations).

WEEK 9: Students and Teachers
Mar. 18  Students Abroad -- SECOND SHORT ESSAY DUE IN CLASS

Mar. 20  Teachers Abroad

WEEK 10: Cultural Cold Wars
Mar. 25  Soft Power and the Democratization of Japan

Mar. 27  The International Politics of Cultural Exchange


**SECTION IV: Popular Culture and Soft Power**

**WEEK 11: Culture as Commodity**

Apr. 1  Selling Japan to America and America to Japan


Apr. 3  The Japanese Tourist Abroad


**WEEK 12: Sports**

Apr. 8  Olympics: Tokyo, Seoul, Beijing


Apr. 10  Soccer World Cup 2002


Yone Sugita, “Historical lessons from Asian Cup,” *Japan Today*.

**WEEK 13: Popular Culture**

Apr. 15  Television as Cultural Exchange


Apr. 17 Hybridity and Appropriation in Asian Popular Culture
Special issue of Popular Music on EA pop music: Vol. 32, Special Issue 01 (January 2013).

WEEK 14: Local Goes Global
Apr. 22 Culinary Globalization
James L. Watson, Golden Arches East: McDonald’s in East Asia (Stanford UP, 1997) [“Introduction: Transnationalism, Localization, and Fast Foods in East Asia” 1-38].

Apr. 24 Asian Popular Culture in the World
Ghost in the Shell (animé), The Matrix (film), and The Animatrix (animé) [clips, in class].

WEEK 15: Summing up
Apr. 29 Research paper presentations

May 1 Research paper presentations