**Introduction**

This seminar introduces students to social science research on East Asia (primarily China, South Korea, and Japan). By examining exemplary and current social science works on selected topics, we aim to develop basic skills in social research, analysis, and writing and explore important areas of social research on East Asian societies.

We start with an overview of the basic methods of social research. The rest of the seminar covers two broad themes. One is the role of culture and the state in East Asian development. The other concerns the social and political consequences of economic development. In this respect, we will examine issues of labor, gender, stratification, environment activism, as well as media, civil society and political change. We conclude with discussions about globalization.

**Requirements**

1. Attendance and active participation in class discussions (10%)

2. Group project (15%): Each student will participate in ONE group project.

3. Eight written assignments and one class presentation (50%): Students should complete eight written assignments and present one of these assignments in class. Assignments are due at the beginning of the class.

4. Final research proposal (25%). The proposal should include a research question that can be addressed through the analysis of empirical evidence, a hypothesis, a discussion of the research methods and data, a literature review, and a bibliography. Due on May 5.

5. Bonus points. On Thursday March 23 and Friday March 24, the Weatherhead East Asian Institute will host a Chinese documentary festival. Three new documentaries on contemporary social issues will be screened. In addition, there will be a panel discussion. All events will begin at or after 4pm. Attend the event on March 23 OR March 24 and submit a 2-page essay about the main social issues brought up in the event to get three bonus points. Stay tuned for more information.

**Grading**

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Readings

Required reading assignments consist of journal articles and book chapters and three books. The books are available in Labyrinth Books and are as follows:


Unless otherwise noted, articles are available for download through the online journal databases of the university libraries. Book chapters are on reserve in the Barnard Library (look for the title of the book rather than the title of the chapter in the library Reserves).

1/17 Introduction: Library orientation (class meets in Starr East Asian Library)

1/24 What is social research?


**Written assignment #1:** Briefly discuss whether and how Lim’s article meets the requirements of social science representations outlined on p. 23 of *Constructing Social Research* and which of the 7 goals of social science research it meets.

1/31 The process of social research; Social research involving human subjects

*Constructing Social Research*, pp.55-79.

Study the following web sites of the Institutional Review Board:

http://www.columbia.edu/cu/irb/
http://www.columbia.edu/cu/irb/documents/students.pdf (about students as researchers)
http://www.columbia.edu/cu/irb/documents/exempt_decision.pdf (exempt research)

**Group project (Group 1):** Make an in-class presentation on human subject research.
2/7 Qualitative methods

*Constructing Social Research*, pp. 81-103.


**Written assignment #2:** Answer the following questions: What is the phenomenon studied in David Wu’s article? How many cases are studied? What analytic frame is used? What kind of evidence does it use to make its argument? How was the evidence collected? What image is presented of the studied phenomenon?

2/14 Comparative and historical methods

*Constructing Social Research*, pp. 105-130.


**Written assignment #3:** Based on Castells’s article “Four Asian Tigers with a Dragon Head” (esp. pp. 50-55), construct a truth table of the common and uncommon factors in the economic development of Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore.

2/21 East Asian Development (I): Confucian Capitalism and the Developmental State


**Group project (Group 2):** Divide your group into two sub-groups. With one group taking the cultural position on East Asian development and the other taking the political position, conduct an informed debate about the sources of East Asian development.

2/28 East Asian Development (II): China; The 1997 Financial Crisis


**Written assignment #4:** Write a 2-3 page essay to examine the main factors that have contributed to China’s economic success.

3/7 The Bases of Inequality


Dennis Hart, "Class formation and industrialization of culture: The case of South Korea's emerging middle class," Korea Journal 33 (Summer, 1993).


**Group project (Group 3):** Make a class presentation to discuss the main forms and sources of inequality in China, South Korea, and Japan.

3/14 **No class. Spring break.**

3/21 **Labor in East Asia**


**Group Project (Group 4):** Suppose you are factory workers in an East Asian country. Draft a statement describing the conditions of the working class in your country and lay out a program of action aimed at improving your conditions.

3/28 **Environmental Movements**


**Written assignment #5:** In a 2-3 page essay, discuss the similarities and differences in the environmental movements in two East Asian societies.

### 4/4 Mass Media, The Internet, and the Public Sphere


**Written assignment #6:** Study a web site AND a newspaper in any East Asian society and in any language. In a 2-3 page report, discuss their differences and similarities in content, style of presentation, and any other aspect you find important. Provide the necessary background information about the web site and the newspaper.

### 4/11 Civil Society and Political Change

Bruce Cumings, “Civil Society in West and East,” pp. 11-35 in *Korean Society*.


Group Project (Group 5): Based on the assigned readings for this week and additional chapters in *Korean Society* and *The State of Civil Society in Japan*, prepare a critical review of the literature on “Civic Society in East Asia: Issues, Progress, and Challenges.”

4/18 Women in East Asia


**Written assignment #7:** In a 2-3 page essay, discuss the conditions and struggles of working-class women in East Asia and the main challenges they face.

4/25 Globalization, Localization, and Individualization (last class meeting)


**Written assignment #8:** Write a 2-3 page essay on “The Global Me.” Discuss how your personal life is linked with East Asia. Alternatively, you may interview a friend and discuss how his or her life is linked with East Asia.

5/5 Final research proposal due.