EAST ASIAN CAPITALISMS AND GLOBALIZATION

Daniel Buck
Department of Geography and Institute for Chinese Studies, Oxford University
First offered as an ExEAS course at Columbia University in Spring 2003

DESCRIPTION:

How we understand the globalization of contemporary East Asia depends on how we understand the rapid development of East Asia’s economies and societies in the second half of the 20th century. Designed as a dialogue between existing social science theories and the actual experience of East Asian societies, this course begins with an exploration of the dominant explanations of postwar capitalist development and social change. These explanations, which tend to emphasize either market mechanisms, state control, or cultural determination, are often based upon excessively narrow understandings of capitalism. Attention is given to the theoretical underpinnings of these explanations, and to the East Asian development histories themselves (with emphasis on Japan, China, Taiwan, and South Korea), so as to reveal the inadequacies of prevailing theories. In the process, the course will develop a deeper theoretical understanding of capitalism as being comprised of multiple local capitals which must be understood in the broadest sense, as socially and culturally constituted regimes subject to contradiction and change. Self-generating and expansive, each produces disparate spatio-temporal trajectories of development and globalization. This framework sets the stage for the final section of the course, which will bring each of the development trajectories up to date and situate the ongoing changes in each country more firmly in their regional and international contexts. Some of the themes to be covered include regional integration, migrations, the 1997 economic crisis, and post-crisis trends and tendencies.

TEXTS:
Reader.

 REQUIREMENTS:

-- There are no prerequisites for this course, and it does not assume any prior knowledge of social science theory or East Asia.
-- Concepts will be developed cumulatively – missing courses and readings will make it difficult to keep up.

20% In addition to regular attendance and active participation in class discussions, students will make a posting to the class web site each week discussing that week’s readings.
25% An in-class midterm exam.
25% A short research paper (5-6 pages).
30% An extensive research paper (15-20 pages).
I. INTRODUCTION

Session 1
Distribution of syllabus. Introduction to course themes and requirements. Instructions on how to read the assigned readings, how to analyze them, and how to write the weekly posting.

Session 2
Orientalism. Introduction to historical context.
Reading:

Session 3
Introduction to historical context, continued; initial sketch of Japan’s postwar development.
Reading:

II. JAPAN and the NICs (TAIWAN, SOUTH KOREA, and HONG KONG)

A. State and Market Explanations of Development

Session 4
Descriptions of the developmental state vs. the market in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong; market vs. state theories of postwar development.
Reading:
Session 5
Market vs. state theories of postwar development.
Reading:

Session 6
The developmental state critique of market explanations; the influence of these two paradigms; introduction to critiques of developmental state (Moore); section wrap-up.
Reading:

B. Culture with a Capital C: Confucian Capitalism

Session 7
Brief introduction to relevant aspects of Confucianism; cultural arguments for postwar development. Begin critique.
Reading:

Session 8
Economy as something beyond states and markets: production network economies, social and cultural embeddedness (Polanyi), trust, authority, and labor relations.
Reading:
Session 9
Discussion of comparative uses of culture in authoritarian state arguments, by scholars (Hamilton and Biggart, Greenhalgh), and by Asian actors. Section wrap-up.
Reading:

C. History isn’t over: Ending Development as an Endpoint

Session 10
Development goes on after “development” is achieved. Ongoing, endogenous change; trends vs. tendencies; internal contradictions. East Asia in the late 1980s and 1990s.
Reading:

Session 11
East Asia in the late 1980s and 1990s. Discussion comparing historical change in Pempel and Ivy.
Reading:

D. Socially and culturally Constituted Capitalisms: Producing development

Session 12
This unit will draw on the materials already covered, and Partner’s Assembled in Japan, to move beyond the embeddedness conception of capitalist economies, and toward an understanding of socially and culturally constituted capitalisms. Today: agrarian transitions to capitalism.
Reading:
Session 13
Labor and gender.
Video: The Japan They Don’t Tell Us About (20 minute excerpt)
Reading:
Assembled in Japan, Chapters 3, 4, 5 (pp. 71-152)

Session 14
Consumption; entrepreneurship.
Reading:
Assembled in Japan, Chapters 6, Conclusion (pp. 153-240)

Session 15
MIDTERM EXAM.

III. CHINA

A. Socialism in China

Session 16
Revolution, some post-liberation history. Introduction to the planned economy.
Reading:

Session 17
Actually lived socialism: urban work units; rural communes; Cultural Revolution and Maoist ideology. 15 minute discussion on critical essays.
Reading:
Chen Village, Chapters 3-4 (pp. 74-140).
B. “Groping for Stones to Cross the River” -- the 1980s

**Session 18**
The reform era of Deng Xiaoping: decollectivization; gradually growing out of the plan.
Reading:
*Chen Village*. Chapters 5-6 (pp. 141-185).

**Session 19**
Overview and critique of marketization and transition theories.
Reading:
*Chen Village*. Chapters 7-8 (pp. 186-235).

**Session 20**
Domestic and international sources of growth. Ideological shifts and battles. 15 minute discussion of final research proposals/projects.
Reading:
*Chen Village*. Chapter 9 (pp. 236-266).

C. **Constructing Capitalism -- the 1990s**

**Session 21**
Consensus in the 1990s, underlying tensions.
Reading:
*Chen Village*. Chapters 10-12 (pp. 267-333).

**Session 22**
Shortage to surplus economy, WTO. 10 minutes: final research proposals/projects.
Reading:
IV. GLOBALIZING EAST ASIA’s CAPITALISMS

Session 23
Beyond the nation-state: regional integration.  
Reading:  

Session 24
The materiality of globalization and transnationality; Greater China. 
Reading:  

Session 25
Globalization: capitalisms, crises, and cultures.  
Reading:  

Session 26
The 1997 Asian Economic Crisis: origins. 
Reading:  

Session 27
The 1997 Asian Economic Crisis: different paths and effects.  
Reading:  
Selected press articles on the 1997 Asian Economic Crisis.

Session 28
East Asia Today: The 1997 Asian Economic Crisis and its aftermath; Polanyi redux; breaking out of Keynesianism; Japan’s deepening crisis? 
Reading:  
Selected press articles on the 1997 Asian Economic Crisis, its aftermath, and Japan’s deepening crisis.