

University of Puget Sound

Asian Studies 344
ASIA IN MOTION
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Man is a slave neither of his race nor his language, nor of his religion, nor of the course of rivers nor of the direction taken by mountain chains. A large aggregate of men, healthy in mind and warm of heart, creates the kind of moral conscience which we call a nation.

Ernest Renan (1882)¹

[J]ust as I have refused to consider the culture of Europe simply as the sum of a number of unrelated cultures in the same area, so I refused to separate the world into quite unrelated cultural groups; I refused to draw any absolute line between East and West, between Europe and Asia.

T.S. Eliot (1948)²

[N]ational identities are not things we are born with, but are formed and transformed within and in relation to *representation*. We only know what it is to be "English" because of the way "Englishness" has come to be represented, as a set of meanings, by English national culture. It follows that a nation is not only a political entity but something which produces meanings—a *system of cultural representation*. People are not only legal citizens of a nation; they participate in the *idea* of the nation as represented in its national culture.

Stuart Hall (1996)³

One of the legacies of nineteenth-century colonialism is that, for better and worse, nations in the "West" and "Asia" participate in a global, dialectical movement in which notions of identity (national, cultural, ethnic, religious, territorial, linguistic) share moments of fluidity and fixity. This course explores the interactions of Asian peoples—the commodities, social practices, and ideas which they produce—across borders, both political and imagined. The course crosses disciplinary borders, as well, drawing upon divergent materials from the humanities and social sciences in an attempt to do justice to a complex contemporary context that we have called "Asia in motion."

This motion may be understood in terms of temporal/spatial or fluidity/fixity, but we will critique how what is characterized as "Asian" at any given moment is actually part of a dynamic that is unstable and heterogeneous at some points, while coalescing into cultural formations at others. One purpose will be to explore how modern Asia represents itself on its own terms, as well as to analyze how it has been imagined, constructed, and experienced from the vantage point of those in non-Asia.

¹ Ernest Renan, "What is a Nation?" trans. M. Thoms, in Nation and Narration, ed. H. Bhaba (New York: Routledge, 1990), 20.

² T.S. Eliot, "Notes Toward a Definition of Culture," in T.S. Eliot, Christianity and Culture (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1968), 199.

³ Stuart Hall, "The Question of Cultural Identity," in Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies, ed. Stuart Hall, David Held, Don Hubert, Kenneth Thompson (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 612.

As a corollary, we also seek to understand how Asia represents itself *to itself*, thereby challenging the binaries of native/foreign, East/West, premodern/modern; indeed, much of what is categorized as Asian is foreign to contemporary Asians.

As the above quotations indicate, much of this discussion is inextricably linked to the modern phenomenon of the nation-state, and while it may be, again, fashionable to talk of transcending nationalism, an underlying theoretical focus of the course addresses how modern forms of national identity—as imagined properties—have always shared a fluid and fixed nature.

The intended learning outcomes of this course for each student include the following:

- Ability to engage in the interdisciplinary process by identifying - and analyzing issues from - multiple disciplinary perspectives, by participating in cross-disciplinary dialogue, and by exploring the integration of these multiple disciplinary perspectives;
- Appreciation of the consequences of change both by analyzing the ways in which social scientists and humanists have approached the topic and by seeing the connections between various forces of change in the region known as Asia;
- Understanding of the variation, complexity, instability, fluidity, and diversity of the seemingly fixed meanings, ideas, and entities of Asia;
- Comprehension of not only Asia's place in global flows of ideas, people, and commodities, but also the interaction of these elements across borders, both political and imagined;
- Capacity to reexamine and challenge commonly held assumptions about Asia;
- Cultivation of written and oral skills in order to encourage communication and critical analysis over rote memorization and pure description.

Books for purchase (in order of first use)

[* denotes tentative]

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised edition. New York: Verso, 1983, 1991.

Iyer, Pico. *Video Night in Kathmandu and Other Reports from the Not-So-Far East*. New York: Vintage Books, 1988.

Thongchai Winichakul. *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994.

Brook, Timothy and Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, ed. *Opium Regimes: China, Britain, and Japan, 1839-1952*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.

Ong, Aihwa. *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality*. Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1999.

Yosano, Akiko. *Travels in Manchuria and Mongolia*. Translated by Joshua Fogel. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.

*Kipling, Rudyard. *The Man Who Would be King*. Edited by Louis Cornell. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Recommended books for purchase

- A good dictionary.
- Hacker, Diana. *A Pocket Manual of Style*. Third edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000. Note: This handbook includes the style expected in this course for scholarly citations and bibliographies.

Other assigned readings (in order of use)

Nihonjinron (Study of Japaneseness) article.

Leon W., M. Consuelo. "Foundations of the American Image of the Pacific." *Boundary* 221.1 (1994):667-673.

Bestor, Theodore C. "How Sushi Went Global." *Foreign Policy* 121 (November/December 2000):54-63.

Ching, Leo. "Imaginings in the Empires of the Sun: Japanese Mass Culture in Asia." In *Contemporary Japan and Popular Culture*, edited by John Treat. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996. Pp. 169-194.

Ang, Ien. "On Not Speaking Chinese: Postmodern Ethnicity and the Politics of Diaspora." *New Formations* 24 (Winter 1994):1-18.

Shastha, Nanda. "Becoming a Development Category." In *Power of Development*, edited by Jonathan Crush. New York: Routledge, 1995. Pp. 266-275.

Mitchell, Timothy. "The World as Exhibition." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31.2 (April 1989):217-236.

Video text

"The Japanese Version" (56 mins.). Produced and directed by Andrew Kolker and Louis Alvarez. New York: Center for New American Media, 1991.

Course requirements and expectations

In this course each student is to complete the assigned readings and all written assignments, including both papers and examinations, and to participate actively in the class as an intellectual community. Your instructor will expect you to take the course work seriously and to perform at your best (perfunctory effort serves no one well); in turn, you can expect your instructor's intense attention to the course and the class. All of us in Asian Studies 344 should meet high standards, in keeping with the quality and the liberal arts mission of the University of Puget Sound.

READING ASSIGNMENTS

This course involves reading that is demanding in both volume and intellectual depth. The schedule below lays out readings on a weekly basis, not day by day, which allows you to consider the broad sweep of a week's readings before and during the given week. In class, as we proceed through the term, we will spell out appropriate breakdown of the readings for Tuesday's class, then Thursday's class (be attentive, and always bring your syllabus to class, for reference and notation). Readings as identified should be completed by the given class day.

You will serve your own learning better to the extent that you read assigned materials in order to *understand and engage the ideas and arguments of individual authors*. This is a course that asks you to be able to read critically, which means being able to state what an author *says* and what a text *means*, what it conveys to an intelligent, active reader. Your written work and your class participation will proceed on the basis of your increasing ability to read and command the varied kinds of texts in the course—primary sources with a "role" in the subject matter, secondary sources that draw upon primary and other works to offer analysis and interpretation, theoretical treatises, and literary sources.

Always look for the “message” of a text and understand an author’s point of view. The objective in this regard goes beyond mastery of each text in and of itself; rather, we have the opportunity to develop our own individual intellectual resources that will serve the mounting *intrigue* of the course (as we unravel complexity we will cultivate new complexity—such is the tendency of an exercised mind). In a sense, class sessions and written work offer opportunities to explore readings on their own and in “conversation” with each other.

WRITTEN WORK (80% of overall course grade)

3 explications, due Week Two, Week Three, and Week Fourteen

1 paper due Week Five

1 hour examination (essay), Week Eight

1 longer paper, due Week Twelve

Final examination (comprehensive, essay), Exam Week

You will see the specifics for the explications and the papers, as well as brief comments about the examinations, in the progression of the weekly schedule, below.

PARTICIPATION (20% of overall course grade)

The expectation in this course is 100% attendance; this is vital to the function of the class as an intellectual community. Appropriate class attendance involves *participation* by active listening and speaking as informed by assigned readings and the progression of ideas on a given class day. *Directed conversation* always welcomes volunteered comment, but it also can involve back-and-forth dialogue and extended discussion as classmates add onto or seek clarification of others’ statements. Yes, you should expect being called upon as one possibility; this is not a rite of passage, but a recognition that we need the contributions of a range of colleagues, even when their comments are still in a formative stage. Class discussion may involve “recitation” to get the talking points on the table, but the best class discussion pushes toward “meaning” and new ideas.

Note: Frequent non-attendance may result in a failing grade in the course.

In short, be here routinely (even on a day when your preparation may be less than what you might have intended), never regard class attendance as “optional,” and be willing to speak up with points of discovery and inquiry and to follow out ideas. Class is not for “speechifying” but for pooled thinking, perhaps a bit like what happens at a manager/executive staff meeting in a thriving business enterprise.

GRADING

You will not be surprised to learn that your instructor expects papers (including the explications) to have had multiple drafts and self-revision *prior* to submission; aim at doing your best work, always, and understand that whatever you write is testimony to the quality of your thinking. Analysis and well-crafted argumentation, responsibly informed with acknowledged sources, is a routine expectation. Even in-class examination essays, admittedly works that cannot enjoy the review and revision that can attend an out-of-class paper, should show depth of analytical attention to subject matter and texts. In every case, in papers and in exams, responsible and respectful use of language counts.

You also will not be surprised to learn that grades in the “A” range are reserved for work that is exceptional, showing original thoughtfulness in dealing responsibly with the course material and combining breadth and specificity appropriately in terms of both argument and evidence. Additionally, grades in the “A” range apply to work that uses language accurately and effectively (yes, spelling and punctuation matter, as does the “ordering” of ideas).

Grades in the “B” range apply to work that is distinguished by clarity and individual “sparkle” in engaging the course material in service to appropriate argumentation, even if the layout of analysis, evidence, and interpretation could use more polish. Again, the use of language matters.

Grades in the “C” range apply to work that is competent and acceptable (although a “C-” is an indication of marginal competency and acceptability at best) but narrower of scope and responsible originality than work in the “distinctive” grade range of “B.”

Grades below the “C” range indicate work in need of more discipline of both preparation and presentation. May you avoid such work!

As a matter of policy, this course has no provision for late submission of papers or examinations at other than scheduled, announced times (be sure to read the syllabus carefully and take note of all due dates and examination days). Be mindful that all assigned written work is necessary for completion of the course. Please note also that all grades on assignments and examinations are final.

Also as a matter of policy, this course has no provision for grades of “Incomplete.” The “W” grade (for “withdraw passing”) is available only upon completion of withdrawal procedures by the stated deadline; after the deadline, “WF” (for “withdraw failing”) is the standard, even if the student’s work is of “passing” quality and withdrawal procedures are followed. *Note:* The academic standards of the University, as they appear in the “Academic Policies” section of *The Logger*, apply in this course, and you will want to have your own copy of *The Logger* for reference on matters such as “Academic Honesty” and procedures for withdrawal from a course. Plagiarism or any other violation of the standards of academic honesty may result in a failing grade in the course.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

Part One

Asia in Motion in Time and Space

Week 1 (22, 24 January)

Readings:

- Course syllabus, entire. Develop a sound preliminary view of the conceptualization and ordering of the course, how to use the syllabus, due dates of explications and papers, and dates of the hour examination and the final examination.
- Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, Preface (pp. xi-xv).
- Pico Iyer, *Video Night in Kathmandu*, first chapter (“Love Match,” pp. 3-28) and last chapter (“The Empire Strikes Back,” pp. 357-374).

Video:

- *The Japanese Version* (1991), 56 minutes.

Part Two
Identity Fixed?

Week 2 (29, 31 January)

Readings:

- Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, Chapters One (pp. 1-8) and Seven (pp. 113-140).
- Thongchai Winichakul. *Siam Mapped*, Preface (pp. ix-xi), Acknowledgements (pp. xv-xvi), Introduction (pp. 1-19), Chapter One (pp. 20-36), Conclusion (pp. 164-174).

Week 3 (5, 7 February)

Readings:

- Kosaku Yoshino, *Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary Japan*, Chapters Two (pp. 9-38) and Nine (pp. 185-202).
- Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, Chapter Ten (pp. 163-185).
- M. Consuelo Leon W., "Foundations of the American Image of the Pacific," *boundary 21* (1994):667-673.

Part Three
Pilgrimage: People in Motion

Week 4 (12,14 February)

Readings:

- Pico Iyer, *Video Night in Kathmandu*, second chapter ("Bali: On Prospero's Island," pp. 29-58), third chapter ("Tibet: The Underground Overland Invasion," pp. 59-76), and fourth chapter ("Nepal: The Quest Becomes a Trek," pp. 77-102).
- Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship*, Introduction (pp. 1-8, 18-26).

Week 5 (19, 21 February)

Readings:

- Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship*, Chapters Three (pp. 87-109) and Four (pp. 110-36).

Part Four
Commerce: Commodities in Motion

Week 6 (26, 28 February)

Readings:

- Timothy Brook and Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, ed., *Opium Regimes*, Introduction (pp. 1-27), Chapter Three (pp. 79-104), Chapter Eight (pp. 189-211), Chapter Nine (pp. 212-227).
- Theodore C. Bestor, "How Sushi Went Global," *Foreign Policy* 121 (November/December 2000):54-63.

Week 7 (5, 7 March)

Readings:

- Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship*, Chapter Six (pp. 158-81).
- Leo Ching, "Imaginings in the Empires of the Sun: Japanese Mass Culture in Asia," in *Contemporary Japan and Popular Culture* (pp.169-194).

Part Five
Imagining: Ideas in Motion

Week 8 (12, 14 March)

Readings:

- Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, Chapter Seven (pp. 113-40; a revisit), Chapter Eleven (pp. 187-206).
- Nanda Shrestha, "Becoming a Development Category" in *Power of Development* (pp. 266-277).
- Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship*, Chapters One (pp. 29-54) and Two (pp. 55-83).

Week 9 (26, 28 March)

Readings:

- Brook and Wakabayashi, ed., *Opium Regimes*, Chapter Eleven (pp. 248-269), Chapter Twelve (pp. 270-291), Chapter Fifteen (pp. 344-359), Chapter Sixteen (pp. 360-379).
- Timothy Mitchell, "The World as Exhibition," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31.2 (April 1989):217-236.

Part Six
Identity Fluid?

Week 10 (2, 4 April)

Readings:

- Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship*, Chapter Five (pp. 139-57).
- Ien Ang, "On Not Speaking Chinese: Postmodern Ethnicity and the Politics of Diaspora," *New Formations* 24 (Winter 1994):1-18.

Video:

- *Minidragons: Singapore*.

Week 11 (9, 11 April)

- Yosano Akiko, *Travels in Manchuria and Mongolia*.
- Read any unassigned but relevant chapter from any of the assigned texts.

Week 12 (16, 18 April)

- Yosano Akiko, *Travels in Manchuria and Mongolia*.
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Week 13 (23, 25 April)

- Rudyard Kipling. *The Man Who Would be King*.
- Read any unassigned but relevant chapter from any of the assigned texts.

Week 14 (30 April, 2 May)

- Rudyard Kipling. *The Man Who Would be King*.