

**ASI 110:  
Introduction to Asia  
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SUNY Plattsburgh**

This course is designed as an introduction to the study of Asia and is meant to both provide you with information about the history and cultures of Asia as well as introduce you to various disciplinary approaches to the study of this part of the world. We will begin by studying the three major civilizations: West Asia which is also known as the Middle East, South Asia which is centered around India, and East Asia which is centered around China. These three civilizations in turn influenced neighboring countries while these neighbors retained some of their indigenous culture as well. China, for example had a great influence on Japan yet Japan retained some of its own culture. India did the same for Southeast Asia and to some degree the Middle East had similar influence on Central Asia. It is useful then to examine each of the “core” countries or regions and then compare them with their “peripheries” to see how the cores influenced the peripheries and to understand the process by which a core and periphery are created. At the same time, we will begin to understand similarities and differences between all these regions of Asia in terms of their culture, politics, economics, religions and societies.

The second half of the course will allow us to do comparative work as we examine specific issues of present-day Asia. We will look at the role of gender and class, the impact of modernization, and the consequences of imperialism and other issues as they pertain to all of the regions of Asia. In particular, we will be able to examine the tragedy of 9/11 and many of the issues surrounding that event including the role of Islam, and Western Asian and Southeast Asian supporters and opponents of al-Qaida. Overall, we can view how modernization is both homogenizing Asia and yet creating different problems and solutions based upon differences of each society.

**Classes:**

MWF 11:00-11:50 Hawkins Hall #131

**Required Texts:**

Heinz, Carolyn Brown Asian Cultural Traditions

Van Gulik, Robert (transl). Celebrated Cases of Judge Dee

Global Studies: The Middle East

Global Studies: India

Global Studies: Japan

Map of “Asia” Purchase at the College Store

Supplemental Readings in Electronic Reserve—Password: asi110f

**Grading:**

In-Class Participation	15%
Map Assignment	5
2 Paper Assignments	20
3 Exams	<u>60</u>
	100%

### **Student Obligations:**

Students must complete the assigned readings, attend all lectures, and hand in all written assignments on time. All assignments must be handed in to receive credit for the course. You are encouraged to ask questions when information is unclear.

All assignments are due at the beginning of class for the day they are assigned. Late work will be docked at least 1/3 a letter grade. If work is more than one week late it will be docked by 1/3 grade for each week it is late.

Any paper that plagiarizes published or unpublished materials (including the work of friends or classmates) will receive a Zero (0) and the second offense will result in an E for the course.

### **Assignments:**

In-Class Participation: There are two facets to this part of your grade. First, there will be several in-class group projects that will include short assignments pertaining to the class lectures and readings. These may be collected and cannot be made up. Also, I will take attendance nearly every day and your attendance will be figured into your grade.

Map Assignment: You will locate several important geographical sites on a map. This assignment will help to make you familiar with the countries under discussion for this course. (See the last page of this syllabus for the map assignment).

Paper Assignments: There will be two paper assignments that require you to analyze information discussed in this class. These papers should be about 3-5 pages long and should be in formal written form. More detail on the outlines for these papers will be provided when appropriate.

Exams: There will be three in-class exams. Each exam will include short answers and longer essays. I will provide a review sheet before each exam and you may use a 3"x5" notecard with any notes handwritten on it you wish.

## **Topics and Readings**

### **Week 1) 8/28-9/1: Introduction to Asia and "Orientalism"**

Heinz: chpts. 1, 2

Van Gulik "Preface"

### **Week 2) 9/4-9/8: East Asia/China Part I**

Heinz: chpts. 3, 7

Van Gulik chpts. 1-5

*Electronic Reserve Readings: Analects of Confucius, Ban Zhao on Women, Buddhist texts*

**Week 3) 9/11-9/15: East Asia/China Part II**

Heinz pp. 333-336, 345-354

Global Studies: Japan pp. 47-55, 59-63

Van Gulik chpts. 6-11

**9/15: Map Assignment Due**

**Week 4) 9/18-9/22: Japan**

Heinz chpt. 8

Van Gulik chpts. 12-17

Global Studies: Japan pp. 19-33

*Electronic Reserve Readings: Kaibara Ekken and Kaibara Token on Women, Buddhist Texts*

**Week 5) 9/25-9/29: South Asia/India Part I**

Heinz chpt. 5

Van Gulik chpts. 18-21

*Electronic Reserve Readings: Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Ramayana*

**Week 6) 10/2-10/6: South Asia/India Part II**

Heinz pp. 336-345

Global Studies: India pp. 33-48

Van Gulik chpts. 22-28

**10/2: Exam #1**

**Week 7) 10/11-10/13: Southeast Asia**

Heinz chpts. 4, 6

Global Studies: Japan pp. 43-46, 64-68, 126-130

Global Studies: India pp. 54-57

Van Gulik chpts. 29-30

10/9—No Class due to Columbus Day

**10/13: Turn in Paper # 1 on Van Gulik**

**Week 8) 10/16-10/20: West Asia and Central Asia**

Global Studies: The Middle East pp. 19-26, 69-80, 144-52, 175-84

Global Studies: India pp. 49-53, 71-77

*Electronic Reserve Readings: Qu'ran, Mohammed's Last Sermon*

**Week 9) 10/23-10/27: Imperialism**

Global Studies: India #3, 18, 39

Global Studies: Japan #1, 15, 21

Global Studies: Middle East #7, 9, 11

**Week 10) 10/30-11/3: Family and Gender**

Global Studies: Japan #5, 8, 17, 22, 24

Global Studies: India #8, 9, 13

*Electronic Reserve Readings: "Internet Discussion of Marriage and Education"*

**10/30: Exam #2**

**Week 11) 11/6-11/10: Class**

Global Studies: Japan #12, 16, 20

Global Studies: India #4, 11

*Electronic Reserve Reading: "Letter From Iran"*

**Week 12) 11/13-11/17: Modern Economies and Political Systems**

Global Studies: Japan #2, 3, 9, 10, 11,

Global Studies: India #1, 5, 6, 7, 14, 15, 16, 20, 26

Global Studies: Middle East #2

**Week 13) 11/20: War and International Conflict**

Global Studies: Japan #7

Global Studies: India #19, 33

Global Studies: Middle East pp. 4-18, and #1

*Electronic Reserve Readings: To Be Announced*

**Week 14) 11/27-12/1: War and International Conflict pt II**

Global Studies: Japan #18

Global Studies: India # 35, 38

Global Studies: Middle East #4, 8, 10

*Electronic Reserve Readings: To Be Announced*

**Week 14) 12/4-12/8: Human Rights and Western Norms in Asian Society**

Global Studies: Japan #4, 9

Global Studies: India #10

Global Studies: Middle East #12

*12/8: Turn in Paper #2 on Global Studies*

**12/11 Finals Week**

*Exam #3*