



## FACULTY OF ARTS

Linguistics, Languages & Cultures

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Course Outline - Fall 2013

Understanding Contemporary East Asia - EAST 201-01

Lloyd Sciban

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** An introductory exploration of the contemporary cultures of China, Japan, and Korea that outlines their shared characteristics as well as highlighting their differences. Subjects covered include physical environment, history, philosophy, social and political order, economy, and arts.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** Instill knowledge and encourage learning of the nature of contemporary Chinese, Japanese, and Korean societies. Provide a basis for determining further interest in East Asia.

### ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION:

1. **Mid-term exams**, based on lectures, readings, and films to date; **Wednesday Oct. 16, 10%**; **Wednesday Nov. 13, 20%**.
2. **Registrar-scheduled final exam, 30%**; based on the term's lectures, readings, and films.
3. **Essay proposal, 5%**; due in class **Monday Nov. 04**. Length: one page double-spaced. Your essay proposal should clearly identify your subject and the value that you believe it has. (See description of essay below.) It should also contain a description of the development of your essay and a thesis statement. It is important that you demonstrate that you understand the assignment is about describing value.
4. **Essay, 35%**; due in class, **Friday, Nov. 22**. Length: **minimum 2500 words**.

Topic: Describe the value of an aspect of East Asian civilization. Value may be taken to be positive or negative. You may take a broad or narrow focus, describing such topics as the East Asian concept of the family or the beauty of a particular Japanese poem. You may also discuss material culture, such as the Korean chaebol.

**Criteria of evaluation: Content:** this includes description of the target aspect and its value. You could proceed by describing the target aspect and the value to its civilization. Be careful to identify the aspect that you choose as distinctly East Asian and to emphasize what its value is rather than the fact that it is valued. Beyond this, you could describe the negative value of the target aspect or its positive value outside the native civilization. For example, let us say your topic is the value of Chinese food. You would want to describe the general characteristics of Chinese food. You could follow by showing that Chinese food has been valued in Chinese history and in contemporary society (e.g., attention is paid to daily meals and many social activities revolve around eating). You would then start to describe the values of Chinese food. For example, you could describe the pleasure of the variety of tastes, the health maintained with low-fat intake, and the joy of socializing with friends and family over a meal. Beyond this, one can describe negative value, such as the long length of time it takes to prepare Chinese food; or the value of the target aspect outside its civilization, such as the advantages to Westerners in adopting a diet more like the Chinese.

**Organization:** this includes clarity, logic (there should be a logical connection among the points given in your essay), unity (maintenance of the same theme throughout the whole, or a large section, of the essay), coherence (smooth link between minor sections of the essay), and correctness of form (e.g., having foot or endnotes, a bibliography, the use of proper grammar, etc.).

**Original thinking:** you are strongly encouraged to present your own perspective or views. This could take the form of presenting and supporting your own thesis, or establishing a point that has not been made before. For example, you may argue the thesis that the general good health of the Chinese people, despite a relatively low-standard of living, is due primarily to their diet, or you may prove that it is preferable to consume soup at the end of the meal as the Chinese traditionally do. Original thinking often makes the difference between an outstanding and an average essay.

5. **Submission of assignments:** please submit your proposals and essays directly to the instructor.
6. **Policy for late assignments:** deduction of a letter grade (e.g., B to B-) for essays and .5 for essay proposals for each day late. It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment. No electronic submissions will be accepted.

**Writing Skills Statement:** Policy directs that all written assignments (including, although to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) but also general clarity and organization. Research papers must be properly documented. If you need help with your writing, you may use the Writing Centre. Visit the website for more details: [www.efwr.ucalgary.ca](http://www.efwr.ucalgary.ca)

## Grading System

Grading Scale	
A+	96-100
A	90-95.99
A -	85-89.99
B+	80-84.99
B	75-79.99
B-	70-74.99
C+	65-69.99
C	60-64.99
C-	55-59.99
D+	53-54.99
D	50-52.99
F	0-49

Where a grade on a particular assignment is expressed as a letter grade, it will normally be converted to a number using the midpoint of the scale. That is, A- would be converted to 87.5 for calculation purposes. F will be converted to zero.

**Ethics:** Whenever you perform research with human participants (e.g., surveys, interviews, observation) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve of your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see The Faculty of Arts research ethics webpage: <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/research/research-ethics>

**In Class Recordings:** Students are allowed to make in class recordings.

## SCHEDULE OF LECTURES AND READINGS

Unit	Topic
1. East Asian	Course explanation and general characteristics of East Asian civilization <b>Reading:</b> Edwin Reischauer, "The Sinic World in Perspective," pages 1-8 in reading package, Foreign Affairs 52.2 (Jan. 1974): 341-48
2. China	Physical environment, recent history, language, Confucian thought
3. China	Social order: ceremony, education system, and status of women <b>Reading:</b> Herbert Fingarette, "A Confucian Metaphor--the Holy," source Confucius--The Secular As Sacred, p. 70-79
4. China	Political order: success of Communist Revolution, present day problems and improvements, and foreign relations <b>Reading:</b> Minxin Pei, "Is China's Communist Party Doomed?" The Diplomat, October 1, 2012; and Daniel A. Bell, "What China Can Teach Europe," New York Times, January 7, 2012
5. China	Economy <b>Reading:</b> James Fallows, "The \$1.4 Trillion Question," pages 75-85 in reading package, Atlantic Monthly, January/February 2008: 11 pages. <b>Exam Oct. 16</b>
6. China	Cultural influence abroad: Chinese Canadians
7. Japan	Physical setting, people, language, recent history
8. Japan	Social order and Japanese self-perception <b>Reading:</b> Thomas Smith, "The Organization of Political Power," source The Agrarian Origins of Modern Japan, p. 50-64
9. Japan	Recent economy <b>Reading:</b> Carin Holroyd, "Japan's 21st Century Innovation Economy: Lessons for Canada," source Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, Canada Asia Commentary 42 (January, 2007): 12 pages. <b>Exam Nov. 13</b>
10. Japan	Aesthetics
11. Korea	History, language, and social order
12. Korea	Political order, economy, and unification
13. Korea	Popular culture <b>Reading:</b> Jeongsuk Joo, "Transnationalization of Korean Popular Culture and the Rise of 'Pop Nationalism' in Korea," Journal of Popular Culture 44.3 (June 2011): 489-504