COURSE DESCRIPTION

Scholars of Western political thought have not disputed the fact that there is a rich body of political thought in Asia. They have just not bothered to incorporate it into the curriculum of the Western academy. This course seeks to remedy this by presenting Western students with an opportunity for engagement with the political thought of Asia.

This course will focus on the core concepts of democracy, freedom, and equality. It will demonstrate that these concepts in Asia grew out of a different historical and cultural context than in the West. As such, these terms, in Asia, need to be examined as statecraft and political authority (mostly discussed in a monarchical context, but with interesting treatises on the extent and value of popular “consultations”) independence or autonomy (that is, relative degrees thereof from political structures and social controls), and equity (in an Asian hierarchical context), respectively. Equity, of course, is another way of looking at justice. In the West, these ideas were expressed and then refined through the history of the small, democratic city-states of Greece, the universal pretensions of the Roman Empire, the subsequent collapse of this imperium politically but its persistence intellectually in the Thomist Medieval synthesis, the smashing ferment of the Renaissance and the Reformation, and the birth of the modern nation-state in the twin crucibles of the Thirty Years War and the French Revolution. In Asia, on the other hand, these roughly same ideas were definitionally filtered through a different drama: a pre-colonial “act” of an ethereal salvation quest amidst a gritty realpolitik in India and the cosmic rhythms of politics, nature, and heaven in China; a second “act” driven by the agonized encounters with Western colonialism, whether direct (for India) or indirect (for China and Japan); and a third “act” of the contemporary struggle for independent identities, with the receding of this Western colonial tidal wave in World War II, in a modern world still of Western creation.

For clarity, this course will largely confine itself to the political thought of India, China, and Japan. And, to appeal to broader and different student populations, the course will also thematically discuss military thought and strategy as well as growing issues of gender as a central factor in the study of equity. There will also be a brief look at the “reverse effect” of the influence of Asian political thought on the West under the phenomenon of “Orientalism.”

A fundamental purpose of this course is to refine these three core concepts of political theory—democracy, freedom, and equality (heretofore defined only as products
of Western experience)—by analyzing their development comparatively in Asia in order to introduce the Western academic world to a richer, multi-cultural emergence of such perhaps universal political ideas. In this refinement, we confront one of the most vital questions of political science: are political concepts universal, and, hence, analyzed by a common rationality (“ratchoice”); or, are these concepts bound by the cultural contexts from which they emerged (“constructivism”) and given, therefore, to differential rather than universal expression? Regardless of the topic, all student seminar papers will have to come to some conclusion on this question.

PREREQUISITES

This is a graduate level course, both in terms of the work load (a full seminar paper and a reading load of a book equivalent per week) and intellectual background. Hence, enrollment requires the permission of the instructor. This will depend on some prior course work in Asia (whether in religion, history, or political science) and in basic Western political theory or philosophy, as well as a demonstrated enthusiasm for the course. Since a political theory course is assumed as a prerequisite for this course; by itself, this class does not fulfill the political theory requirement for the political science major—even though it is a political theory class.

READINGS

Most of the texts for this course are out of print. Some, nevertheless, are available for purchase in the book story. The rest will be on 3-Hour Reserve in the Reserve Reading Room in Pius Library. I checked into a developing a course pack, but either the costs were prohibitive for some, and others involved copyright infringements. Nevertheless, two of the readings are available for purchase for $25 from University Readers at www.universityreaders.com. They have been packaged into a single volume. They are Kosaku Yoshino, Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary Japan and Max Muller, India: What Can It Teach Us?

I have succeeded in placing a few items on E-Reserve. They are duly noted in the syllabus. The class password for E-Reserve is: pols49307.

General:


India:


**China:**


**Japan:**


**Recommended:** The following will serve as texts for the “supplementary” subjects of military strategy and gender issues in Asia. For each subject in the syllabus, there are also recommended readings in addition to the required readings.

**Military Strategy**


**Gender**


**GRADES/ASSIGNMENTS**

The course grade will be derived from four components:
• Two 5 page book response essays—20%  
• Seminar Paper—50%

• Class participation—20%  
• Paper presentation/discussion—10%

I calculate grades on straight deciles with 90-99 as A’s (though my historic high is 95), 80-89 as B’s, and 70-79 as C’s, etc. In each of these deciles, grades of 7-9 are +’s and 0-2 are –’s. The Graduate School does not assign the A-grade.

Though each of these components has a separate handout, in summary they require the following:

• **Two 5-page book response essays**—In each of these, the student will summarize the message of the book, and discuss its contribution to the political thought of the relevant country, and to Asia and the world more generally. The two reports must be on different countries and time periods (classical, colonial, and modern). They can, however, be on similar themes or concepts. They will be graded on a 60/40 formula; namely, of the 20% overall course grade assigned to these two essays, the best essay will count 12% and the other 8%.

• **Seminar Paper**—Students will write a full seminar-length research paper on some aspect of democracy, freedom, and equality (or on military strategy or gender) that has significance for central course themes. Papers will be grouped into thematic panels for classroom presentation and formal responses by discussants in the last class. Because of its centrality to the course, it counts for 50% of the grade. Included in this grade are an Abstract due March 26th, a draft due April 26th, and the final paper due May 8th. Although these first two items are essentially ungraded, penalties will be imposed for failing to turn them in on time.

• **Class participation**—The class participation grade will be derived from a combination of good attendance, meaningful participation in class discussions, and the presentation of oral reports on required and recommended readings. Attendance and participation is an absolute must for a seminar, and absence from more than four classes is unacceptable. Full engagement with the readings is essential for an A grade.

• **Paper presentation/discussion**—to ensure a quality “conference,” students will be graded on both the formal presentations of their papers and on their comments on the papers assigned to them as discussants.

**OTHER CONDITIONS**

Since this seminar conflicts with the normal supper hour, I want to stress the following about food in class. Students may feel free to consume non-spiritual liquids in
class. However, they may not consume food during class time, nor should it be left out for visual and olfactory distractions. Food may be consumed during break times.

**Academic Honesty**

Saint Louis University takes the issue of academic honesty seriously. Please read the following statement carefully:

*Students are expected to be honest in their academic work. The University reserves the right to penalize any student whose academic conduct at any time is, in its judgment, detrimental to the University. Such conduct shall include cases of plagiarism, collusion, cheating, giving or receiving or offering or soliciting information in examinations, or the use of previously prepared material in examinations or quizzes. Violations should be reported to the instructor and will be investigated and adjudicated according to the Policy on Academic Honesty of the College of Arts and Sciences. If the charges are found to be true, the student may be liable for academic or disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion from the University.*

**Disabilities**

Students with university-certified disabilities should identify themselves to the professor so that the appropriate modifications can be arranged.

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**SCHEDULE**

I. **CLASSICAL ASIA**

Class #1 (Aug 25)  

**Origins**

Organization and purpose of the course. Setting in a constructivist approach. Context of Western political thought and rationale for core concepts of democracy (statecraft and authority), freedom (degrees of autonomy), and equality (equity in cultures of hierarchy and dependence). Issue of Pre-Indo-Aryan feminism and persistence.

Lomperis, “Asian Political Thought” *E-Reserve*

Class #2 (Sep 3)  

**Classical India**
Political thought in the *Rig Veda, Laws of Manu*, and the two epics, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. Focus on the purposes and organization of rule in a Hindu setting in Kautilya’s *Arthashastra*. Discussion of Asoka as a model *Chakravartin* (universal emperor). Comparative role of women in epics: Helen, Draupadi, and Sita. Political Buddhism and Jainism briefly noted.

**READING:** Pye, *Asian Power…*, Ch. 5.  
Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus*, Intro, Chs. 1, 2, and 7. *Reserve*

Lomperis, *The Odyssey of the Soul…* (’84)

Class #3 (Sep 10)  

**Classical China**
Basic deal between Confucianism and Daoism: responsibility (Confucian virtues) vs. independence (the Interior life and secret societies and resistance). The legalists, historians, and the Mandate of Heaven (Mencius and Mohism). Consideration of the decline of the Han, the *Sun Tzu*, Romance of the Three Kingdoms, and gender issues in The Story of the Stone.

**READING:** Pye, *Asian Power…*, Ch. 7.  
Schwartz, *Thought in Ancient China*, entire (reading divided among the class). *Reserve.*

Recommended: Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy* (’95).  

Class #4 (Sep 17)  

**Classical Japan**

**READING:** Pye, *Asian Power…*, Ch. 6.  
Benedict, *Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, Chs. 5-11

Recommended: Murasaki Shikibu, *The Tale of the Genji*

Class #5 (Sep 24) **Military Strategy and Gender in Classical Asia**
The first half will look at Grand Strategy in India and China and then examine the knightly code of honor among India’s Kshatriya, China’s warriors and the Bushido of the Samurai. The second half will look at gender issues implicitly contained in the Qing novel, *The Story of the Stone*, and directly in traditional vestiges of contemporary village life in South India. Class reports.

READING: Johnston, …*Grand Strategy…Chinese History*, Chs. 3, 4. Reserve
Rosen, …*India and Its Armies*, Chs. 2, 3. Reserve
Levy,…*Story of the Stone*, Chs. 1,2, and 5. Reserve
Kapadia, *Siva and Her Sisters*, Chs. 1,2,4, and 6. Reserve

**II. COLONIAL ASIA**

Class #6 (Oct 1) **Imperialism and Orientalism**
Ideologies of empire with a focus on the British Raj. A look at the Orientalists and Eastern influences on Western intellectual thought (Heidegger, Hesse, Halbfass, and Emerson). Critique of Said. Basic comparisons: similarities vs. differences debate. Reports.

Max Muller, *India: What Can It Teach Us?*, entire.
*Reserve and University Readers packet.*
Dallmayr, *Beyond Orientalism*, Chs. 4-6.

Recommended: Breckenridge and van der Veer, *Orientalism and The Postcolonial Predicament* (*93), student reports.

***First Book Response Essay due, October 1st***
Class #7 (Oct 8)  
**British Raj in India**  

READING: Mehta, *Foundations…*, Chs. 7-10, and 12.  

Recommended: Antony Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought* (2001), Parts II-IV.  
Anton Pelinka, *Democracy Indian Style: Subhas Chandra Bhose and the Creation of India’s Political Culture* (’03).  

Class #8 (Oct 15)  
**China and the West**  

READING: Hall and Ames, *The Democracy of the Dead*, Chs. 3-7  
Reserve  
Levenson, *Confucianism and Its Modern Fate*, students will read different selections. Reserve.

Mann and Chang, eds., *Under Confucian Eyes: Writings on Gender in Chinese History* (’01).

Class #9 (Oct 22)  
**The Opening of Japan**  

Carol Gluck, *Japan’s Modern Myths*, entire (divided among student reports). Reserve.
Recommended: Emily Ooms, Women and Millenarian Protest In Meiji Japan (’93).

***Single Page Abstracts of Term Papers due, October 22nd***

III. MODERN ASIA

Class #10 (Oct 29)  
**Modern India**  
Focus on Prime Minister Nehru as an intellectual symbol of modern India: his interpretation of Indian history, his ideology, and influences on it. Discussion of modern Hindu
ta versus secularism and traces of Gandhianism (Vinoba Bhave). Radhakrishnan’s philosophy of East and West. Persistence of caste and issues of gender. Reports.

READING: Nehru, Discovery of India, skim entire, focused reading on themes above. Reserve.  
Mehta, Foundations…, Chs. 11, 13.  
Dallmayr, Beyond Orientalism, Chs. 3, 7.  

Recommended: Karen Kapadia, Siva and Her Sisters, Parts II, III.

Class #11 (Nov 5)  
**Modern China**  
Communism and Mao. Also, Mao as anarchist, Confucianist, nationalist, Daoist, and feminist. Focus on the emergence of a modern political culture in this “integration.” A look as well at Deng Xiaoping as a Dewey pragmatist and at Jiang Zemin’s “Three Represents.”


Recommended: Arif Dirlik, Anarchism and the Chinese Revolution.  
Chalmers Johnson, Peasant Nationalism.

***Second Book Response Essay due, November 5th***
Class #12 (Nov 12)  **Modern Japan**
“The Democracy Way” and the absorption of American constitutionalism. How complete the make-over? The yin and yang of “fixed” and “floating” worlds. The concept of Nihonjinron and Japan’s place internationally in the “just say no” response to the American shadow.

READING: Kosaku Yoshino, *Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary Japan* (’92), selections divided among student reports. Reserve and University Reader pack.

Class #13 (Nov. 19)  **Modern Asia/Modern World**
Summary discussion of three core concepts of democracy, freedom, and equality in Asia. Challenge of Islam in Asia. Issue of universalism vs. Asianness in political thought. Possible contributions of Asian political thought to Western corpus.


Recommended: J.J. Clarke, *Oriental Enlightenment: The Encounter between Asian and Western Thought* (’97), student reports.

***Draft of Seminar Papers due to discussants, December 1st ***
This is the morning of December 1st!

Class #14 (Dec 3)  **Seminar Paper Presentations**
Final class will be organized into “Conference Panels” of papers with similar topics. Each paper will be critiqued by a discussant. General discussion and reactions will follow the paper critiques. *The general department (faculty and majors) will be invited to this “Conference.” Feel free to bring friends and family (toilet-trained only, please). This class will last an extra half hour to ensure full discussion of papers.*

***Final copies of papers due at time of scheduled Final Exam, May 10***