

History 216  
Spring 2004

## Modern Asian Civilization

([www.uncg.edu/~jwjones/asia](http://www.uncg.edu/~jwjones/asia))

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Office Hours: M 10-10:50; W 11:00-12:00; F 1:00-2:00

### Course Description

This course provides a historical perspective on contemporary Asia by examining the complex process of “modernization” underway since about 1800. We will focus primarily on the 20<sup>th</sup> century, beginning with India’s struggle against colonialism, then moving to Japan, the one Asian country that has rivaled the West in terms of military and economic development. A significant part of the course concentrates on China, which has undergone a remarkable transformation from traditional Confucianism to Maoist communism and now to a form of “market socialism.” We will end with the turbulent and violent recent history of Southeast Asia, specifically Vietnam and Cambodia. There are also three online presentations spread out over the semester: Afghanistan, the Pacific Rim countries, and Korea. The course introduces and explores several underlying themes of modern Asia: traditional society’s interaction with the West; revolution; colonialism and the struggle for independence; communism; the Cold War; nationalism; the international economy; and democracy. We will examine these and other issues through the prisms of gender, class, and ethnicity.

### Course Goals

By the end of the course each student will understand, firstly, that history is not just the memorization of dates and facts, but rather the interpretation of the past; and, secondly, that we tend to see Asia and the world through a number of basic assumptions that are not always accurate. Students will take from the class the skills to critically appraise varying historical arguments and to clearly express their own interpretations.

### Readings:

- *Nectar in a Sieve*, Kamala Markandaya (Penguin Books, 1998)
- *Kato Shidzue: A Japanese Feminist* (Pearson Longman, 2004)
- *Family*, Pa Chin (Waveland Press, 1989)
- *Son of the Revolution*, Liang Heng and Judith Shapiro (Vintage Press, 1984)
- *Sacred Willow: Four Generations in the Life of a Vietnamese Family*, Duong van Mai Elliot (Oxford University Press, 2000)
- Reserve and online material identified below

**Films:** we will see the films “Bandit Queen” and “Raise the Red Lantern” on the dates indicated below. These films are also available at the The Teaching & Learning Center (McNut Building) and will be put on reserve.

**Course Web Page:** The course web page is at [www.uncg.edu/~jwjones/asia](http://www.uncg.edu/~jwjones/asia)

The page has course readings, summaries of the notes, links to Internet Resources, and other relevant features.

**Assignments:**

|                    |      |
|--------------------|------|
| Participation      | 30 % |
| Written Assignment | 20 % |
| Midterm Exam       | 20 % |
| Final Exam         | 30 % |

**Participation:** Your 30% class participation grade will consist of in-class quizzes plus Reaction Pieces to the five assigned books, 1-2 pages double-spaced. These are intended to be your reaction to or opinion of the books, not a summary. The total sum of these assignments is 60 points, which will be divided by two for the final participation grade. Students who miss the in-class quizzes can *only* make them up with a legitimate reason. Inform me beforehand if you know you have to miss an announced in-class quiz and we will schedule a make-up.

**Written Assignment:** Students have a choice of several paper topics or a book/film review for this assignment (worth 20%). All papers should be 3-5 pages, double-spaced. You can do your paper and turn it in at any time over the course of the semester since the topics correspond to different issues dealt with in the course. However, **the final due date by which all papers must be turned in is Wednesday, April 14.** See the Guidelines to the Written Assignment for the choice of topics and further information.

**Exams:** There is a midterm (worth 20%) and a final (worth 30%). Each exam covers *only* the part of the course for which they are designated, so they are not cumulative. However, the final exam also includes a comprehensive take-home essay question (worth 10% of the overall course grade) that draws on broader issues dealt with all semester.

**Grading:** Grades are compiled on a point system. For example, if you make a 90 on the Written Assignment (18/20) + an 80 on the Midterm Exam (16/20) + 88 on the final exam (26.4/30) + 90 on participation (27/30) your final grade = 87.4 = **87** or B+

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

Monday, January 12. Introduction to the Course

BEGIN READING *Nectar in a Sieve*; Reaction Piece to the book due Wednesday, January 28

Wednesday, January 14. Traditional India

- Reading for next class: *Time*'s "Man of the Year" for 1930: Mohandas K. Gandhi

Wednesday, January 21. British Colonialism & India's Struggle for Independence

- Reading for next class: "Phoolan Devi: India's 'Bandit Queen'" by Mary Anne Weaver;
- Optional Reading: Reviews of "Bandit Queen"

WEDNESDAY, January 21: "Bandit Queen" in Jarrell Hall (Jackson Library) at 3:30

Monday, January 26. India & Neighbors Since Independence

- For next class: listen to NPR Report "Caste Hanging in India" on the web page

Wednesday, January 28. Discussion of *Nectar in a Sieve* & the Film

**\*\*Reaction Piece (*Nectar in a Sieve*) due in class**

**Online Presentation:** “Afghanistan: A History of Turmoil”

BEGIN READING *Kato Shidzue: A Japanese Feminist*; Reaction Piece to the book due Monday, February 16

Monday, February 2. Traditional East Asian Culture

- For next class: listen to NPR Report “Noodle Slurpin’ in Japan” on the web page

Wednesday, February 4. Traditional Japan Meets the West

- Reading for next class: online reviews of *The Rape of Nanking* by Iris Chang

Monday, February 9. The Rise of Fascism & World War II in Japan

Wednesday, February 11. Japan’s Postwar Economic “Miracle”

Monday, February 16. Discussion of *Kato Shidzue: A Japanese Feminist*

**\*\*Reaction Piece (*Kato Shidzue: A Japanese Feminist*) due in class**

- For next class: listen to NPR Report “Visit to War Memorial” on the web page

**Online Presentation:** “The ‘Tigers’ of East Asia: the Pacific Rim Countries”

Wednesday, February 18. Japan & the Pacific Rim Countries Today

**Monday, February 23. Midterm Exam**

BEGIN READING *Family*; Reaction Piece to the book due Monday, March 15

Wednesday, February 25. Traditional China

WEDNESDAY, February 25: “Raise the Red Lantern” in Jarrell Hall (Jackson Library) at 3:30

Monday, March 1. Traditional China & the West: “The Girl from Hunan”

Wednesday, March 3. Traditional China & the West: “The Girl from Hunan” (cont’d)

Monday, March 15. Discussion of *Family* & “Raise the Red Lantern”

**\*\*Reaction Piece (*Family* and “Raise the Red Lantern”) due in class**

BEGIN READING *Son of the Revolution*; Reaction Piece to the book due Monday, April 5

Wednesday, March 17. The Origins of China’s Peasant Revolution

Monday, March 22. “Fanshen”: “turning over” in China

Wednesday, March 24. Maoism in Practice

- Reading for next class: e-reserve articles “Lei Feng, Chairman Mao’s Good Fighter,” and “‘Father is Close, Mother is Close, but Neither Is as Close as Chairman Mao’—The Cult of Mao (1964-1965)” from *Wild Swans* by Jung Chang

Monday, March 29. The Mao Cult & the Origins of the Cultural Revolution

Wednesday, March 31. China’s Cultural Revolution

Monday, April 5. Cultural Revolution (cont’d): Discussion of *Son of the Revolution*

**\*\*Reaction Piece (*Son of the Revolution*) due in class**

Wednesday, April 7. The Reforms of Deng Xiaoping

- Reading for next class: e-reserve articles “People’s Daily Editorial and Response” and “A Letter From Beijing, June 1989” by Ya Lu

Monday, April 12. The Tiananmen Square Incident

- Reading for next class: Chinese Communist Party Report on Rising Social Tensions

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS due by Wednesday, April 14**

BEGIN READING *Sacred Willow*; Reaction Piece due Monday, April 26

Wednesday, April 14. China Since Tiananmen

**Online Presentation**: “Cold War Conflict in Korea”

Monday, April 19. French Colonialism in Southeast Asia

Wednesday, April 21. War & Revolution in Vietnam

Monday, April 26. Discussion of *Sacred Willow*

**\*\*Reaction Piece (*Sacred Willow*) due in class**

Wednesday, April 28. The “Killing Fields” of Cambodia

Monday, May 3. Asia Today

**Final Exam: Monday, May 10 12 Noon–3:00**