

Spring 2017
Thur 3:00-5:30

Instructor: Hagen Koo
with Patricia Steinhoff

SOC720: Comparative Study of East Asia

This seminar is to study important social changes occurring in East Asia (China, Korea, and Japan) from a comparative sociological perspective. The seminar takes a different theme of study each semester, so the students who have taken the seminar previously are welcome to enroll again. The main topics of this semester include (1) the issues of consumerism and status competition in Asian cities, (2) global educational mobility involving Asian students, and (3) increasing job market precarity caused by neoliberal economic transition. These are tentative topics and may change depending on the interests of students enrolled this semester.

The objective of this seminar is not just to increase the student's factual knowledge of East Asian societies but to provide a sociological way of looking at what's happening in these societies. Students in other disciplines are welcome to this seminar; they do not need to have a prior sociological background. They can expect to learn a sociological perspective and concepts that can be very helpful in doing research in their own disciplinary fields.

Readings Materials:

No textbook.

Journal articles and book chapters (to be available on Laulima).

Course Requirements:

1. One-page weekly reaction paper on the reading materials to be discussed in the class.
2. A mid-term paper on one topic covered in the seminar, based on a critical review of the relevant literature (about 7-10 pages in double space).
3. A final term paper on a topic selected by the student and approved by the instructor. This paper can be a comparative study of two or three East Asian societies or a single-country study but employing a comparative perspective in framing the research question(s) and interpreting the findings (around 15 pages).