SOC 720  Comparative Study of East Asia

Spring 2018

Thursday, 3:00-5:30pm
Saunders 226

Instructor: Dr. Le Lin, with Dr. Hagen Koo and Dr. Patricia Steinhoff
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Office Hours: Tuesday 2-3pm or by appointment

Course Description
This seminar probes social structures and processes of East Asia broadly defined (societies in the Greater China Region, Korea, Japan and with cases drawn from Vietnam too). In Spring Semester 2018, we examine a number of intensely debated themes about East Asia, including causes and dynamics of globalization (consumption, education, job insecurity etc.), economy/market, social/labor movements, and media/culture etc. Note that the themes of this semester are different from those of previous semesters. Students who have taken the seminar before are welcome to enroll again. This is both a sociological and an interdisciplinary course. Students in other disciplines are welcome and no prior sociological background is needed. Any research projects that involve East Asian societies (e.g. comparing education-induced inequality between China and U.S.) are acceptable.

Student Learning Objectives
In this course, students will: a) develop and/or revise a research project through incorporating one or more of the three theoretical perspectives we discuss in class—globalization, comparative-historical and global/transnational sociology; b) develop familiarity with and critical understanding of classic debates and recent developments in studies of East Asia; c) learn to appreciate and apply the sociological insight in understanding social structure and processes in general and East Asia in particular.

This course will be taught and graded primarily by Dr. Le Lin who specializes in Chinese society. Dr. Hagen Koo and Dr. Patricia Steinhoff, leading experts on Korea and Japan respectively, will actively participate in our discussion and provide comments on students’ projects.

Readings Materials
No textbook required. Journal articles and book chapters will be available on Laulima. Readings with * are optional.

Course Requirements
1) One-page reaction paper on the reading materials ahead of classroom discussion each week.
2) A mid-term paper (4-6 double-spaced pages) on one topic covered in the seminar, based on a critical and creative review of relevant literature.

3) A final term paper (14-20 double-spaced pages) on a topic selected by the student and approved by the instructor. This empirical paper should develop a research question and present an argument. Collecting and interpreting original data are encouraged but not required. Students can either focus on one East Asian society or conduct a comparative study that involves East Asia.

The final grading will be determined by the final term paper (50%), mid-term paper (30%), reaction papers (10%) and class participation (10%). Late papers are not accepted. Class participation is crucial to both individual and group success of the course. Regular attendance is expected.

Course Schedule

Jan. 11 Introduction

Jan. 18 Globalization and Other Theoretical Perspectives


*David Harvey, *A Short History of Neoliberalism*, Ch. 1 (pp. 1-38).


I. Causes and Dynamics of Globalization and Neo-liberalization

Jan. 25 Consumption


**Feb. 1 Education I**


**Feb. 8 Education II**


Koo, Hagen. “Globalizing Education Struggle, the Korean Experience”. Unpublished Manuscript.


**Feb. 15 Middle Class**


Feb. 22 Job Insecurity


II. Economy and Market

Mar. 1 Economy and Market I


Mar. 8 Economy and Market II


III. Social Movements
Mar. 15 Labor and New Left Movements


Mar. 22 Religious Movements


Mar. 29 Spring Recess

IV. Media and Culture

Apr. 5 Media: Old and New


**Apr. 12 Culture, Cosmopolitanism and Identity**


**Apr. 19 Popular Culture**


**Apr. 26 Students’ Presentation and Course Wrap-Up**

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**Kokua Statement**

*Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability is invited to contact me privately. I would be happy to work with you, and the KOKUA Program (Office for Students with Disabilities) to ensure reasonable...*
accommodations in my course. KOKUA can be reached at (808) 956-7511 or (808) 956-7612 (voice/text) in room 013 of the Queen Lili'uokalani Center for Student Services.

Plagiarism
The following definition of plagiarism comes from the UH-Manoa Student Conduct Code: Plagiarism includes but is not limited to submitting, in fulfillment of an academic requirement, any work that has been copied in whole or in part from another individual's work without attributing that borrowed portion to the individual; neglecting to identify as a quotation another's idea and particular phrasing that was not assimilated into the student’s language and style or paraphrasing a passage so that the reader is misled as to the source; submitting the same written or oral or artistic material in more than one course without obtaining authorization from the instructors involved; or “drylabbing,” which includes obtaining and using experimental data and laboratory write-ups from other sections of a course or from previous terms.

University of Hawaii at Manoa Student Conduct Code (1992), p. 6