SOC720: Comparative Study of East Asia

This is a seminar taught by a team of three East Asia specialists in sociology department, Hagen Koo, Patricia Steinhoff, and Seio Nakajima, although the principal instructor is Hagen Koo. The course is designed to study social structures, institutions, and social processes in East Asian societies (primarily China, Japan, and Korea) from a comparative sociological perspective. The seminar takes a different theme of study each semester and the students who have taken the course previously are also welcome to re-enroll. (This is a repeatable course.)

The seminar is organized around the theme of globalization and examines institutional changes and social and cultural processes in today’s East Asian societies within the context of globalization. The first part of the seminar reviews major theoretical and conceptual studies on globalization and the second part is directed to substantive topics of social and cultural changes in East Asia under the impact of globalization. Tentatively, this semester will focus on the topics of (1) educational changes associated with globalization; (2) transnational migration, identity, and citizenship; and (3) the political economy of East Asian industrial organizations. While studying these phenomena, the focus of the analysis is on comparing the patterns of change occurring in each of East Asian countries as well as comparing the East Asian pattern with those of Western countries.

Readings Materials:

Saskia Sassen, Sociology of Globalization (W.W. Norton, 2007)
Robert Holton, Making Globalization (Palgrave, 2005)
Journal articles and Book chapters, to be supplied in the class.

Course Requirements:

1. One-page weekly reaction paper on the reading materials ahead of class discussion.
2. One essay on globalization (about 10 pages)
3. A research paper on a selected topic, to be submitted in two drafts.