

East Asia against/as Modernity: Globalization and the Problem of Universal History

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Course: 1-4pm, Togo Salmon Hall 321

Office hours: I'm usually free for an hour after class; just ask.

Description:

The European encounter with East Asia (which begins, pace Marco Polo, in the late 16th century) created a crisis in European historiography and self-image: Here were peoples unmentioned in the Bible, who nonetheless had a written history dating back some 5,000 years, and a culture and civilization that by most measures was more sophisticated (safer, better-organized, more literate, fairer, less violent) than Europe's. How to explain this phenomenon? Were the Chinese a lost tribe of Israel, or did they have some other role in God's plan? Where did they fit into the sequence of "global" history as Europe understood it? What did it mean for Europe's sense of itself as a "civilization" to encounter a possible model for development on the other side of the globe?

The argument of this course is that the world (including both Europe and China) has never really gotten over this problem. We will follow its appearance in a variety of twentieth- and twentieth-first century contexts, including material from such fields as history, geography, art history, literature, philosophy, political science, and sociology. I have tentatively divided the conundrums created by the so-called "great divide" between East and West across a number of problems: modernity, history, values, and aesthetics. As we shall see, these problems cannot truly be disaggregated. Whatever general understanding we build over the course of the next two weeks will derive from an understand of their partiality and their relatedness.

Course Organization:

There will be a three hour seminar each day, on the days listed in the syllabus below.

Required and Recommended Readings:

See below.

Course Evaluation:

My general feeling is that graduate courses, and especially graduate courses taught by an instructor unfamiliar with the home institution, should be places more or less free of sustained formal evaluation as it emerges in grades. The compressed format of the course also gives us a limited time to get to know each other. My emphasis here is therefore going to be on exploration

I expect you to come to class with the reading done, and with questions to ask about it. For each class other than the first I will assign two or three students to write a short response (1-2 pages) for the reading; they will be expected to open our discussion by pointing us to interesting ideas or passages.

The major written work for the course will be a 15-20-page paper. Given the time frame, the paper will have to be due on May 30. Students who wish to meet with me to discuss paper ideas may do so in the second week. We will also talk extensively about the paper in class.

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

Final paper:	50 percent
Participation/engagement:	40 percent
Short response:	10 percent

Daily Syllabus:

May 11

No class today. Please plan to attend the “Globalization and Asia” conference, to be held at McMaster Innovation Park, 175 Longwood Road S, Hamilton, ON L8P 0A1. Though the conference as a whole is optional, you are required to attend my lecture, which runs 13:30-14:30. Those of you who are around should plan to meet at 18:00 for a quick drink before dinner, assuming we can find a place.

May 12, 13: The Problem of Modernity

May 12 Required

Perry Anderson, from *Lineages of the Absolutist State*

Stuart Hall, “The West and the Rest”

S.N. Eisenstadt, “Multiple Modernities”

Optional

Takeuchi Yoshimi, “What is Modernity?”

May 13 Required

Partha Chatterjee, from *Our Modernity*

Volker Schmidt, “How Unique is East Asian Modernity?”

Enrique Dussel, “World-System and Transmodernity”

Optional

Teemu Ruskola, “Canton is Not Boston”

May 14, 15, 16: The Problem of History

May 14 Required

Wang Hui, “The Idea of Asia and its Ambiguities”

Milner and Johnson, “The Idea of Asia”

Sanjay Subrahmanyam, from *Is Indian Civilization a Myth?: Fictions and Histories*

May 15 Required

Kenneth Pomeranz, from *The Great Divergence*

Jared Diamond, from *Guns, Germs, and Steel* (322-33, 354-375, 403-425)

Optional

Andre Gunder Frank, from *Re-Orient*
Jared Diamond, from *Guns, Germs, and Steel* (376-402)

May 16 Required

Karatani Kojin, from *History and Repetition*
Naoki Sakai, from *Deconstructing Nationality*
Haun Saussy, "China and the World"

Optional

Ban Wang, from *The Sublime Figure of History*
Wang Hui, "Depoliticized Politics"

May 19, 20: The Problem of Values

May 19 Required

Tu Wei-ming, from *The Living Tree*
Ruth Benedict, from *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (two parts)
Daniel Bell, from *Beyond Liberal Democracy*
William de Bary, from *Asian Values and Human Rights*

May 20 Required

Ien Ang, from *On Not Speaking Chinese*
Allen Chun, "Fuck Chineseness"
Arif Dirlik, "Timespace, Social Space, and the Question of Chinese Culture"

Optional

Eric Hayot, from *The Hypothetical Mandarin*

May 21, 22: The Problem of Aesthetics

May 21 Required

Karatani Kojin, "Uses of Aesthetics"
Christopher Bush, "The Ethnicity of Things"
C.J.W.-L. Wee, "We Asians"? Modernity, Visual Art Exhibitions, and East Asia"

Optional

Shu-mei Shih, from *Visualizing Identity*

May 22 Required

Hiroki Azuma, from *General Will 2.0*
Kuan-Hsing Chen, from *Asia as Method*

Films, screening times TBA:

Jia Zhangke, dir. *A Touch of Sin*
Gen Sekiguchi, dir. *Survive Style 5+*

Academic Dishonesty

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process.

Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University’s Policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Statement on Electronic Resources

In this course we will be using Dropbox. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, they will be required to do so through a personal or private Dropbox account.

It may be that we use other electronic technology to handle course materials or other information—I am not familiar with the McMaster system. I will let you know if any such technology requires you to divulge personal information.

Course Modification Statement

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

Faculty of Social Sciences E-Mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Email Forwarding in MUGSI: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/uts/support/email/emailforward.html>

*Forwarding will take effect 24-hours after students complete the process at the above link.