

SOC 372H1S TRANSNATIONAL ASIA
Winter 2026, University of Toronto, St. George Campus

Time: Friday 3:10-5 pm

Room: See Acorn

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course approaches Asia from a transnational perspective to enhance our understanding of the complexities involved in Asia's contemporary transformations. Departing from traditional nation-state-oriented analyses, this class explores Asia's transnational interconnectedness through the experiences of trans-Pacific politics, war and colonial legacies, global capitalism, labor migration, international norms of citizenship, urban development, and flows of ideas and popular cultures. As a way of questioning the prevalent notions about Asia and the dominant assumptions in regional studies, we closely examine the contradictions and challenges Asia faces in its political, economic, social, and cultural spheres. This critical approach is expected to offer a deeper investigation of Asia in and of itself while critiquing the limitations of the existing frameworks and approaches found in the study of Asia.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Students are expected to achieve the following

- (1) To understand the basic concepts and debates related to transnational interconnections by critically engaging with readings, lectures, and class discussions
- (2) To gain knowledge on the political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions of transnational processes in Asia
- (3) To critically examine the transformations and challenges created by the transnational process in Asia
- (4) To demonstrate and articulate students' understanding of course materials in oral and written assignments.

PREREQUISITES: Two (1.0 FCE) of 200-level sociology courses. Students enrolled without the prerequisite will be removed at any time, and without notice.

COURSE MATERIALS

There is no required textbook. All readings are available on Quercus. Please check the website regularly as important announcements, class-related information, and any additional materials will be posted there.

*Suggested reference reading to understand the timeline of important events in Asia:

- Carla Thomas, “Five Historic Moments that Transformed Asia in the Last Century”
Forbes September 19, 2017:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/cfthomas/2017/09/19/5-historic-moments-that-transformed-asia-in-the-last-century/#fa701763e5f4>

- Asia for Educators, Columbia University:

http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/main_pop/related/timelines.htm

ASSIGNMENTS and GRADING

Assignments	Point (100)	Due date
Attendance	10	Wk 2-6 & Wk 8-11
Response paper 1	20	Jan 30
Response paper 2	20	Mar 20
Midterm exam	30	Feb 27
Reflection paper	20	April 10

1. Attendance: 10 %

Excluding the first and last class and the midterm day, students who attend the remaining 9 classes receive 1 point for each class. Students who attend all 9 classes will get an additional point of 1. At the end of each class, professor will pose one question and students write an attendance note by answering the question.

2. Response papers: 2 x 20 points = 40% (1200 words, max, for each paper)

Response paper 1: Due 2 pm, January 30

Students read the assigned readings of Week 4 (Jan 30). They choose another academic paper (a paper that appeared in a sociology journal in 2015-2025 with a length of 15 pages or more) on their own, which addresses a similar topic. The response paper should discuss the following topics:

- What is the main argument in the assigned readings?
- What are the empirical examples used in the readings?
- What is the main argument in the new article that you found out?
- What are the empirical examples used in the new article that you found out?

- How do the two sets of readings relate to each other? How do they converge or diverge in their main arguments?
- How do the two sets of reading together inform and change our understanding of Asia?

Response paper 2: Due 2 pm, March 20

Students read the assigned readings of Week 10 (Mar 20). They choose another academic paper (a paper that appeared in a sociology academic journal in 2015-2025 with a length of 15 pages or more) on their own, which addresses a similar topic. The response paper should discuss the following topics:

- What is the main argument in the assigned readings?
- What are the empirical examples used in the readings?
- What is the main argument in the new article that you found out?
- What are the empirical examples used in the new article that you found out?
- How do the two sets of readings relate to each other? How do they converge or diverge in their main arguments?
- How do the two sets of reading together inform and change our understanding of Asia?

3. Mid-term test: 30%, Feb 27

There will be an in-class mid-term test to assess students' understanding of the key concepts and arguments discussed in lectures and assigned readings (no multiple choice).

4. Final reflection paper: 20%, Due 2 pm, Apr 10 (1500 words, max)

The professor will pose two broad questions that touch upon central themes discussed in the course throughout the semester. Students choose **one question** and write an essay that responds to the question posed. Two questions will be posted on Quercus by Mar 20 to give time for students to reflect on course materials. The reflection paper should include the following.

- Demonstration of a solid understanding of relevant course materials.
- Incorporation of at least **three readings outside course readings** (more is fine). The three readings can be a combination of journal articles, books, and book chapters found from students' independent research.
- Articulation of students' own reflections on the topic by addressing the questions posed by the professor. Instead of just summarizing the readings and the authors' arguments, students need to describe what new knowledge and perspective they gained by studying the subject with course materials and new readings they found out.
- Using a proper citation style of the student's choice, including in-text citation and a list of references.

***Recommended format:** All written assignments should be within the word limit set for each assignment, excluding tables, figures, and bibliography. Font 12 and double-spacing recommended. If any sources are cited in the assignment, students need to provide full citations (in-text and bibliography) and use an appropriate reference style.

*** Turnitin:** Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. The terms that apply to the University’s use of the Turnitin.com service is described on the Turnitin.com web site. Assignments not submitted through Turnitin will receive a grade of zero (0 %), unless a student instead provides, along with their position paper, sufficient secondary material (e.g., reading notes, outlines of the paper, rough drafts of the final draft, etc.) to establish that the paper they submit is truly their own. The alternative (not submitting via Turnitin) is in place because, strictly speaking, using Turnitin is voluntary for students at the University of Toronto.

***Writing skills:** The quality of writing will greatly impact the grade. Writing skills (clarity, logic, parsimony, organization) are probably the most important skills students need to develop in university. Students in need of improving their writing skills can be assisted by various services and workshops offered by the Academic Success Centre, the Career Centre, and UofT Libraries: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/news/writing-plus>

RULES FOR GRADING

1. Grade scale:

A+: Above 90	B+: 77-79	C+: 67-69	D+: 57-59	F: 0-49
A: 85-89	B: 73-76	C: 63-66	D: 53-56	
A-: 80-84	B-: 70-72	C-: 60-62	D-: 50-52	

2. Late submissions: Assignments that fail to meet the deadlines will result in losing one point for every 24-hour tardiness from the original due date.

3. Incomplete: No incomplete will be granted in this course unless the student provides evidence of emergencies such as family bereavement or medical treatment.

4. Missed deadlines and tests: Students who miss a paper deadline or a test will receive a mark of zero for that paper or test unless the reason is a circumstance beyond their control. Within three days of missing a paper deadline or test, students must send the instructor a request for consideration. Students must document their request with one of the following:

- Absence declaration via ACORN (can only be used once during the semester)
- U of T Verification of Illness or Injury Form
- College Registrar's letter (e.g., in case of personal/family crisis or emergency)
- Letter of Academic Accommodation from Accessibility Services

Students who miss the test or are late in submitting an assignment for other reasons, such as family or other personal reasons, should request their College Registrar to email the instructor.

ACADEMIC HONESTY and CLASS ETHICS

1. Academic integrity/Plagiarism: Academic integrity is fundamental to learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that the U of T degree that students earn will be valued as a true indication of their individual academic achievement. Familiarize yourself with the University of Toronto's Code of Behavior on Academic Matters:

<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>

The University of Toronto treats cases of academic misconduct very seriously. All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following the procedures outlined in the Code. The consequences for academic misconduct can be severe, including a failure in the course and a notation on the student's transcript. If students have questions about appropriate research and citation methods, they need to seek out additional information from the professor or from other available campus resources like the U of T Writing Website.

2. AI use: Students may use AI for grammar-check and proof-reading purposes but not for generating the content of their assignments.

3. Electronic devices: Cell phones should be turned off during class. Laptops can be used in class for note-taking purposes only. No web browsing is allowed as it inhibits learning and disrupts class discussion.

4. Taping, recording, photographing lectures: Lectures and course materials prepared by the professor are the professor's intellectual property covered by the Canadian Copyright Act. Students wishing to record lecture or other course material are required to ask the professor's explicit permission and may not do so unless permission is granted. This includes tape recording, filming, photographing PowerPoint slides, etc. Once obtained, such permission is only for that individual student's own study purposes and does not include permission to "publish" them in any way. It is absolutely forbidden for a student to publish the professor's notes to a website or sell them in other form without formal permission.

5. Accessibility needs: Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if students have a disability or health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach the professor and/or Accessibility Services at

(416) 978-8060 or visit: <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility>

6. Contacting the professor: If students feel overwhelmed by the course materials or encounter other personal difficulties that may affect their performance in class, they should immediately contact the professor and seek consultation EARLY in the semester.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topics, Readings, and Assignments
W1: Jan 9	Introduction & Overview
W2: Jan 16	<p>What is Asia? How to study Asia sociologically?</p> <p>-Prasenjit Duaram, "Asia redux: Conceptualizing a region for our times," <i>Journal of Asian Studies</i> 69-4 (2010): Read the first three sections p.963-977</p> <p>-Hannah Ming Yit Ho and Ying-kit Chan, "Interrogating the transnational paradigm in Southeast Asia," <i>Cultures in Transnational Southeast Asia</i> (2025): 1-16</p>
W3: Jan 23	<p>Colonialism, war, and Asia</p> <p>-Lisa Yoneyama, "Transpacific Cold War formations and the question of (un)redressability," in <i>Cold War Ruins</i> (Duke University Press 2016): 1-42</p> <p>-Hansson, Hewison and Glassman, "Legacies of the Cold War in East and Southeast Asia," <i>Journal of Contemporary Asia</i> 50-4 (2020): 493-510</p>
W4: Jan 30	<p>The military and Asia</p> <p>-Patrick Chung, "From Korea to Vietnam: Local labor, multinational capital, and the evolution of US military logistics, 1950–97," <i>Radical History Review</i> 133 (2019): 31-55</p> <p>-David Vine, "No bases? Assessing the impact of social movements..." <i>Current Anthropology</i> 60 (2019): 158-172</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response paper 1 due
W5: Feb 6	<p>Capitalism, the state, and Asia</p> <p>-Wonik Kim, "Rethinking colonialism and the origins of the developmental state in East Asia," <i>Journal of Contemporary Asia</i> 39-3 (2009): 382-399</p> <p>-Jenny Chesters. "The rise of China and India and the formation of a transnational capitalist class in the Asia/Oceania region" in <i>Globalization and Transnational Capitalism in Asia and Oceania</i> (Routledge 2016): 56-72</p>
W6: Feb 13	<p>Labor in Asia</p> <p>-Dae-oup Chang, "Informalizing labor in Asia's global factory," <i>Journal of Contemporary Asia</i> 39-2 (2009): 161-179</p>

	-Kalleberg, Hewison and Shin, "Precarious work in comparative perspective," in <i>Precarious Asia</i> (Stanford University Press 2021): 18-34
Feb 20	Reading week: No class
W7: Feb 27	Midterm test
W8: Mar 6	<p>Migration, gender, and citizenship 1</p> <p>-Nicole Constable, "Introduction," in <i>Cross-border Marriages: Gender and Mobility on Transnational Asia</i> (University of Pennsylvania Press 2005): 1-16</p> <p>-Adamson, Chung and Hollifield, "Rethinking the migration state: Historicising, decolonising, and disaggregating," <i>Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies</i> 50-3 (2024): 559-577</p>
W9: Mar 13	<p>Migration, gender, and citizenship 2</p> <p>-Sonia Ryang, "Space and time: The experience of the 'Zainichi'," <i>Urban Anthropology and Studies of ...</i> 43-4 (2014): 519-550</p> <p>-Chickera and Waas, "Statelessness in Asia," in <i>Routledge Handbook of Human Rights in Asia</i> (2019): 215-230</p>
W10: Mar 20	<p>Food and Asia</p> <p>-Nicolyn Woodcock, "Tasting the 'Forgotten War': Korean/American memory and military base stew," <i>Journal of Asian American Studies</i> 21-1 (2018): 135-156</p> <p>-Robert Ku, "MSG" in <i>Dubious Gastronomy</i> (University of Hawaii Press 2014): 159-189</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response paper 2 due
W11: Mar 27	<p>Transnational culture</p> <p>-Solee Shin and Lanu Kim, "Organizing K-pop," <i>East Asia</i> 30-4 (2013): 255-272</p> <p>-Olga Fedorenko, "Korean-Wave celebrities between global capital and regional nationalisms," <i>Inter-Asia Cultural Studies</i> 18-4 (2017): 498-517</p> <p>-Ashvin I. Devasundaram, "Bollywood's soft power: Branding the nation, sustaining a meta-hegemony," <i>New Cinemas</i> 14-1 (2016): 51-70</p>
W12: Apr 3	Good Friday: No class
W13: Apr 10	Reflection papers due on April 10