ICIR 231 Imperial Legacies in Asia

Course Description & Aims:
Throughout history and across the globe, empires have been an enduring and influential form of socio-political organization. This course assesses how the legacies of past Asian and Western empires, such as those of the Chinese and the British, continue to affect Asia today. In particular, it outlines how Western and Japanese colonialism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries shaped the political, economic, social and religious systems of present-day Asian countries. The course also considers how these countries have tried to understand and deal with their imperial legacies since gaining independence. Lastly, it discusses the ways in which world powers still seek to exert their influence over less powerful states in the region. Students will examine both primary sources related to imperialism and the secondary literature that has sought to understand this phenomenon.

A concise history of the region from the beginning of the modern colonial period through to independence; independence, liberalism, nationalism, communism, democratization and globalization. Students will understand; assess; analyse both primary and secondary sources related to imperialism in Asia.

Lecturer: Mr. Christian Oesterheld
Office Number: Office Hours:
Email address:

Assessment
There are four assessment components:
Classroom participation 10%
Mid-term examination 20%
Essay 30%
Final examination 40%

Course Learning Outcomes
At the completion of the course the student will be able to:

1. Describe the main features and effects of former empires and imperial traditions in Asia
2. Identify and assess how former empires and imperial traditions continue to influence Asian states and societies in the present day
3. Discuss and evaluate the different theories and perspectives on colonialism and imperialism
4. Compare and contrast the effects of different empires upon specific countries in Asia
5. Understand, interpret and evaluate how imperialism and colonialism affects a particular Asian state or society in one specific aspect, e.g. politics, economics, religion etc., in the present day
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**Assessment Methods & Criteria**

1. **Classroom Participation (10%)**
   Students will receive between 0% and 5% for attendance, with lateness also being taken into consideration. Students will also receive between 0% and 5% for participating in class; this includes being an active member of a group during group work activities, and asking and answering questions.

2. **Mid-Term Examination (20%)**
   The mid-term exam will be held in Week 6 and cover all the topics from Weeks 1 to 5. It consists of 3 sections. Section A (20%) is a matching exercise that tests students on the definitions of key words including people, places, concepts, events and terms. Section B (30%) consists of a number of essay questions related to the lectures and readings done in class; the students write a short essay answering one of these questions. Section C (50%) consists of a number of essay questions based on the take-home weekly reading assignments; students write an essay answering one question.

3. **Essay (30%)**
   Students write an essay in which they analyse a particular piece of writing by a prominent Asian nationalist from the mid-twentieth century. In their analysis, students need to explain who the writer was, why they wrote that essay and what it can tell us about their ideas about and understanding of national identity. In particular, they need to discuss how these ideas still affect that particular country today. Lastly, they should also consider what types of bias the writer displays and some of the problems in using the source. The essay should be between 1,500 and 2,000 words and is due in Week 10. Essays should include in-text citations where relevant and a bibliography of all the sources consulted. Any essays submitted after the deadline will receive a penalty of minus 2 percent per day. Some examples of the nationalist texts that can be examined include: Burma: Aung San, ‘An Address to the Anglo-Burmans’ (1946). Indonesia: Sukarno, ‘The Birth of the Pancasila’ (1945).

4. **Final Examination (40%)**
   The final examination is held in Week 13. It consists of two sections, each worth 50% of the total mark. Section A consists of a number of essay questions based on the take-home weekly reading assignments done between Weeks 7 and 12. Section B involves reading a short, previously unseen primary source related to one or more of the topics covered in the entire course and then writing an essay answering the related question.
Introduction: Defining Imperialism and Colonialism

**Topic description:** Students will be introduced to the course outline and forms of assessment. They will also consider what imperialism and colonialism are/were and how these phenomena still affect twenty-first-century Asia. The ways in which scholars have attempted to understand and analyze imperialism and colonialism will be outlined. Terms such as empire, state, and colonial are discussed and defined.

**Expected learning outcomes:** Students will be able to define imperialism, colonialism and related terms. They will also be able to discuss how these phenomena continue to influence Asia today.

**Readings and activities:**
- In class: Students define and discuss imperialism and colonialism.
- In class: Students brainstorm examples of how imperialism continues to affect Asia.

Asian Imperial Traditions and Pre-Colonial Continuities

**Topic description:** Students will be introduced to the empires that covered much of Asia in the pre-colonial/early modern period, such as the Mughals in South Asia and the Qing dynasty in China. Particular attention is paid to how the political systems and religio-philosophical ideologies of these empires still continue to influence the governance of their successor states and former parts of their empires in the present-day. Pre-colonial forms of states, such as the mandala state in Southeast Asia and interstate relations, particularly the Chinese tributary system, are also discussed.

**Expected learning outcomes:** Students will be able to describe the political systems and ideologies of early modern Asian empires. They will also be able to discuss to what extent features of these empires continue to influence Asia today.

**Readings and activities:**
- In class: Students brainstorm names of historical Asian empires and information related to them.
- In class: Students discuss how these past empires might influence present-day Asia.

State-building and Governance: Authoritarianism and Democracy

**Topic description:** This week’s topic focuses on how Western and Japanese colonialists established modern state apparatus – with Western-educated bureaucrats working in functional ministries – in their Asian colonies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Attention is paid to how the colonial governments had to recruit and coopt local elites and/or ethnic minorities as collaborators and agents of the colonial state, with a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of direct versus indirect rule. While Western colonial governments in Asia were by their very nature authoritarian, some colonial regimes nevertheless sought to introduce representative, participatory forms of governance as part of their so-called ‘civilizing mission’. Students will evaluate the success of this democratic training and its influence upon the present-day political systems of former colonies in Asia.
Expected learning outcomes: Students will be able to describe how colonial states were established and run in Asia. They will also be able to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of different forms of colonial governance. Lastly, they will be able to evaluate how colonial forms of governance influence Asian nation-states today.

Readings and activities:
- In class: Students brainstorm the areas colonized by Westerners and Japanese in Asia.
- In class: Students discuss the advantages and disadvantages of direct and indirect rule.
- In class reading: Students compare and contrast the arguments for and against collaborating with colonizers by reading the correspondence between two Vietnamese scholar-officials on the French colonial government.

Economic Development and Exploitation

Topic description: This week’s topic considers how and why the Western and Japanese colonial governments sought to develop the economies of their Asian colonies. Attention is paid to how the Asian colonies were transformed into producers of primary products – e.g. minerals, fossil fuels, rubber, teak, tin, etc. and foodstuffs such as rice – for the industrial economies of the West and Japan. Asian colonies were also important markets for the industrial manufactures of their colonial power and, hence, their industrialization was stymied. This led to economic dependency and underdevelopment, which continues to plague some Asian economies to this day. Students will consider the debates among scholars regarding the economic legacies of imperialism, particularly those comparing Japanese colonial policies with Western ones.

Expected learning outcomes: Students will be able to describe how colonial governments developed the economies of their Asian colonies. They will also be able to assess who the winners and losers of this economic development were and how colonial economic policies led to dependency and underdevelopment. Lastly, they will be able to compare and contrast the effects of Western and Japanese economic policies on their colonies.

Readings and activities:
- In class: Students brainstorm the economic resources that Western and Japanese imperialists sought in Asia.
- In class: Students discuss the advantages and disadvantages of Western and Japanese imperialism for the economic development of their colonies.

Religious Reform and Conversion
**Topic description:** This topic examines how religious beliefs and practices were shaped by the policies of the imperial powers and the actions of the colonized believers. Westerners and Japanese alike sought to reform and codify the religions of their colonial subjects in an effort to understand and control them. In all their colonies, Westerners sought to convert people to Christianity, with varying results. Converting to Christianity was a way of aligning oneself with the colonial power and thus carried certain privileges but also dangers as it might lead to ostracisation by local communities. Moreover, Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, Christians and those of other beliefs often framed their opposition to imperialism through religious means.

**Expected learning outcomes:** Students will be able to discuss how imperialism shaped religions in Asia. They will also be able to discuss how Asian people sought to accommodate or resist imperialism through religious practices and organisations. Lastly, they will be able to compare and contrast the religious policies, and their effects, of different colonial governments.

**Readings and activities:**
- In class: Students brainstorm how and why imperial powers might try to utilize and shape religions.
- In class: Students discuss how religion might be used as means of accommodating or resisting imperialism.

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**Review and Mid-term Examination**

**Expected learning outcomes:** N/A

**Readings and activities:**
- Predicting possible topics and essay questions
- Reviewing reading assignments

**Racial Ideologies and Ethnic Hierarchies**

**Topic description:** This topic examines how the racial ideologies and policies of the imperial powers affected ethnic identities and inter-ethnic relations. Western colonialists frequently employed ‘divide-and-rule’ policies that solidified ethnic identities and exacerbated or even created antagonisms between different ethnic groups. Some ethnic minorities of so-called ‘martial races’ – e.g. the Sikhs and Ambonese – were employed in colonial armies and police forces to aid in the control of ethnic minorities. In colonies where the Westerners believed that the ‘natives’ were too lazy or uneducated to work in a capitalist economy and/or where there were shortages of labour, they imported huge numbers of coolies from India or China. These policies led to what the colonial scholar J. S. Furnivall called ‘the plural society’, in which different groups mixed but did not combine. In some cases, Westerners created new ethnic groups as they sought to categorize
their colonial subjects, with the Dayaks of Borneo being an example. Besides examining these policies and their impacts, students will also consider how Western and Japanese racism evolved over time.

**Expected learning outcomes:** Students will be able to explain how colonial racial ideologies and policies affected ethnic identities and relations. They will also be to discuss the concept of the plural society. Lastly, they will be able to describe how Western and Japanese racism evolved.

**Readings and activities:**
- In class: Students brainstorm different ethnic minorities in Southeast Asia in teams.
- In class: Students discuss the relevance of the concept of the plural society to Asia today.

**Nationalist Movements and National Identities**

**Topic description:** Following on with some of the themes and issues from the previous topic, this topic examines how nationalist movements championing modern ideologies such as democracy and socialism and utilizing modern forms of organization emerged under colonial rule and sought to forge broad national identities, encompassing all or most of the people of that particular colony, in order to campaign for independence. Apart from examining these developments, students will also consider the responses of the imperial powers to nationalist agitation. In some cases, the colonial governments were able to distract or nullify nationalists by offering them limited forms of political representation and promises of future independence; in others, they refused to countenance independent and resorted to outright suppression, sometimes leading to the creation of martyrs for the nationalist cause.

**Expected learning outcomes:** Students will be able to explain the emergence of nationalist movements and the creation of national identities. They will also be able to discuss how the responses of the colonial powers shaped Asian nationalisms and nationalist movements. Lastly, they will be able to discuss the different ways in which scholars have tried to understand and categorize Asian nationalisms.

**Readings and activities:**
- In class: Students brainstorm the ingredients for a national identity.
- In class: Students discuss whether it is possible to both a nationalist and a collaborator with a colonial regime.

**Decolonization and the Cold War**

**Topic description:** The different ways in which the imperial powers and nationalist movements interacted with each had profound consequences for decolonization, principally in determining whether it was done peacefully through negotiation or violently through wars of independence. This topic places the process of decolonization after the Second World War in the context of the Cold War, examining the interplay between the attitudes and policies of the colonial powers, the strategic aims and actions of the two superpowers, specifically the United States and the Soviet Union, and the initiatives of Asian independence movements. Particular attention is paid to the Korean and Indochina Wars and their legacies. Students will consider to what extent
nationalist leaders exploited Cold War politics to achieve their aims and the degree to which they truly believed in the ideologies of the two blocs.

**Expected learning outcomes:** Students will be able to explain how Asian countries gained their independence in the post-World War Two period. They will be able to discuss how the Cold War affected the process of decolonization. Lastly, they will be able to compare and contrast the decolonization process in different Asian countries.

**Readings and activities:**
- In class: Students brainstorm things they know about the Cold War in Asia.
- In class: Students discuss why some Asian countries chose to align themselves with one of the two Cold War blocs while others tried to remain neutral.

**Post-Colonial Challenges and Post-Colonial Theory**

**Topic description:** Having achieved independence, the new Asian nation-states faced an array of challenges that were not limited to just choosing sides in the Cold War. These challenges took various political, economic and social forms, such as how to deal with the poverty of their populations, the prevalence of ethnically or religiously motivated insurgencies, and/or finding a political system that was suited to dealing with these challenges. Moreover, students will consider how Asian societies have sought to come to terms with the legacies of imperialism, for instance through the construction of national histories that downplay or highlight the role of imperialism. In particular, they will examine the ideas of Asian scholars working in the field of post-colonial studies.

**Expected learning outcomes:** Students will be able to describe and explain the challenges faced by Asian nation-state and the effectiveness of their responses to them in the post-colonial period. They will also be to discuss the broad outlines of post-colonial theory.

**Readings and activities:**
- In class: Students brainstorm the challenges that newly independent Asian states faced in the mid- to late twentieth century.
- In class: Students discuss the ways in which Asian societies might try to understand their imperial legacies.

**Neo-Imperialism in the Twenty-First Century**

**Topic description:** Despite the end of formal colonialism in the mid- to late twentieth century, global superpowers such as the United States and China continue to exert their influence over Asian countries in the present day. Attention is paid to the ways in which these superpowers exert their influence, through the granting of military or economic aid, for instance, or the creation of supranational organisations and treaties.
**Expected learning outcomes:** Students will be able to describe what neo-imperialism is. They will also be able to discuss how neo-imperialist powers exert their influence over Asian countries in the present day.

**Readings and activities:**
- In class: Students define neo-imperialism and discuss how it differs from previous forms of imperialism.
- In class: Students discuss how global superpowers continue to exert influence in Asia today.

**Review for Final Examination**

**Topic description:** Review
**Expected learning outcomes:** N/A

**Readings and activities:**
Predicting possible topics and essay questions
Reviewing reading assignments
Practice in-exam reading exercise