EAST ASIAN STUDIES (EAST)

* EAST 030b / HIST 030b, Tokyo Daniel Botsman
Four centuries of Japan’s history explored through the many incarnations, destructions, and rebirths of its foremost city. Focus on the solutions found by Tokyo’s residents to the material and social challenges of concentrating such a large population in one place. Tensions between continuity and impermanence, authenticity and modernity, and social order and the culture of play. Enrollment limited to freshmen. Preregistration required; see under Freshman Seminar Program. WR, HU

EAST 220a / HIST 321a, China from Present to Past, 2021–960 Valerie Hansen
Underlying causes of current issues facing China traced back to their origins in the premodern period. Topics include economic development, corruption, environmental crises, gender, and Pacific island disputes. Selected primary-source readings in English, images, videos, and Web resources. WR, HU

EAST 229a / EALL 219a or b / HUMS 214a / PHIL 119a / RLST 171a, Introduction to Chinese Philosophy
This course represents an introduction to the most important philosophical thinkers and texts in Chinese history, ranging from roughly 500 BC–1500 AD. Topics include ethics, political philosophy, epistemology, and ontology. We discuss the basic works of Confucian and Daoist philosophers during the Warring States and early imperial eras, the continuation of these traditions in early medieval “dark learning,” Buddhist philosophy (in its original Indian context, the early period of its spread to China, and in mature Chinese Buddhist schools such as Chan/Zen), and Neo–Confucian philosophy. The course emphasizes readings in the original texts of the thinkers and traditions in question (all in English translation). No knowledge of Chinese or previous contact with Chinese philosophy required. HU

EAST 240a / CHNS 200a / EALL 200a / HUMS 270a, The Chinese Tradition Tina Lu
An introduction to the literature, culture, and thought of premodern China, from the beginnings of the written record to the turn of the twentieth century. Close study of textual and visual primary sources, with attention to their historical and cultural backdrops. Students enrolled in CHNS 200 join a weekly Mandarin-language discussion section. No knowledge of Chinese required for students enrolled in EALL 200. Students enrolled in CHNS 200 must have LS proficiency in Mandarin or permission of the course instructor. HU

* EAST 253b / EALL 265b / LITR 251b, Japanese Literature after 1970 Timothy Goddard
This course provides a survey of Japanese literature from 1970 to the present. Readings include novels and essays from a diverse range of authors, addressing themes such as identity, language, memory, domesticity, postmodernism, and racial discrimination. Students develop extensive knowledge of contemporary Japanese literature, while also cultivating skills in close reading and research methods. All readings are in English translation; no knowledge of Japanese is required. HU

EAST 301a / HIST 307a, The Making of Japan’s Great Peace, 1550–1850 Fabian Drixler
Examination of how, after centuries of war in Japan and overseas, the Tokugawa shogunate built a peace that lasted more than 200 years. Japan’s urban revolution, the eradication of Christianity, the Japanese discovery of Europe, and the question of whether Tokugawa Japan is a rare example of a complex and populous society that achieved ecological sustainability. HU

* EAST 302a / HIST 303Ja, Hong Kong and China: A Cross-Border History Denise Ho
This departmental seminar studies the historical development of Hong Kong and China in relation to each other, from the colonial and late imperial experience to their shared histories in national and political movements, from postwar industrialization to reform-era economic growth, culminating in the 1997 handover and its attendant political and economic integration. The readings from the first half of the semester come primarily from the literature in history, while the readings in the second half draw from anthropology, economics, political science, and sociology. Each week readings include primary sources in or translated into English. WR, HU

* EAST 303b / HIST 303Jb, Uses of the Past in Modern China Denise Ho
Modern China’s use of the past in state-sponsored narratives of nation, in attempts to construct heritage by elites and intellectuals, and in grassroots projects of remembrance. Theories on history and memory; primary sources in English translation; case studies from twentieth-century China. Interdisciplinary readings in art history, anthropology, cultural studies, and history. WR, HU

EAST 310b / GLBL 309b / PLSC 357b, The Rise of China Daniel Mattingly
Analysis of Chinese domestic and foreign politics, with a focus on the country’s rise as a major political and economic power. Topics include China’s recent history, government, ruling party, technology, trade, military, diplomacy, and foreign policy. SO

* EAST 310b / HIST 310Jb, Tokugawa Japan and the Human Condition Fabian Drixler
An exploration of what Tokugawa Japan can teach us about shared human challenges and the diverse solutions different societies have found for them. Topics include standards of physical beauty; loyalty; romantic love; naming and the power of words; animals, infants, and the boundaries of humanity; unspeakable truths and open secrets; concealed power and the power of concealment; permissible violence; acceptable disasters; and the relationship of the living with the dead. In their coursework, students are invited to draw on their knowledge of other times and places as they put Tokugawa Japan in comparative perspective. HU

* EAST 340a / EALL 300a, Sinological Methods Pauline Lin
A research course in Chinese studies, designed for students with background in modern and literary Chinese. Explore and evaluate the wealth of primary sources and research tools available in China and in the West. For native speakers of Chinese, introduction to the secondary literature in English and instruction in writing professionally in English on topics about China. Topics include Chinese bibliographies; bibliophiles’ notes; specialized dictionaries; maps and geographical gazetteers; textual editions, variations and reliability
of texts; genealogies and biographical sources; archaeological and visual materials; and major Chinese encyclopedias, compendia, and databases. Prerequisite: CHNS 171 or equivalent. Formerly CHNS 202.  

EAST 375b / HIST 375b, China from Mao to Now  Denise Ho
The history of the People’s Republic of China from Mao to now, with a focus on understanding the recent Chinese past and framing contemporary events in China in historical context. How the party-state is organized; interactions between state and society; causes and consequences of economic disparities; ways in which various groups—from intellectuals to religious believers—have shaped the meaning of contemporary Chinese society.  

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EAST 391a / EALL 296a / RLST 121a, Religion and Culture in Korea  Hwansoo Kim
Introduction to Shamanism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, Christianity, and new religions in Korea from ancient times to the present. Examination of religious traditions in close relationships with social, economic, political, and cultural environments in Korean society. Examination of religious tensions, philosophical arguments, and ethical issues that indigenous and foreign religions in Korea have engaged throughout history to maximize their influence in Korean society.  

HU

EAST 401b / EALL 321b / THST 367b, Theater and Drama Traditions of China and Japan  Staff
This seminar offers a window into Chinese and Japanese drama and theater traditions from their beginnings to the 20th century. We engage issues of dramatic texts as well as performance practices; thus, the course draws on material from theater history, performance and acting conventions, and the literary history of drama. Readings and discussions span major genres of dramatic writing and their different modes of performance, including the Chinese dramatic genres of zaju and chuanqi; Chinese performance styles of Beijing opera and Kunqu; and Japanese dramatic genres and performance practices of noh, kyogen, kabuki, and puppet theater. Throughout the course, we engage closely with dramatic texts as literature, giving detailed thematic readings to some canonical and non-canonical plays. We also consider how dramatic writing and theatrical performance relate to broader trends in sociopolitical history and literary history, exploring how dramatic texts and theatrical performance embody a multivalent and multisensory space that is unique among creative enterprises. We deal with both the actor and the text, and consider how each are conditioned by modern and premodern contexts. No prerequisites are required, although some prior knowledge of China or Japan is helpful.  

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EAST 402a / EALL 290a / FILM 422a, Screening China from the Margins  Staff
This seminar challenges mainstream understandings of contemporary China by focusing on films concerned with the people who exist on its margins. The course is divided into three units: sexuality, socio-economic inequality, and ethnicity. Students are introduced to the terms of film analysis and of contemporary Chinese history and social issues. Films are drawn from China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, and represent both major studio directors, such as Wang Kar-wai and Ang Lee, and independent directors, such as Pema Tseden and Jia Zhangke. Students have the option of creating short videos/films in lieu of certain written assignments. All films and readings are available in English. No previous knowledge of Chinese language or culture is required.  

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EAST 403b / HIST 315b, Japan and Germany, 1860 to the Present  Staff
This course examines the histories of Japan and Germany from the founding of the two as modern nation states through the present. Relatively latecomers compared to supposedly “normal” nation states like the United States, France, and the United Kingdom, both societies followed similar, sometimes connected paths. The course introduces students to connections between East Asia and Europe through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and explores how the specific parallels and entanglements between Japan and Germany shaped the histories of both regions. The course emphasizes themes of race, gender, and empire. Students engage with texts in history, sociology, and anthropology to answer key questions about Japanese and German history with particular emphasis on the question: is there something “peculiar” about their histories that led them to similar outcomes?  

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EAST 404a / HIST 305a / RLST 359a, Faith in Law in East Asia: Beginnings to 1800  Staff
This course investigates law in East Asia from ancient times to 1800 from the perspective of belief. We debate treatises, codes, cases, and cultural products from across East Asia’s legal traditions, tracing the lives they took on. We work to understand firsthand law in its diverse contexts. More fundamentally, we consider the many ways in which people formed beliefs about what “law” might be or do. We examine the philosophical and faith traditions—and the hopes and fears—through which law was articulated, justified, realized, and then immediately contested. Throughout, we ask: What does it mean to invest law with one’s faith? How much of one’s belief is law? How much does law depend on one’s belief? What gave people pause about this over time? You develop your own answers, with an eye toward how all of this has been understood, misunderstood, and appropriated across cultures and time. So the next time you hear an analyst or government official explain something in East Asia as rooted in “a Confucian disdain for law,” or “Japanese ‘Justice,’” (feat. in NYT) you will be equipped to strike up a conversation about just how they arrived at that belief.  

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EAST 405a / HIST 317a, Japanese History before 1600: Society and Economy  Staff
This seminar employs a topical approach to the social and economic history of Japan between about 800 and 1600. We begin with the roles of each social group, from emperor to outcast, and then explore critical issues including: disease and famine; the varied roles of women; cities and commerce; the human relationship to the environment; legal and extralegal crime and punishment; and contacts with Korea and China.  

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EAST 406a / EAST 506a / RLST 225a / RLST 628a, Paradise in Buddhism: Pure Land Traditions  Staff
Pure Land Buddhism is a tradition with roots in India that developed most extensively in East Asia. Unlike other forms of Buddhism, it centers on a paradise motif and is largely devotional in character. It arises from scriptural stories about a transcendent Buddha named Amida who vows to bring all living beings to enlightenment via an other-worldly realm known as the Pure Land. The seminar examines this tradition historically against the backdrop of Buddhism in general, focusing on the Pure Land sutras and the unfolding of Pure Land
Buddhism in Japan. Among the goals of the course is to develop familiarity with the structure of the sutras and with classical Buddhology, the core concepts and strategies of Buddhist doctrine and story-making. It also explores the teachings of several celebrated Japanese Buddhists, the portrayal of women in texts and religious practices, and the demythologization of Pure Land and Amida in the modern period. HU

* EAST 412b / RLST 417, Mummies, Ghost, and Relics: Understandings of the Sacred Dead  Staff
The objective of this course is to examine how Buddhist cultures perceive of death—conceptually and physically through corpses, mummies, ghosts, and relics—using secondary scholarship in English on Buddhist sutras, popular stories, oral traditions, and material objects. The readings, which span across China, India, Japan, and Taiwan, show that there is great variance in how the bodies of the dead, whole or fragmented, are enshrined, worshipped, and written about. There are distinct parallels, as well. This course teaches students about Buddhist practices in which the body is preserved and enshrined, in part or whole; it addresses issues of gender and the body, ritual killing of the dead, theft of corpses, and other thought-provoking topics related to the sacred dead. This course is designed to answer questions, such as: What can we learn from the skeletons of the past that is not always present in books? Why would monks go to such lengths to preserve the dried body of a fellow monk? Why would some monks knowingly starve themselves? What makes someone a buddha? Can a female become a buddha? And, what happens to the souls of young children and fetuses in the afterworld? HU

* EAST 413a / HIST 381Ja, Writing the Rise and Fall of the Qin Empire  Staff
This course is a survey of the history of the Qin empire from its pre-imperial origins to its fall in 207 BCE—with a twist. We learn about the Qin, but we also use the Qin as a case study for the writing of East Asian history. How do we know what we know about the past? What assumptions are we making when we read a primary document? What’s the difference between primary and secondary sources? Instead of beginning with survey materials written by scholars, we start with so-called primary sources (in translation). We then look at excavated materials. With new materials coming to light nearly every month, the study of the Qin empire is an exciting and quickly changing field of study. There is likely be new evidence published during the course of the semester. HU TR

* EAST 416b / HIST 386Jb, Childhood and Domesticity in East Asia  Staff
This course offers an overview of burgeoning studies of childhood and domesticity in East Asia to get us to think about childhood and domesticity as methodologies of studying East Asia and history in general. Instead of learning about children “as they were,” this course examines how childhood and domesticity were socially constructed. East Asia is our geographical focus, although this course also introduces students to relevant key works in studies of childhood in the United States and Europe. This course focuses on several key questions. How do studies of childhood and domesticity enhance, challenge, and/or broaden our understanding of East Asia? How were normative conceptions of childhood, domesticity, and family constructed and challenged throughout the 20th century? How does scholarship on childhood and domesticity help us understand our own experiences of childhood, family, and homes? How can we make connections between the familiar/mundane everyday life with more explicitly political issues, such as wars and economy? Through a transnational approach, we situate East Asia within the global, transnational circulation of ideas, people, money, and practices that continue to shape how we perceive and experience our childhood, family, and domesticity. HU

* EAST 417a / ANTH 414a, Hubs, Mobilities, and World Cities  Helen Siu
Analysis of urban life in historical and contemporary societies. Topics include capitalist and postmodern transformations; class, gender, ethnicity, and migration; and global landscapes of power and citizenship. SO RP

* EAST 418b / EAST 218, Chinese Media and Popular Culture  Staff
This course aims to examine stories we tell ourselves about China. How do popular fictions, films, search engines, and social media shape the concept of China? What are the social, technological, political, and economic contexts of Chinese media and communication systems? Why do the U.S. media produce either a “sunshine” or a “noir” version of the Chinese state? How do international politics influence the transnational circulation of cultural products from China? As a broad, accessible course on contemporary China (1979–), this course introduces salient themes in the studies of the political economy of Chinese popular culture. HU

* EAST 419a / ANTH 419a, Anthropology of Japan: Continuity and Change  Staff
Taking an anthropological perspective, this course provides an introductory survey of Japan, which is designed to interest students who not only wish to learn about the different conditions of modern Japanese life but are also curious about the enormous global impact that this non-Western society has had over the last century. Japan currently faces a historically crucial moment as it fosters more international ties—both within and outside Asia—moving beyond its postwar relationship with the United States. In this seminar, we discuss topics of the workplace, schooling, youth culture, family matters, gender and feminism, religion and nationalism, social media, and demographic challenges. As such, the course draws on scholarship from across the social sciences as well as a broad range of perspectives about contemporary Japan, considering thematically coherent issues that inform students on how Japan’s complex society may be approached by anthropologists. SO

* EAST 431b / RLST 175b, North Korea and Religion  Hwansoo Kim
Ever since the establishment of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) in 1948 and the Korean War (1950–1953), North Korea has been depicted by the media as a repressive, oppressive, and military country, its leaders as the worst dictators, and its people as brainwashed, tortured, and starving to death. The still ongoing Cold War discourse, intensified by the North Korea’s recent secret nuclear weapons program, furthers these negative images, and outsiders have passively internalized these images. However, these simplistic characterizations prevent one from gaining a balanced understanding of and insight into North Korea and its people on the ground. Topics other than political, military, and security issues are rarely given attention. On the whole, even though North Korea’s land area is larger than South Korea and its population of 25 million accounts for a third of all Koreans, North Korea has been neglected in the
This class tries to make sense of North Korea in a more comprehensive way by integrating the political and economic with social, cultural, and religious dimensions. In order to accomplish this objective, students examine leadership, religious (especially cultic) aspects of the North Korean Juche ideology, the daily lives of its citizens, religious traditions, the Korean War, nuclear development and missiles, North Korean defectors and refugees, human rights, Christian missionary organizations, and unification, among others. Throughout, the course places North Korean issues in the East Asian and global context. The course draws upon recent scholarly books, articles, journals, interviews with North Korean defectors, travelogues, media publications, and visual materials.

* EAST 470a or b, Independent Study  Staff
For students with advanced Chinese, Japanese, or Korean language skills who wish to pursue a close study of the East Asia region, not otherwise covered by departmental offerings. May be used for research, a special project, or a substantial research paper under faculty supervision. A term paper or its equivalent and regular meetings with an adviser are required. Ordinarily only one term may be offered toward the major or for credit toward the degree. Permission to enroll requires submission of a detailed project proposal, signed by the adviser, by the end of the first week of classes and its approval by the director of undergraduate studies.

EAST 480a or b, One-Term Senior Essay  Staff
Preparation of a one-term senior essay under the guidance of a faculty adviser. Students must receive the prior agreement of the director of undergraduate studies and of the faculty member who will serve as the senior essay adviser. Students must arrange to meet with that adviser on a regular basis throughout the term.

* EAST 491a and EAST 492b, Senior Research Project  Staff
Two-term directed research project under the supervision of a ladder faculty member. Students should write essays using materials in East Asian languages when possible. Essays should be based on primary material, whether in an East Asian language or English. Summary of secondary material is not acceptable. Credit for EAST 491 only on completion of EAST 492. ½ Course cr per term