

The Rise of Asia and International Relations of the Asia Pacific

Abstract

This course aims at introducing to the students key dynamics of international relations in the Asia-Pacific region in the context of simultaneous progression of globalization and regionalism. The post-Cold War Asia Pacific has faced drastic shifts in economic and security thinking. Reintegration of the previously socialist countries (like Vietnam, China, and Russia) into the regional and global economy has progressed with their entry into the regional and global organizations and agreements. Further reduction of economic barriers and standardization of economic rules are actively negotiated. The East Asia region has become the fastest growing economic region, with which both Europe and North America wish to remain engaged. On the security front, the rise of China has become the focus of its neighboring countries in Asia and the United States. Relative decline of the U.S. dominance in the region is urging the Asian countries to review their security strategies in a way similar to the post-Vietnam War period, but perhaps with a greater magnitude. Now with U.S. President Donald Trump's emphasis on restoring U.S. economy through protectionist policies, the post-Cold War globalization trend has reversed. Students are expected to gain multiple theoretical and national perspectives through which to understand the region and be able to interpret policy development in the region through the obtained perspectives.

Learning Goals

Gain familiarity with the Asia Pacific region's key political, economic, and security issues, as well as national policy of the key regional powers.

Understand multiple perspectives and be able to express them in theoretically relevant debates.

Pedagogy

This course will employ a Socratic method of small group discussions. Students must not expect the instructor to give a long lecture. Instead, students are required to actively participate in the discussion based on their preparation (required readings). Students are required to concurrently work on preparation for a final presentation.

Pre-Reading List

Students are expected to have read a majority of the reading material below before each session. Some links may have expired, or been firewalled after a few sample accesses. Simply move to the next item if such are the case.

Session 1: Course Overview; Cold War and the International Relations system in the Asia-Pacific

Course Overview

Introduction

Session 2: Regional Economic Integration in the Asia-Pacific

<https://www.9dashline.com/article/which-way-for-the-belt-and-road>

<https://www.9dashline.com/article/bri-20-reflecting-on-the-past-charting-the-future>

<https://www.9dashline.com/article/the-eus-global-gateway-initiative-infrastructure-cooperation-with-southeast-asia>

<https://www.9dashline.com/article/the-quads-public-goods-approach-countering-the-bri>

<https://www.9dashline.com/article/in-forum-2024-us-strategy-and-the-indo-pacific>

<https://www.9dashline.com/article/president-bidens-more-strategic-competition-with-china>

Session 3: Post-Cold War Security Realignment

<https://www.9dashline.com/article/in-forum-2024-the-future-of-asean>

<https://www.9dashline.com/article/us-china-in-2024-one-year-after-the-spy-balloon-incident>

<https://www.9dashline.com/article/in-forum-2024-south-china-sea-at-a-crossroads>

<https://www.9dashline.com/article/in-forum-great-power-politics-amid-great-turbulence>

<https://www.9dashline.com/article/strategic-competition-in-the-south-pacific-and-its-implications-for-new-zealand>

<https://www.9dashline.com/article/western-indian-ocean-the-missing-piece-in-the-us-indo-pacific-strategy>

Session 4: United States

[Biden-Harris Administration's National Security Strategy.pdf \(whitehouse.gov\)](#)

[U.S.-Indo-Pacific-Strategy.pdf \(whitehouse.gov\)](#)

[Two Years Later, What Has the Indo-Pacific Strategy Achieved? | United States Institute of Peace \(usip.org\)](#)

[The strange case of America's Indo-Pacific strategies | Chatham House – International Affairs Think Tank](#)

Session 5: Japan

[The Japan Institute of International Affairs \(jia.or.jp\)](#)

[Japan's new security policies: A long road to full implementation | Brookings](#)

[What You Need to Know About Japan's New National Security Strategy | United States Institute of Peace \(usip.org\)](#)

[Japan's updated defence strategy leaves crucial details to be determined | East Asia Forum](#)

[Japan's new security strategy and development aid - The Japan Times](#)

[Japan's New Security Strategy: Who Fights, Who Pays, and Who Decides? | Asia Society](#)

Session 6: The Korean Peninsula issues

<https://www.nbr.org/publication/south-koreas-general-election-implications-for-foreign-and-security-policy/>

<https://www.nbr.org/publication/south-korea-japan-relations-surviving-the-forced-labor-dilemma/>

<https://www.38north.org/2024/04/nato-and-the-republic-of-korea-the-ap4-in-the-indo-pacific/>

<https://www.38north.org/2024/04/deterring-an-emerging-nuclear-axis-in-northeast-asia/>

Session 7: The Taiwan Straits and Maritime issues in East Asia

<https://www.eastwestcenter.org/publications/mapping-unknown-and-thinking-unthinkable-how-us-allies-might-respond-crisis-over>

<https://www.eastwestcenter.org/publications/taiwans-economic-policy-toward-china-under-tsai-ing-wen-administration>

<https://www.nbr.org/publication/the-taiwan-flashpoint-and-asias-middle-powers/>

Session 8: ASEAN Unity and Balancing Act

[The Translator: "ASEAN Centrality" | Lowy Institute](#)

[ASEAN Centrality and Its Narratives in an Evolving Regional Order](#)

[ASEAN's centrality depends on a shift to collective security | East Asia Forum](#)

[Whither ASEAN centrality?](#)

Session 9: Vietnam and the Philippines

[U.S.-Vietnam Relations | Congress.gov | Library of Congress](#)

[An Indispensable Upgrade: The U.S.-Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership chapter08.pdf](#)

[The US-Philippines alliance and the 2024 US elections | Brookings](#)

[The U.S.-Philippine Alliance in 2025 | Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative](#)

[Trump's bearhug for the Philippines | Lowy Institute](#)

Session 10: Australia

[Overview | Foreign Policy White Paper](#)

[Australia's foreign policy reckoning: Time for a new White Paper | Lowy Institute](#)

[After voting for stability, Australia faces tough foreign policy choices | Chatham House – International Affairs Think Tank](#)

Session 11: India

[Timeline: U.S.-India Relations](#)

[INdia75 Web.pdf](#)

[India's transformative foreign policy: A decade of strategic diplomacy](#)

[In India, Foreign Policy Is on the 2024 Ballot | Carnegie Endowment for International Peace](#)

Session 12: European states and their Indo-Pacific strategies

[Why the Indo-Pacific should be a higher priority for the UK | Chatham House – International Affairs](#)

[Think Tank](#)

[France | Sciences Po Observatory Indo-Pacific](#)

[After AUKUS: How Could France Reboot Its Indo-Pacific Strategy? | Institut Montaigne](#)

[NATO - Topic: Relations with partners in the Indo-Pacific region](#)

Sessions 13: “Hub-and-spokes” or “Asian NATO”?

[The unlikelihood of an Asian NATO – POLITICO](#)

[Would an Asian NATO Be Good for America? | Carnegie Endowment for International Peace](#)

[Ishiba's Asian NATO: a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow | The Strategist](#)

[Why "Asian NATO" finds no support?](#)

Sessions 14 and 15: Student Research Presentations

Students are to orally present on one of the following topics:

1. Maritime security in a) East China Sea, b) South China Sea, c) Southeast Asian straits, d) Bay of Bengal, or e) Arabian Sea / Red Sea
2. Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (or AUKUS) and prospects of its enlargement

Grading

Reading Summary for sessions: 15%

Students are to read preparatory material for each session from the reading list and write up a bullet point summary of what they read for each session.

Informed Participation in Class Discussion: 50%

Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions.

Oral Presentation: 35%

Students are to conduct some research on a topic (explained under Sessions 14 and 15) and orally present on it during the Sessions 14 or 15.