Course Description

This course explores patterns of political participation and protest in Japan and South Korea. We will examine civil society and contentious politics, the diverse ways in which the state and society affect each other, and what exactly we mean by “state” and “society.” This course is designed to help you learn to analyze and write about sociopolitical continuity and change in comparative perspective. After reviewing the history and political institutions that have shaped and been shaped by protest and state-society interactions in South Korea and Japan, we will analyze protest in relation to democracy, collective action tactics, state repression, the media, legal mobilization, multiculturalism, and recent transnational activism regarding human rights in North Korea.

This is a writing-in-the-discipline seminar, which aims not only to help you understand protest and political participation in East Asia, but also how to read, speak, and write more effectively in the fields of comparative politics and political science more broadly. The reading load is light so that we can focus on dissecting assigned readings and examining the craft of social science inquiry and writing. Over the course of the semester, you will write in several different formats, including a short response paper that compares and evaluates several scholarly articles, a media analysis, research questions, a review of the scholarly literature on a research question, an abstract, and an independently researched final paper. These assignments are designed as building blocks for your research paper, which you will complete in stages with multiple chances to revise. You should choose your research topic early in the semester. Through seminar discussions, peer evaluations, workshops, and other group activities, we will work on improving our skills related to reading, selecting a topic, refining a research question, designing a research project, conceptualizing variables, gathering and evaluating evidence, constructing a persuasive argument, responding to potential counterarguments, outlining, developing writing strategies, writing, and revising.

Throughout the semester, you should follow current events in East Asia by regularly reading English-language newspapers from Japan and South Korea and other reputable news media. Examples from current events and policy debates will complement seminar readings and enrich our discussions. Recommended sources are linked on the course’s Blackboard site.

Learning Objectives

1. Understand politics, recent history, and policy in East Asia
2. Improve your ability to write, read, and speak about political institutions and processes
3. Learn conceptual and theoretical tools for analyzing political and social phenomena
Requirements
Your grade will reflect your participation and presentations in class, your comments on your classmates’ work, and your performance on interrelated writing assignments that culminate in a research paper.

1. Participation and Attendance (10%)—Do all readings and be prepared to discuss them each week. Each week’s seminar will mix lectures, discussion, student presentations, small group exercises, and writing workshops. Absences and tardiness will affect your grade.

2. Discussion Questions and Response Paper (10%)—For each week that we have assigned readings, students will serve as discussion leaders. Each discussion leader will submit three questions related to the readings by 5pm on Monday before class to help the rest of the class prepare for seminar. The discussion leaders should also prepare a 5-minute presentation elucidating key concepts/theories from that week’s readings, rather than just summarizing the readings. A 600-word response paper (due in class) should serve as the basis of your presentation. Include citations and a full reference list with your memo. You will be evaluated on your ability to concisely identify the readings’ main concepts and arguments and, more importantly, compare/contrast their approaches and evaluate them in relation to readings from other weeks.

3. Media Analysis (15%)—To strengthen your news consumption skills, you will analyze coverage of a current topic and write a 500-word summary of your findings. Pick a current issue and find 10 news articles on that topic from a range of 10 reputable Asian and Western English-language newspapers. Analyze the corpus of articles for the basics first: who is and where is the reporter (byline); what type of piece is it (i.e., news, analysis, editorial); how long is it; are there indicators of prominence (e.g., a photo, what page in the printed edition). In your deeper analysis of the articles, identify the people/groups quoted in each piece (are any missing?), find statements of fact vs. interpretation, follow any embedded links in the piece, and note discrepancies among the articles. Focus on your analysis rather than the content of the articles or the issue. Include full references/citations. Due March 22.

4. Final Research Paper—Please clear your topic with me by Feb. 2.

   a. Conceptualization and Research Questions (5%)—For this assignment, you will identify your dependent variable and write three potential research questions, which we will workshop in class. To do so, select a concept that interests you (e.g., social movement outcomes, policy change, or government responsiveness) and find at least three ways that prior scholars have defined and measured this concept. Look at how these scholars phrase their research questions. What are you going to explain in your paper? Conceptualize and operationalize (define) your dependent variable carefully in your questions. Due February 10 (by email).

   b. Literature Review and Annotated Bibliography (15%)—In 1,500 words or less assess existing explanations for your dependent variable. What’s wrong with existing explanations? Include an annotated bibliography with one or two sentences explaining the argument and utility of at least 15 non-news sources (scholarly books and articles, primary sources, think tank or government reports etc.). Due March 3.
c. **Abstract (10%)**—This 300-word abstract outlines your main question, argument, evidence, research design, and the significance of your research. Due **April 1**.

d. **Final presentation (15%)**—You will be responsible for presenting a classmate’s paper during the last two weeks of the semester. You will briefly summarize the core research question, main argument, the evidence used to support that explanation and refute potential rival explanations, and the paper’s implications. Then, you will discuss several strengths and weaknesses of the paper, offering suggestions about how to improve it for the final draft. Another student will similarly present your paper. Full drafts are due on **April 15 or 22** (by email).

e. **Final paper (20%)**—This 20-page paper is a chance for you to develop your interest in some empirical phenomenon/issue in East Asian politics using theories about protest and political participation. During the semester we will develop and workshop key components of the final paper (see above), giving you multiple opportunities to revise and improve your final product. The final version is due on **May 5** (by email by 5pm).

**Required Readings on Blackboard**
Please complete all readings before seminar and bring them with you to seminar each week.

**Course Policies**

**Attendance and Participation:** This seminar will only succeed—and be beneficial for you—if you come to every seminar prepared to participate actively. Your participation will contribute to your final grade in the course, and your fellow students will expect thoughtful comments from you (just as you should expect good feedback from them). High-quality participation entails completing all readings and assignments on time, bringing the readings and thoughtful questions with you to class, listening to your classmates, and adding your ideas to our discussions. Remember to be respectful when you offer constructive criticism on one another’s writing.

**Absences:** You’ll receive a zero for participation if you have more than 2 unexcused absences (i.e., anything other than a documented medical reason, interview, or religious holiday). Email me in advance if you need to miss class, arrive late, or leave early.

**Classroom Etiquette:** Please do not use your laptops to check email or do anything else online during class. Refrain from using your mobile devices. Do not arrive late or depart early from class. These behaviors are distracting to your fellow classmates and impede your learning.

**Formatting Written Work:** Submit work as a Word file in Times New Roman, 12-point font, and double-spaced with one-inch margins and page numbers. Use Chicago or APA style consistently and include proper citations and a full reference list for all written work.

**Late Assignments:** Assignments handed in late will be docked by 1/3 of a grade (i.e., from a B+ to a B) for each day late. Be sure that you receive a confirmation email from me after submitting assignments via email. Any grade disputes must be submitted to me in writing.
Writing Resources at GW
The Political Science Department has a website with guidance on reading, writing, sources and citations, research fellowships, and other materials. The link for these resources is http://politicalscience.columbian.gwu.edu/research-writing.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in Rome Hall, Suite 102, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/. Please also speak with me before the end of the second week of classes. All discussions will be kept confidential.

Academic Integrity
Do your own work. You must properly cite all the sources upon which you draw. Plagiarizing others’ work is dishonest and will be handled as a serious offense. I will adhere to the GW Code of Academic Integrity, (see http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html). We will discuss issues related to citations and plagiarism in the course. For an explanation of plagiarism and tips on how to avoid it, see http://libguides.gwu.edu/content.php?pid=56080&sid=410568. Please consult me if you have any questions.

Credit Hour Policy
This class involves 150 minutes of direct instruction in seminar plus the expectation that students spent about 200 minutes engaged in independent learning outside the classroom every week.

Optional Readings for Historical and Political Background
The following books are optional and on reserve at Gelman. They provide useful historical and political overviews of Japan and Korea, should you wish more information.


Recommended Reading on Writing in Political Science
Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

January 19—Introduction and Discussion of Course Themes

(no readings)

January 26—The Historical Arc of State-Society Relations in Korea and Japan


February 2—The Developmental State Model and its Decline (Library Session)


February 9—Political Institutions and Policymaking in Korea and Japan


⇒ February 10—Research Questions are due by email by 5pm
February 16—Protest and Democracy and a Workshop on Research Questions


Sunhyuk Kim, “Civil Society and Contentious Democracy in South Korea,” paper prepared for the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association in Washington, DC (September 2-5, 2010).

February 23—Civil Society and Civic Engagement


March 2—Responses to Repression


⇒ March 3—Literature Reviews and Annotated Bibliographies are due by email by 5pm

March 9—A Workshop on Literature Reviews

(no readings)

Spring Break (March 13 – 17)

⇒ March 22—Media Analyses are due by email by 5pm
March 23—The Media and Discussion of Media Analysis


March 30—Protesting and Mobilizing the Law to Change Policy


⇒ *April 1—Abstracts are due by email by 5pm*

April 6—North Korean Human Rights Discourses and a Workshop on Abstracts


April 13—Multiculturalism and Demographic Changes


⇒ *April 15—full drafts of papers presented on April 20 are due by email by 5 pm*
April 20—Presentations of Research Papers

Introduction of each paper by discussant, response from author, and open discussion

⇒ April 22—full drafts of papers presented on April 27 are due by email by 5 pm

April 27—Presentations of Research Papers and Wrap-Up

Introduction of each paper by discussant, response from author, and open discussion

⇒ May 5—final research papers are due by email by 5 pm