

PIA5032: AUTHORITARIAN RESILIENCE AND DEMOCRATIC CHANGE IN EAST ASIA

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Authoritarian Resilience and Democratic Change in East Asia

Subject Code

PIA - Public and International Affairs

Course Number

5032

Academic Unit

Public and International Affairs (PIA)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

P5, P6 - Postgraduate Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

AIS5032 Authoritarian Resilience and Democratic Change in East Asia

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course develops research questions about democracy, autocracy, and everything in-between. It uses the post-1945 experiences of Northeast and Southeast Asia's varied political systems to address important theoretical debates in comparative politics, and developmental studies. It seeks to understand why, over the past decades, East Asia has seen the rise, demise and return of authoritarian modes of governance, in parallel with the emergence of multifaceted processes of political liberalisation. It examines the various challenges of democratic transition and consolidation in the region, but also democratic regression and illiberal politics, questioning the developmental state and modernization theory, military intervention in politics, political contention, party systems, elites and dynasticism, democracy promotion and their impact on authoritarian resilience and democratic change. How can we make sense of East Asia's highly diverse political institutions, regime formation and durability, historical legacies and cultural dynamics, and what can we learn from the region? The course will be structured thematically so that students will be able to study East Asia comparatively while making connections with the broader fields of comparative politics.

Course Aims:

The course seeks to enable students to analyse the causes and consequences of the resilience and challenges of political regimes in East Asia while relating historical developments and contemporary dynamics in the region to social science theories about comparative democratization, regime change and authoritarian rule. By exposing students to a variety of empirical studies on Northeast and Southeast Asia's political contexts and institutional systems, as well as cutting-edge theoretical debates on key topics in the region, the course will help them construe why certain countries are democratic and others are not. By the end of the course, students will be ready to develop ideas and formulate their own research questions about democracy, authoritarianism, and everything in-between in the region - and beyond.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

	CILOs	Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Explain and apply theories of regime change and continuity in East Asia	20	x	x	
2	Reflect critically on key concepts of political science, such as power, elites, democracy, authoritarianism, elections, modernization and contentious politics under different institutional settings	20	x	x	
3	Examine and evaluate processes of political transition, democratization and democratic regression	30	x	x	
4	Identify, design and construct models of resilient political institutions	10	x	x	x
5	Apply multi-disciplinary critical thinking skills to solve research problems, consider new approaches, and demonstrate the ability to accomplish innovation	20	x	x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs		Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	1	Explain theories and conceptual frameworks in lectures	1, 2, 3	
2	2	Discussion of reading and visual materials in class centred on student's lived experiences	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	
3	3	Case-based debate of political processes, democratization, democratic backsliding and authoritarian rule	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	
4	4	Written assignments	2, 3, 4, 5	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?	
1	Attendance and participation, including in (online) class debates	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	10	Weekly	Yes
2	Presentation in class (teamwork)	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	20	Weekly	No
3	Book review (c. 1,500 words)	1, 2, 3, 5	20	Week 7	No
4	Position paper (c. 2,000 words)	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	30	Week 12	No
5	Final desk test	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	20	Week 13 (questions directly related to the weekly required readings in the form of mini-essays to be completed in 2 hours)	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Attendance and participation, including in (online) class debates (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Quality of contribution to class discussions and intervention

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Continuous contributions to classroom discussions and interventions that show a high level of analysis

Good

(B+, B, B-) Frequent contributions to classroom discussions and interventions with a good analysis level

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Infrequent contributions to classroom discussions but which reveal attempts at analysis

Marginal

(D) Few contributions to classroom discussions and contributions that show little analytical insight

Failure

(F) No contributions to classroom discussions and repeated absence

Assessment Task

Presentation in class (teamwork) (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Quality of argument, structure of class presentation Cohesiveness of overall presentation oral delivery visual aids Evidence of research

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellently structured, supporting an analytical argument backed by excellent research and answering set topic or question, clear speech, excellent use of powerpoint or similar tools

Good

(B+, B, B-) A good structure at least partially supporting an analytical argument, backed by good research answering set topic or question, clear speech, good use of powerpoint or similar tools

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Adequate structure, to some extent supporting an analytical argument backed by some research, providing some answers to a set topic or question, adequate speech and use of powerpoint

Marginal

(D) Limited structure that provides little support to analytical argument backed by little research providing few answers to a set topic or question, unadequate speech or use of powerpoint

Failure

(F) No recognizable structure without any analytical argument backed by no discernible research, providing no answers to a set topic or question, poor speech and use of powerpoint or similar tools

Assessment Task

Book Review (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Quality and structure of evidence-based argument and clarity of position taken

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent analytical argument; excellent use of current events, and theories/models, and a well-argued position with a clear structure, extensive and high-quality research incorporated into text, few grammatical mistakes

Good

(B+, B, B-) Good analytical argument, good use of events and theories/models, clear structure, good range and quality of materials incorporated into text, limited spelling or grammatical mistakes

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Mostly descriptive argument, some use of events and theories/models, problematic structure, limited range and quality of materials incorporated into text, spelling or grammatical mistakes do not hinder comprehension

Marginal

(D) Descriptive argument, minimal or no use of contemporary events and theories/models, unclear structure, limited range and low quality of research materials incorporated into text, spelling or grammatical mistakes, some evidence of plagiarised text

Failure

(F) No argument, no use of contemporary events and theories/models, unclear structure, minimal range and quality of research materials incorporated into text, frequent grammatical mistakes, substantial evidence of plagiarised text

Assessment Task

Position paper (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Quality and structure of evidence-based argument and clarity of position taken

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent analytical argument; excellent use of current events, and theories/models, and a well-argued position with a clear structure, extensive and high-quality research incorporated into text, few grammatical mistakes

Good

(B+, B, B-) Good analytical argument, good use of events and theories/models, clear structure, good range and quality of materials incorporated into text, limited spelling or grammatical mistakes

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Mostly descriptive argument, some use of events and theories/models, problematic structure, limited range and quality of materials incorporated into text, spelling or grammatical mistakes do not hinder comprehension

Marginal

(D) Descriptive argument, minimal or no use of contemporary events and theories/models, unclear structure, limited range and low quality of research materials incorporated into text, spelling or grammatical mistakes, some evidence of plagiarised text

Failure

(F) No argument, no use of contemporary events and theories/models, unclear structure, minimal range and quality of research materials incorporated into text, frequent grammatical mistakes, substantial evidence of plagiarised text

Assessment Task

Final Desk Test (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Quality and structure of evidence-based argument and clarity of position taken

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent analytical argument; excellent use of current events, and theories/models, and a well-argued position with a clear structure, extensive and high-quality research incorporated into text, few grammatical mistakes

Good

(B+, B, B-) Good analytical argument, good use of events and theories/models, clear structure, good range and quality of materials incorporated into text, limited spelling or grammatical mistakes

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Mostly descriptive argument, some use of events and theories/models, problematic structure, limited range and quality of materials incorporated into text, spelling or grammatical mistakes do not hinder comprehension

Marginal

(D) Descriptive argument, minimal or no use of contemporary events and theories/models, unclear structure, limited range and low quality of research materials incorporated into text, spelling or grammatical mistakes, some evidence of plagiarised text

Failure

(F) No argument, no use of contemporary events and theories/models, unclear structure, minimal range and quality of research materials incorporated into text, frequent grammatical mistakes, substantial evidence of plagiarised text

Assessment Task

Attendance and participation, including in (online) class debates (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Quality of contribution to class discussions and intervention.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Continuous contributions to classroom discussions and interventions that show a high level of analysis

Good

(B+, B) Frequent contributions to classroom discussions and interventions that reveal some attempts at analysis

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Infrequent contributions to classroom discussions and contributions that show little analytical insight

Failure

(F) No contributions to classroom discussions and repeated absence

Assessment Task

Presentation in class (teamwork) (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Quality of argument, structure of class presentation Cohesiveness of overall presentation; oral delivery visual aids; evidence of research.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellently structured, supporting an analytical argument backed by excellent research and answering set topic or question, clear speech, excellent use of PowerPoint decks or similar tools.

Good

(B+, B) A good structure at least partially supporting an analytical argument, backed by some research, providing some answers to a set topic or question, adequate speech and use of PowerPoint decks.

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Limited structure that provides little support to analytical argument backed by little research providing few answers to a set topic or question, inadequate speech or use of PowerPoint decks.

Failure

(F) No recognizable structure without any analytical argument backed by no discernible research, providing no answers to a set topic or question, poor speech and use of PowerPoint decks or similar tools.

Assessment Task

Book Review (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Quality and structure of evidence-based argument, mobilisation of scholarly references and theoretical frameworks, clarity of position taken.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent analytical argument; excellent use of current events, and theories/models, and a well-argued position with a clear structure, extensive and high-quality research incorporated into text, few grammatical mistakes.

Good

(B+, B) Good analytical argument, good use of events and theories/models, clear structure, limited range and quality of materials incorporated into text, spelling or grammatical mistakes do not hinder comprehension.

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Mostly descriptive argument, minimal use of contemporary events and theories/models, unclear structure, limited range and low quality of research materials incorporated into text, spelling or grammatical mistakes, some evidence of plagiarised text.

Failure

(F) No argument, no use of contemporary events and theories/models, unclear structure, minimal range and quality of research materials incorporated into text, frequent grammatical mistakes, substantial evidence of plagiarised text.

Assessment Task

Position paper (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Quality and structure of evidence-based argument, mobilisation of scholarly references and theoretical frameworks, clarity of position taken.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent analytical argument; excellent use of current events, and theories/models, and a well-argued position with a clear structure, extensive and high-quality research incorporated into text, few grammatical mistakes.

Good

(B+, B) Good analytical argument, good use of events and theories/models, clear structure, limited range and quality of materials incorporated into text, spelling or grammatical mistakes do not hinder comprehension.

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Mostly descriptive argument, minimal use of contemporary events and theories/models, unclear structure, limited range and low quality of research materials incorporated into text, spelling or grammatical mistakes, some evidence of plagiarised text.

Failure

(F) No argument, no use of contemporary events and theories/models, unclear structure, minimal range and quality of research materials incorporated into text, frequent grammatical mistakes, substantial evidence of plagiarised text.

Assessment Task

Final Desk Test (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Quality and structure of evidence-based argument, mobilisation of scholarly references and theoretical frameworks, clarity of position taken.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent analytical argument; excellent use of current events, and theories/models, and a well-argued position with a clear structure, extensive and high-quality research incorporated into text, few grammatical mistakes.

Good

(B+, B) Good analytical argument, good use of events and theories/models, clear structure, limited range and quality of materials incorporated into text, spelling or grammatical mistakes do not hinder comprehension.

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Mostly descriptive argument, minimal use of contemporary events and theories/models, unclear structure, limited range and low quality of research materials incorporated into text, spelling or grammatical mistakes, some evidence of plagiarised text.

Failure

(F) No argument, no use of contemporary events and theories/models, unclear structure, minimal range and quality of research materials incorporated into text, frequent grammatical mistakes, substantial evidence of plagiarised text.

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Northeast Asia; Southeast Asia; Democracy; Democratization; Democratic Backsliding; Illiberalism; Modernization Theory; Authoritarianism; Authoritarian Durability; Personal Rule; Military Intervention; Sultanistic Regime; Hybrid Regime; State Formation; Developmental State; Elites; Elections; Electoral Authoritarianism; Party Systems and Political Parties; Dynastic Politics; Political Family; Parliaments; Political Culture; Asian Values; Ethnicity; Identity; Religion; Civil Society; Middle Class; Contentious Politics; Human Rights.

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

	Title
1	Aspinall, Edward, 2005. <i>Opposing Suharto: Compromise, Resistance and Regime Change in Indonesia</i> , Stanford CA, Stanford University Press.
2	Barr, Michael D., 2014. <i>The Ruling Elite of Singapore: Networks of Power and Influence</i> , London: IB Tauris.
3	Bauer, Joanne R. and Daniel A. Bell, 1999. <i>The East Asian Challenge for Human Rights</i> , Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
4	Bertrand, Jacques. 2013. <i>Political Change in Southeast Asia</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
5	Brennan, Jason, 2016. <i>Against Democracy</i> . Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
6	Brown, David, 2003. <i>The State and Ethnic Politics in Southeast Asia</i> , London: Routledge.
7	Case, William, ed., 2015. <i>The Routledge Handbook of Southeast Asian Democratization</i> , London: Routledge.

8	Cheng, Tun-jen and Yun-han Chu, eds., 2018. <i>The Routledge Handbook of Democratization in East Asia</i> , London: Routledge.
9	Chu, Yun-han, Larry Diamond, Andrew J. Nathan and Doh Chull Shin, 2008. <i>How East Asians View Democracy</i> , New York: Columbia University Press.
10	Diamond, Larry and Gi - wook Shin, eds., 2014. <i>New Challenges for Maturing Democracies in Taiwan and Korea</i> , Baltimore MD: The Johns Hopkins Press.
11	Diamond, Larry, Mark F. Plattner and Chu, Yun-han, eds., 2013. <i>Democracy in East Asia: A New Century</i> , Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
12	Dore, Giovanna Maria Dora, Jae H. Ku and Karl Jackson, eds., 2014. <i>Incomplete Democracies in the Asia-Pacific: Evidence from Indonesia, Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand</i> , Houndsmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
13	Dukalskis, Alexander, 2021. <i>Making the World Safe for Dictatorship</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press.
14	Egreteau, Renaud, 2022. <i>Crafting Parliament in Myanmar' s Disciplined Democracy, 2011-2021</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press.
15	Ferrara, Federico, 2015. <i>The Political Development of Modern Thailand</i> , Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
16	Finkelstein, David M. and Kristen Gunness, eds., 2016. <i>Civil-Military Relations in Today' s China: Swimming in a New Sea</i> , New York: Routledge.
17	Ford, Michele and Thomas B. Pepinsky, eds., 2014. <i>Beyond Oligarchy: Wealth, Power and Contemporary Indonesian Politics</i> , Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press.
18	Frantz, Erica, 2018. <i>Authoritarianism: What Everybody Needs to Know</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press.
19	Haddad, Mary Alice, 2012. <i>Building Democracy in Japan</i> , Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
20	Huntington, Samuel P., 1991. <i>The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century</i> , Norman OK: University of Oklahoma Press.
21	Kim, Sungmoon, 2014. <i>Confucian Democracy in East Asia: Theory and Practice</i> , Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
22	Martin, Sherry L., 2011. <i>Popular Democracy in Japan: How Gender and Community Are Changing Modern Electoral Politics</i> , Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press.
23	McCoy, Alfred, ed., 1994. <i>An Anarchy of Families: State and Family in the Philippines</i> . Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.
24	Morbrand, Eric, 2019. <i>Top-Down Democracy in South Korea</i> , Seattle WA: University of Washington Press.
25	Rodan, Garry, 2018. <i>Participation without Democracy: Containing Conflict in Southeast Asia</i> , Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press
26	Shin, Doh Chull, 2012. <i>Confucianism and Democratization in East Asia</i> , Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
27	Slater, Dan and Joseph Wong, 2022. <i>From Development to Democracy: The Transformations of Modern Asia</i> . Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.
28	Svolik, Milan W., 2012. <i>The Politics of Authoritarian Rule</i> , Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
29	Tria Kerkvliet, Benedict J., 2019. <i>Speaking Out in Vietnam: Public Political Criticism in a Communist Party-ruled Nation</i> , Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press.
30	Truex, Rory, 2016. <i>Making Autocracy Work: Representation and Responsiveness in Modern China</i> , New York: Cambridge University Press.

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Nil