

PIA3041: PROBLEM-BASED STUDIES OF SELECTED ASIAN SOCIETIES AND REGIONS I

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Problem-based Studies of Selected Asian Societies and Regions I

Subject Code

PIA - Public and International Affairs

Course Number

3041

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

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

AIS3041 Problem-based Studies of Selected Asian Societies and Regions I

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course uses problem-based learning method to acquaint students with analytical concepts and qualitative approaches in anthropology and sociology to understand important issues in Asian societies and regions. We will start with the basics of contemplating and designing a research project. In Part II, two kinds of activities take place in a parallel manner. On the one hand, we will do close reading of several case studies to learn how to analyse data and draw conclusion. On the other hand, students will work in small groups and explore problems under designated themes, problems that they define by themselves. Through teamwork and problem-based learning, students will learn how to identify, analyse, appraise and solve problems in collaborative and innovative ways.

Themes for this year include:

1. Family, Marriage and Reproduction
2. Care work and aging society
3. Media and the self
4. Technology and society

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Be exposed to key analytical concepts in designated themes in anthropology and sociology;	25	x	x	
2	Be acquainted with qualitative research approaches in anthropology and sociology;	25	x	x	
3	Develop skills to relate social phenomena to existing literature, to design qualitative research projects, and to conduct research;	20	x	x	x
4	Develop skills to do teamwork;	20	x	x	x
5	Apply the above-mentioned concepts, research methods, and other skills to specific case studies of particular social phenomena.	10		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	Lectures & Discussions	Introduce and explain concepts, theories, histories, and debates through use of diverse pedagogical strategies; Provide students with opportunities to synthesize readings, raise questions and debate in a critical yet respectful manner	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	
2	Readings	Expose students to various approaches to specific issues in political sociology	1, 2, 3, 4	
3	Group Projects	An exercise for students to synthesize, reflect upon and apply ideas learned in the course and work as a team	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	
4	Critical Engagement of others' work	An exercise for students to critically evaluate other people's work, provide constructive suggestions and foster collegiality	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	
5	Individual essays	An exercise for students to build upon and push forward ideas developed in the group projects, and take a more individualized perspective	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

ATs		CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Class Participation	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	20	-	Yes
2	Individual Essay	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	25	-	No
3	Group Projects	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	40	-	No
4	Critical Engagement in others' work	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	15	-	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

1. Class participation

Criterion

1.1 Familiarity with readings and relevant concepts

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Limited

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

1. Class participation

Criterion

1.2 Participation in discussion and other class activities.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Active and engaging

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant participation

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate level of participation

Marginal (D)

Occasional participation

Failure (F)

No participation

Assessment Task

2. Individual Essay

Criterion

2.1 Summarize relevant readings and discussions.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

2. Individual Essay

Criterion

2.2 Utilize analytical concepts to evaluate arguments;

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

2. Individual Essay

Criterion

2.3 Capacity to articulate one's ideas in a logical manner

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

3. Group Projects

Criterion

3.1 Utilize analytical concepts to ask questions ;

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

3. Group Projects

Criterion

3.2 Identify and synthesize relevant readings;

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

3. Group Projects

Criterion

3.3 Ability to design a qualitative research plan and carry out research;

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

3. Group Projects

Criterion

3.4 Ability to analyze empirical data and make a logical argument.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

4. Critical Engagement in others' work

Criterion

4.1 Summarize and evaluate the other people's works.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

4. Critical Engagement in others' work

Criterion

4.2 Provide constructive comments for improvement.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)Not even reaching marginal levels

Part III Other Information**Keyword Syllabus**

Family change; Sports; Language and politics; Internet and communication; Technology, Security and Privacy; Asia; modernity; modernization; social sciences; qualitative research

Reading List**Compulsory Readings**

Title	
1	Santos, Gonalo D., and Stevan Harrell, eds. 2017. Transforming Patriarchy: Chinese Families in the Twenty-first Century. Seattle: University of Washington Press. (Introduction).
2	Berg, Ulla D. 2015. Mobile selves: race, migration, and belonging in Peru and the U.S, Social transformations in American anthropology. New York: New York University Press. (selected chapters)
3	Grindstaff, Laura, and Susan Murray. 2015. "Reality Celebrity: Branded Affect and the Emotion Economy." Public Culture 27 (1 75):109-135.
4	Fraser, Nancy. 2016. "Contradictions of Capital and Care." New Left Review 100 (July/August):99-117.
5	Ochiai, Emiko. 2014. "Care Diamonds and Welfare Regimes in East and Southeast Asian Societies." In Transformation of the Intimate and the Public in Asian Modernity, edited by Emiko Ochiai and Leo Aoi Hosoya, 166-189. Leiden: Brill.
6	Marwick, Alice E. 2015. "Instafame: Luxury Selfies in the Attention Economy." Public Culture 27 (1 (75)):137-160.
7	Wallis, Cara (2013) Technomobility in China: Young Migrant Women and Mobile Phones. NYU Press. (selected chapters)
8	Cowan, Ruth Schwartz. 2012. "The Consumption Junction: A Proposal for Research Strategies in the Sociology of Technology." In The Social Construction of Technological Systems: New Directions in the Sociology and History of Technology, edited by Wiebe E. Bijker, Thomas P. Hughes and Trevor J. Pinch, 253-272. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Additional Readings

	Title
1	Paper, Jordan. Chinese Religion and Familism: The Basis of Chinese Culture, Society, and Government. London: Bloomsbury Publishing PLC. (selected chapters)
2	Hochschild, Arlie R. 2012. The Second Shift: Working families and the revolution at home. New York, N.Y.: Penguin Books..
3	Santos, Gonalo. 2020. "Birthing Stories and Techno-moral Change across Generations: Coping with Hospital Births and High-tech Medicalization in Rural South China, 1960s–2010s." Technology and Culture 61 (2):581-616..
4	Shi, Lihong. 2017. "From Care Providers to Financial Burden: The Changing Role of Sons and Reproductive Chocie in Rural Northeast China." In Transforming Patriarchy: Chinese Families in the Twenty-first Century, edited by Gonalo D. Santos and Stevan Harrell, 59-73. Seattle: University of Washington Press..
5	Buch, Elana D. 2015. "Anthropology of Aging and Care." Annual Review of Anthropology 44 (1):277-293. .
6	Donner, Henrike, and Gonalo Santos. 2016. "Love, Marriage, and Intimate Citizenship in Contemporary China and India: An introduction." Modern Asian Studies 50 (Special Issue 04):1123-1146...
7	Davis, Deborah, and Sara Friedman, eds. 2014. Wives, Husbands, and Lovers: Marriage and Sexuality in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Urban China. Palo Alto, CA; Hong Kong: Stanford University Press; University of Hong Kong (Introduction)..
8	Lemonnier, Pierre, ed. 1993. Technological Choices: Transformation in Material Cultures since the Neolithic. London; New York: Routledge.
9	Wilf, Eitan. 2013. "Toward an Anthropology of Computer-Mediated, Algorithmic Forms of Sociality." Current Anthropology 54 (6):716-739..
10	Wajcman, Judy. (2015). Pressed for time: The acceleration of life in digital capitalism. University of Chicago Press. [selected chapters]
11	Cowan, Ruth S. (1985). More work for mother. The ironies of household technology from the open hearth to the microwave. Basic Books. (selected chapters)
12	Chen, Yujie, Zhifei Mao, and Jack Linchuan Qiu. 2018. Super-sticky WeChat and Chinese society. United Kingdom: Emerald Publishing (selected chapters).
13	Jasanoff, Sheila, and Sang-Hyun Kim. (eds) 2015. Dreamscapes of Modernity. Socio-technical imaginaries and the fabrication of power. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [Introduction].
14	Morozov, Evgeny. 2013. To Save Everything, Click here: The Folly of Technological Solutionism. London: Penguin Books Ltd (selected chapters).
15	Online Resources: Canvas is used for the provision of readings (as pdf or html or Word files), for Discussions Forums, and to provide links to external web-based material.