AS 101H.01: Introduction to Asian Studies

Anthony Tribe

University of Montana - Missoula
This course is designed for students with little or no previous study of, or experience with, Asia and is intended to be an introduction to Asia for those who might be thinking of pursuing Asian Studies in more depth. At the same time it is suitable as a ‘stand-alone’ course, either for those interested in broadening their education through gaining some understanding of non-western societies and traditions, or for those with an Asian Studies Emphasis who wish to expand their knowledge of Asia beyond their area of specialization. It could also be of interest to Asian students who are curious about other Asian cultures and about the way the West looks at and studies Asia.

**Content & Structure**

- **AS 101** focuses on a range of cultural areas, including South, South-East, Central and East Asia.
- It is intended as an *introduction* rather than a *survey*, and is composed of a broad cultural-geographical introduction followed by modules that provide a series of ‘samplers’ that examine specific themes, issues and traditions. The approach is multi-disciplinary and, as well as being set in historical context, each module focuses on a core ‘text’, for example a novel or a film.
- The chronological emphasis is on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
- **AS 101** is part of a two-course sequence, **AS 101/102**, designed to provide an opportunity for a broad introduction to Asian Studies. **AS 101** is offered in the autumn, **AS 102** in the spring semester. The two courses share the same structure but have different modules; the emphases in the cultural-geographical introduction also differ. It is possible to take either course singly as a ‘stand-alone’.

**Themes**

A number of themes are given particular emphasis throughout the course:

- The Individual and Society.
- Cultural traditions that shaped and continue to shape Asian identity.
- The Impact of the West. (Some understanding of this theme is necessary for any grasp of contemporary Asia.)
Readings, Lectures, Films

- Course materials include novels and films by Asian writers and film makers, as well as a number of documentary videos.
- Rhoads Murphey’s textbook, *A History of Asia*, provides historical and cultural contexts, and integrates the course.
- One feature film is scheduled for evening viewing on Tues Oct 8th. **Attendance is required.**

Course Requirements

Attendance, reading, participation in discussion, quizzes as required, plus

- Two Mid-Term Exams 100 each
- One Three-Page reaction paper 100 each
- Final Exam (non-inclusive) 100

**Attendance:** absence from more than three class meetings will automatically lower your final grade by one letter.

Required Books (available from the UC bookstore)

**CO UR SE S CH ED U L E**

Readings should be completed by the date indicated

* Asterisk indicates item on reserve in the Library

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>Introduction to Course</td>
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<td>Sept 4</td>
<td>Introduction to Course</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>Asia Overview</td>
<td>Murphey, <em>A History of Asia</em>, 1–9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>South Asia 1: * Map Orientation / South Asia Today</td>
<td>* Robert Thurman, &quot;The Basics of Buddhism&quot; from <em>Wisdom and Compassion, the Sacred Art of Tibet</em></td>
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<td>Sept 9</td>
<td>South Asia 2: Cultural Traditions</td>
<td>Murphey, 43–4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>South Asia 2: Cultural Traditions</td>
<td>* W. Scott Morton, &quot;The Land &amp; People of China&quot; from <em>China, its History and Culture</em></td>
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<td>Sept 11</td>
<td>China 1: * Map Orientation / China Today</td>
<td>Murphey, 30–35 (&quot;Confucianism,&quot; &quot;Daoism&quot;), 94–5 (&quot;Confucius&quot;)</td>
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<td>Fri</td>
<td>China 1: * Map Orientation / China Today</td>
<td>Murphey, 346–52, 474</td>
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<td>Sept 13</td>
<td>China 2: Cultural Traditions</td>
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<td>Mon</td>
<td>China 2: Cultural Traditions</td>
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<td>Sept 16</td>
<td>China 2: Cultural Traditions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>Southeast Asia: * Map Orientation / Southeast Asia Today</td>
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<td>Sept 18</td>
<td>Southeast Asia: * Map Orientation / Southeast Asia Today</td>
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Fri Central Asia:  
Sept 20 Map Orientation / Central Asia Today  
Murphey, 439–40 ("Afghanistan")  
* Martin McCauley, from  
Afghanistan and Central Asia

Mon Japan:  
Sept 23 Map Orientation / Japan Today  
Murphey, 39–40 ("Shinto")  
* J. H. Boyle, "Land and People,"  
from Modern Japan, the American Nexus

Wed In-Class Exam  
Sept 25

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Module 1. South Asia:  
Society, Religion and Women in Contemporary India  
(Core 'Text': film "Fire" dir. Deepa Mehta)

Fri Introduction to the Module  
Sept 27  
* Short Story: "Giribala," by Mahasweta Devi

Mon Indian Society: Caste  
Sept 30  
* Gurcharan Das, "Caste," from India Unbound.

Wed Indian Society: Dalits  
Oct 2  
To be assigned

Fri Indian Religion: Hinduism, an  
Oct 4 Introduction  
Murphey, 22–6

Mon Indian Religion: Goddesses and  
Oct 7 Heroines  
* Kim Knott, "Divine Heroes: The Epic Tradition"

Tues Film, "Fire," dir. Deepa Mehta  
Oct 8 7:00–9:30pm SS344
   "Discussion of film ‘Fire’"

Fri  Oct 11 Women in India: Traditional Roles

Mon  Oct 14 Women in India: Contemporary Responses

Wed  Oct 16 To be Arranged

Fri  Oct 18 In-Class Exam

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Module 3. East Asia: Meiji Japan—Continuity & Change
(Core ‘Text’: Enchi Fumiko, The Waiting Years)

Mon  Oct 21 Introduction to the Module
Murphey, 154–8
Start The Waiting Years

Wed  Oct 23 Meiji Restoration
Introduction to The Waiting Years
Murphey, 312–16
("Japan among the Powers")

Fri  Oct 25 Western Ideas in Meiji Japan
Murphey, 316–19
("Imperialism and Americans in Asia")

Mon  Oct 28 Women and Literature in Classical Japan
Murphey, 163–71 (starting from
"Heian Culture")
* Edward Seidensticker and Haruo Shirane, “The Tale of Genji”

Wed  Oct 30 The Impact of China on Japanese Culture
Murphey, 158–63
("The Link with China")
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fri Nov 1</td>
<td>The Tokugawa Shogunate: the role of the Samurai</td>
<td>Murphey, 255–266</td>
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<td>Mon Nov 4</td>
<td>The Tokugawa Shogunate: poetry and play</td>
<td>* Haruo Shirane, “The Poetry of Basho”</td>
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<td>Fri Nov 8</td>
<td>Discussion of <em>The Waiting Years</em></td>
<td>Finish <em>The Waiting Years</em></td>
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<td>Nov 8</td>
<td>Nov 8 Reaction Paper Due on <em>The Waiting Years</em></td>
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<td>Mon Nov 11</td>
<td><strong>Holiday</strong> (Veterans’ Day)</td>
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<td>Nov 11</td>
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**Module 4. Central & East Asia:**

*The Dragon & the Snow–Lion—China, Tibet & the Dalai Lamas*

(Core ‘Text’: Documentary Video, “Red Flag Over Tibet”)

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<tr>
<td>Wed Nov 13</td>
<td>Introduction to Module</td>
<td>* Melvyn Goldstein, from <em>The Snow Lion and the Dragon</em></td>
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<td>- Tibet &amp; the World</td>
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<td>* Victor Chan, “Tibet: the Forbidden Land,” 189</td>
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<td>Fri Nov 15</td>
<td>China’s Historical Claim to Tibet</td>
<td>* Victor Chan, “Tibet: the Forbidden Land,” 190–197</td>
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<td>Mon Nov 18</td>
<td>The 20th Century: Chinesean</td>
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<td>Communist Rule - The Mao Era</td>
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<td>- Start “Red Flag Over Tibet” (Doc. Video: Orville Schell, 1994)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed Nov 20</td>
<td>The 20th Century: Tibet after Mao</td>
<td>To be assigned</td>
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<td>- Finish “Red Flag Over Tibet”</td>
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<td>Fri Nov 22</td>
<td>Tibetan Buddhism: an Introduction</td>
<td>To be assigned</td>
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Mon Nov 25  Tibetan Buddhism: the Tradition of Incarnate Lamas

Thanksgiving Holiday (Nov 27–29)

Mon Dec 2  Tenzin Gyatso. the 14th Dalai Lama
            “Dalai Lama: Soul of Tibet”
            (Documentary Video, 1997)

Wed Dec 4  Tibet: Present Perspectives & Future Possibilities

Fri Dec 6  Tibet in Western Imagination

* Robert Thurman, Wisdom and Compassion, the Sacred Art of Tibet, 30–32 (“A Buddhist Nation”)
* Peter Hessler, “Tibet Through Chinese Eyes”
* Donald Lopez, from Prisoners of Shangri-La

Module 4. Asian Film

Mon Dec 9  Asian Film 1  To be assigned
Wed Dec 11  Asian Film 2  To be assigned
Fri Dec 13  Asian Film 3  To be assigned

Final Exam: Tuesday Dec. 17th, 8:10–9:00am