Seminar on Taiwan in the East Asian Context

Instructor: Yao-Tai Li (yal059@ucsd.edu)
Time: TBD
Office Hour: TBD

Course Description
Social scientists are interested in understanding the complexities of cultural diversity in different countries and in explaining why/how such complexities are produced and reproduced over time. Echoing such inquiry, this course offers a comprehensive and engaging introduction to a country that represents a socially complex and culturally diverse case: Taiwan. Taiwan is also inherently important because of its rapid economic growth and political democratization in East Asia, its geopolitical importance in East Asia as well as current political tensions with China also provide us with rich study materials. Studying contemporary Taiwanese society gives us an opportunity to understand that as a unique east-Asian democratic regime, how the current Taiwanese society is shaped and transformed historically, and what we can learn from its experiences.

The purpose of this course is to enable students to understand current political, economic, cultural, and social components of Taiwanese society, including its political struggles with China, cultural resistance against Chinese culture, as well as its internal ethnic and social complexities, including ethnic conflicts and other social problems. This course will also touch upon some major social issues in Taiwan, including national identities, social stratifications, social movements, civil society, family and gender, among others.

In addition, this course will cover the political, economic, and cultural relations between Taiwan and its neighboring countries like Japan, China, Korea, and Hong Kong. The relationship between Taiwan and other East Asian countries not only influences the status quo of East Asian region, it also shapes the American foreign policy. Focusing on Taiwan, throughout the semester we will go through issues including its colonial history with Japan, political and cultural struggles with China, parallels with the Korean political and economic development trajectory, as well as the shared identity-politics and social movement with Hong Kong. A solid understanding of Taiwanese society will facilitate a better comprehension of overall East Asian society and the interaction between the countries therein. Furthermore, by comparing Taiwan with other east-Asian countries we can further understand the characteristics and position of Taiwan in East Asia. As such, the course will address discussions and debates surrounding these topics, grounding in both the historical and social process of the Taiwanese society in the East Asian context.

Course Goals
By the end of this course, you will have acquired the following skills:
• A solid understanding of some key issues, topics, and debates on Taiwanese society and Taiwan in the East Asian context
• A capacity for discerning the importance of Taiwan in a more comparative perspective and also situating it in the historical layer
• An understanding of how current political, economic, and cultural status quo of Taiwan and its neighboring countries is shaped and transformed
• An ability to articulate these concepts and to critically evaluate their implications from various angles, drawing on contrasting ideas and perspectives
• An ability to use different types of empirical data to substantiate your own argument

Course Requirement
• Be ready to start class on time
• Read the course materials, prepare questions for class
• Treat everyone with respect
• Turn off cell phones and other electronic devices
• Check your email account daily

Course Materials
The course readings are available online and will be posted on my blog: https://yaotaili.wordpress.com/teaching/

Office Hours
My office hours and places are TBD. Other time scheduled by appointment via email: yal059@ucsd.edu.

Evaluation
I believe the most effective way of learning is through the process of critically analyzing an issue that you genuinely care about. In this course I do not expect you to memorize theories and their arguments. Instead, I will train your abilities to appropriately apply these theories and relevant data to your own arguments.

Your course grade is based on: class participation, a reflection paper, an outline of your final paper, and the final essay.

1. Class participation (10%): We will have open and active discussions in seminar. This means that you will be expected to contribute your thoughts, listen carefully to others, and be prepared to respond to questions and raise questions on a regular basis. I might have in-class assignments occasionally (e.g., ask you to write few paragraphs of reflection). The objective is to ensure that all students have the opportunity to engage with the readings and to discuss the topics regularly and actively.

2. Reflection paper (40%): For this assignment, you need to choose one of the assigned readings and critically analyze it. Pick a theory/reading we have been talking about in the first half of the class and analyze: its main argument, what the implications of the author’s research findings are, what its methodology is, how the author substantiates his/her arguments, and whether you agree with the argument or not and why (or why not). Your paper may be turned in anytime in Week 8, but no later than the last class of Week 8.

3. Outline of final essay (10%): During the course you will have to prepare a topic that you are most interested in and care about. You can analyze an issue which has or has not been talked about in class. The outline should be no longer than 1 page. The outline should address your research question for the final essay, your main argument, the theories you will have a conversation with, and the data you are going to analyze. It will be due at the end of week 11.
4. Final essay (40%): As mentioned, an important goal of the course is to help you sharpen your skills for developing well-reasoned and well-written arguments that draw on sociological perspectives. Based on your outline, the final essay is expected to show what you have learned throughout the course and your ability to critically analyze a topic or phenomenon that you care about. For this essay I will particularly focus on your main argument and how well you connect it to the theories and use the data to substantiate it.

Course Schedule
This schedule is subject to revision as we proceed. Any changes will be announced in class.

Week 1-2 Why Is Taiwan Important? Why Do We Study Taiwanese Society?
Why Do We Study Taiwan in the East Asian Context?
Muyard, Frank. 2015. “Comparativism and Taiwan Studies: Analyzing Taiwan In/Out of Context, or Taiwan as an East Asian New World Society.” In: Shu-mei Shih and Ping-hui Liao (Eds.) Comparatizing Taiwan.

* References:

Week 3 Taiwan’s Colonial History under Japan’s Rule

* References:

Week 4 The Legacy of Japanese Colonialism in Taiwan
Japan and National Identities in Asia, 1895-1945.

* References:

Week 5 Cross-Strait Relations and Political Tensions with China

* References:

Week 6 Taiwanese Acceptance for or Resistance against China
Chang, Bi-yu. 2006. “Constructing the Motherland: Culture and the State since the 1990s.” In: Dafydd Fell et al. (Eds.) What Has Changed? Taiwan Before and After the Change of Ruling Parties.

* References:
Harrell, Stevan and Huang Chun-Chieh. 1994. “Introduction: Change and Contention in Taiwan’s Cultural Scene.” In: Stevan Harrell and Huang Chun-Chieh (Eds.) Cultural Change in Postwar Taiwan.
Ho, Ming-sho and Jeffrey Broadbent. 2011. “Introduction to Taiwanese Society, Culture and Politics.” In: Jeffrey Broadbent and Vickie Brockman (Eds.) East Asian Social Movements: Power, Protest, and Change in a Dynamic Region.

Week 7 Memory, Belongs, and National Identity

* References:
Rigger, Shelley. 2006. Taiwan’s Rising Rationalism: Generations, Politics, and

**Week 8 Indigenous Group and Ethnic Conflicts**


* Reference:


**Reflection paper due**

**Week 9 Social Stratification, Class, and Inequality**


* References:


Lin, Yi-Wei. 2010. *Job Mobility and Class Mobility in Taiwan: From the Life-Course Perspective.*

**Week 10-11 Social Movements and Civil Protests**


**Final essay outline due**

**Week 12 Family and Gender Issues in Taiwan**


Taiwanese Society in Comparative Context

Week 13 State Corporatism in Taiwan and Korea
Liu, Hwa-Jen. 2015. Leverage of the Weak Labor and Environmental Movements in Taiwan and South Korea, Introduction chapter.

* References:

Week 14 Development Model in Taiwan and Korea

* References:

Week 15 Identity Politics in Taiwan and Hong Kong

* Reference:
Week 16 Social Movements and Civil Society in Taiwan and Hong Kong
Kaeding, Malte. 2014. “Challenging Hongkongisation: The Role of Taiwan’s Social Movements and Perceptions of Post-Handover Hong Kong.” *Taiwan in Comparative Perspective* 5: 120–133.

Week 17–18 Beyond East Asia: Taiwan and Other Non-Asian Countries
Yang, Chi-Shou Justin. 2011. “A Comparison of Leadership Traits Across Countries: Taiwan and the United States.” University of Kentucky Master’s Theses. Paper 646: [http://uknowledge.uky.edu/gradschool_theses/646](http://uknowledge.uky.edu/gradschool_theses/646)