Contemporary Taiwanese Society

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 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 is also inherently important because of its rapid economic growth and political democratization in East Asia, its geopolitical importance as well as current political tensions with China also provide us with rich study materials. Studying contemporary Taiwanese society gives us a chance to understand as a unique east-Asian democratic regime, how the current Taiwanese society is shaped and transformed, 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. We will also touch upon some major social issues in Taiwan, including national identities, social stratifications, social movements, civil society, family and gender. An understanding of Taiwanese society will facilitate a better comprehension of overall East Asian society and the interaction between the countries therein. As such, the course will address discussions and debates surrounding these topics, grounding in both the historical and social process of the Taiwanese 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
- 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 Taiwanese society 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 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 class. 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 1-2 paragraphs of reflection). The objective is to ensure that all students have the opportunity to engage with the readings and topics regularly and actively.

2. Mid-term Exam (40%): You will have an in-class mid-term exam that covers the readings we have gone through in the first half of this course (week 1–8). There will be both short answers and essay questions. I will announce more details one week before the mid-term.

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 10.

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 of immigration. 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  Introduction: Why Is Taiwan Important? Why Do We Study Taiwanese Society?

* References:

Week 2  A Brief History of Taiwan’s Political Development

* Reference:

Week 3  A Brief History of Taiwan’s Economic Development

* Reference:

Week 4-5  Cross-Strait Relations

* References:

Week 6-7  Social and Cultural Changes in Taiwan
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.

* Reference:
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 8-9** Memory, Belongs, and National Identity


* References:


**Week 10** Indigenous Group and Ethnic Conflicts


* References:


• Final essay outline due

**Week 11** Social Stratification, Class, and Inequality


* References:


Lin, Yi-Wei. 2010. Job Mobility and Class Mobility in Taiwan: From the Life-Course Perspective, chapter TBD.
Week 12-13 Social Movements and Civil Protests
Protests” In: Tun-Jen Cheng and Stephan Haggard (Eds.) Political Change in
Taiwan.
Ho, Ming-sho. 2015. “Occupy Congress in Taiwan: Political Opportunity, Threat and

* References:
Chiu, Yubin. 2011. “Old Constraints and Future Possibilities in the Development of
Taiwan’s Independent Labor Movement.” Capitalism Nature Socialism 22(1): 58–
75.
Ho, Ming-sho. 2012. “Sponsoring Civil Society: State and Community Movement in
Taiwan” Sociological Inquiry 82(3): 404–423.

Week 14 Family and Gender Issues in Taiwan
Thornton, Arland and Hui-Sheng Lin. 1994. “Weakening the Linkage between the
Ancestors, the Living, and Future Generations.” In: Arland Thornton and Hui-
Sheng Lin. Social Change and the Family in Taiwan.

* References:
Cheng, Yen-hsin Alice. 2014. “Changing Partner Choice and Marriage Propensities
by Education in Post-industrial Taiwan, 2000-2010.” Demographic Research 31:
1007–1042.
Catherine Farris, Anru Lee and Murray Rubinstein (Eds.) Women in the New
Taiwan: Gender Roles and Gender Consciousness in a Changing Society.

Week 15-16 Taiwan in Comparative Perspective
Shih, Fang-Long and Carol Jones. 2014. “Introduction to Taiwan and Hong Kong in
Comparative Perspective: Centres–Peripheries, Colonialism, and the Politics of
Representation.” Taiwan in Comparative Perspective 5: 1–25.
Difference, How Many Similarities? In: Schubert, Gunter and Jens Damm (Eds.)
Taiwanese Identity Politics in the Twenty-First Century: Domestic, Regional and
Global Perspectives.

* References:
Simon, Scott. 2011. “Multiculturalism and Indigenism: Contrasting the Experiences
of Canada and Taiwan.” In: Tak-wing Ngo and Hong-zen Wang (Eds.) Politics of
Difference in Taiwan.
Liu, Hwa-Jen. 2015. Leverage of the Weak Labor and Environmental Movements in
Taiwan and South Korea, Introduction chapter.

• Final essay due