This course aims to trace affinities and linkages among cultural processes, geopolitical conditions, and media representations within the greater Asian region, broadly defined. Expanding its scope beyond a single nation, race, or language, the course builds on the comparativist work of Benedict Anderson, Chen Kuan-hsing, Aihwa Ong, and Anna Tsing in Asian Studies, Sinophone Studies, and Inter-Asia Cultural Studies to uncover the multiplicity of diverse Asias.

Its focal points are keywords, objects, and images that would have social resonance in particular locations and societies. Examining their global interchange through an array of print, audiovisual, and digital media, it focuses on their variance in form, use, and meaning across distinct spatial environments and historical periods with a spotlight on vernacular perspectives and experiences.

This course explores a combination of questions: How are different understandings of ‘neoliberalism,’ ‘development,’ and ‘democracy’ exemplified by contrasting conditions of political, social, and historical transformation? How do analogous systems of state surveillance and violence reverberate with divergent modes of trauma and justice? How are ghosts, spirits, witches, and trolls regarded in varied forms under distinct circumstances of corporate capitalism and financial speculation?

How are the racial, ethnic, or religious identities of Chinese-ness or Muslim-ness shaped by diaspora, tourism, and media? How are systems of exchange and distribution shaped by commodity circulation based on local tastes? How is the experience and consumption of nostalgia configured by particular conditions of intensifying economic and emotional instability?

How is colonialism a system that exceeds the dichotomy between East and West to encompass intraregional hierarchies centered on the economic and cultural superiority of Japan or China? How have interactions and exchanges among intellectuals, revolutionaries, and migrants constituted imaginaries of ‘pan-Asianism’? With this transnational orientation, the course hopes to expand the locus of the discussion beyond Asia to encompass its trans-oceanic connections with Africa and Latin America.

This semester’s iteration of the course is designed for advanced postgraduate students. It will be conducted seminar-style with active participation a major requirement. Students will submit three short response papers throughout the semester. The final requirement is an original research paper that will comparatively analyze a keyword, object, or image across three different Asian contexts.
SCHEDULE

Week 1: Toward Comparativism and Transnationalism (Jan 12)
Required:
Recommended:
- Carol Gluck, “Words in Motion,” in Words in Motion: Toward a Global Lexicon, eds. Carol Gluck and Anna Tsing (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), pp. 3-10

Week 2: Pan-Asian Imagined Communities (Jan 19)
Required:
Recommended:

Week 3: Media Dissemination (Jan 26)
Required:
Recommended:

Week 4: LUNAR NEW YEAR HOLIDAY (Feb 2)

Week 5: Colonialisms (Feb 9)
Required:
Recommended:


**Week 6: Migration and Race (Feb 16)**

**Required:**

**Recommended:**
- Caroline Hau, “Region,” in *The Chinese Question: Ethnicity, Nation and Region in and beyond the Philippines* (Quezon City, PH: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2014), pp. 203-246

**Week 7: Genders and Sexualities (Feb 23)**

**Required:**

**Recommended:**

**Week 8: Neoliberal Precarity (Mar 2)**

**Required:**

**Recommended:**
Week 9: Nostalgias (Mar 16)
Required:

Recommended:

Week 10: Ghosts, Spirits, and Traumas (Mar 23)
Required:

Recommended:

Week 11: Nature and Environment (Mar 30)
Required:

Recommended:

Submission of abstract for final paper (end of week 11)

Week 12: Consultation on final paper (Apr 6)

Week 13: Anthologizing Asia (Apr 13)
Film screening and discussion:
- Live Q&A with producers and filmmakers

Week 14: Presentation of final paper (Apr 20)
Submission of final paper (end of April)
LEARNING OUTCOMES

1) To become acquainted with the key issues and debates in comparative and transnational Asian cultural and media studies
2) To identify points of similarity, affinity, and variance in the diverse histories and cultures of the greater Asian region
3) To apply a comparative, transnational lens to uncover and analyze cross-cultural connections and divergences among seemingly disparate spatial environments, media ecologies, and historical milieus

ASSESSMENT

Class Participation – 20%
Please make sure you have thoroughly read the required readings. You are expected to participate actively during lectures, presentations, and discussions by posing relevant questions and insights. In every class session, different students will be called on to share their thoughts or questions. Your responses to your classmates will also be assessed.

3 Response Papers (200-400 words each) - 25%
You will submit 3 response papers throughout the semester, each of which will discuss your thoughts and questions about a different set of assigned readings. For one, you could examine the connections or divergences among the assigned readings. You could raise questions about the gaps in argumentation or analysis in these readings. You could also investigate their degree of applicability to other examples or contexts.

The ideas or examples discussed in these papers will be used as prompts for further class discussion.

Student-led Discussion of Recommended Reading (20 mins.) – 15%
Each student will be assigned to lead the discussion of one set of recommended readings. For your presentation, you should 1) present a summary of your assigned readings’ key terms and arguments. It should also 2) explain how these ideas might be applicable to other examples not mentioned in the assigned readings for that session. I will ask questions during and after your discussion to clarify your understanding of the assigned readings.

This requirement will be marked based on the depth and clarity of your understanding of the assigned readings, which you will demonstrate during the presentation. The organization and coherence of the presentation will be taken as evidence of your effort and preparedness. Part of your grade will also come from the quality of your discussion questions and examples. By the noon of your presentation date, you should email to me a copy of your slideshow as a basis for grading.

Final Research Paper (4000-6000 words) – 40%
As your final requirement for the course, you will write an original research paper that explores how a keyword, object, or image is articulated or understood across 3 different Asian contexts.

This requirement will be graded based on the depth and clarity of the understanding it demonstrates in its explanation of its ideas and their substantiation. Credit will be given to the suitability and uniqueness of the chosen ideas and evidence. Lastly, the presentation of the paper will be marked for its organization and coherence.
You will submit an abstract for your proposed paper of 400-500 words in bullet-point format. Based on this abstract, I will help you develop your paper during a one-on-one consultation. In our final class meeting, you will give a paper presentation, which will be your last opportunity to receive feedback before submitting the final version.

GRADING RUBRIC

A (Exceptional) – The paper or project greatly exceeds the expectations for this requirement. Fresh insights are presented not only about the chosen example but also about the concepts used. The paper or project displays a comprehensive understanding of the chosen example and the concepts used that goes beyond the scope of the class discussion. The language used to explain the concept and its application is complex yet lucid. The writing is grammatically correct and coherently organized. The chosen example is unique for the topic. The paper or project was submitted by the deadline.

A- (Outstanding) – The paper or project exceeds the expectations for this requirement. Fresh insights are presented about the chosen example. The paper or project displays a comprehensive understanding of either the chosen example or the theory used that goes beyond the scope of the class discussion. The language used to explain the theory and its application is complex yet lucid. The writing is grammatically correct and coherently organized. The chosen example is unique for the topic. The paper or project was submitted by the deadline.

B+ (Very Good) – The paper or project more than meets the expectations for this requirement. Fresh insights are presented about the chosen example. The paper or project displays a comprehensive understanding of the chosen example and the theory used. The language used to explain the theory and its application is lucid. The writing is coherently organized. The chosen example is suitable for the topic. The paper or project was submitted by the deadline.

B (Good) – The paper or project more than meets the expectations for this requirement. The insights presented about the chosen example could have been developed further. The paper or project displays a sufficient understanding of the chosen example and the theory used. The language used to explain the theory and its application is lucid. The writing is moderately coherent. The chosen example is suitable for the topic. The paper or project was submitted by the deadline.

B- (More than Satisfactory) – The paper or project meets the expectations for this requirement. The insights presented about the chosen example or theory used lack elaboration or development. The paper or project displays a sufficient understanding of either the chosen example or the theory used. The language used to explain the theory and its application is understandable. The writing is moderately coherent. The chosen example is suitable for the topic. The paper or project may have been submitted late.

C+ (Satisfactory) – The paper or project meets the expectations for this requirement. The insights presented about the chosen example or theory used lack elaboration or development. The paper or project displays a basic understanding of the chosen example and the theory used. The language used to explain the theory and its application is understandable. The writing is slightly coherent. The chosen example may not be suitable for the topic. The paper or project may have been submitted late.

C, C- (Fair) – The paper or project barely meets the expectations for this requirement. The insights presented about the chosen example or theory used are vaguely elaborated. The paper or project fails to display a sufficient understanding of the chosen example and the theory used. The language used to explain the theory and its application is
virtually understandable. The writing is incoherent. The chosen example may not be suitable for the topic. The paper or project may have been submitted late.

**D+, D (Pass)** – The paper or project does not meet the expectations for this requirement. No additional insights are presented about the chosen example or the theory used on top of what was discussed in class. The language used to explain the theory and its application are almost incomprehensible. The writing is incoherent. The chosen example is irrelevant. The paper or project may have been submitted late.

**F (Fail)** – The paper or project does not meet the expectations for this requirement. The language and writing are poor. The chosen example is irrelevant. The theory used was not covered in class. The paper or project may have been submitted long past the deadline.

**ACADEMIC ETHICS**

You are expected to abide by the university’s principles and regulations on academic honesty. Please take some time to familiarize yourself with the information on the following webpage: [http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/).

Violations such as plagiarized papers or multiple submissions will not be tolerated in any form. These will be subject to disciplinary action. Remember that all words, phrases, or ideas taken from sources other than your own submitted assignment must be properly cited. When in doubt about an assignment with a possible violation, please feel free to consult me.

All written assignments must be accompanied by a VeriGuide receipt, a signed declaration acknowledging your awareness of and subscription to the university’s policies and regulations on academic integrity. Written assignments submitted without a VeriGuide receipt will not be accepted and graded.