

## **Course Title: East Asia and the Rise of a Global Middle Class**

Spring Session

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This course looks at East Asian history through the rise of a global middle class. What is a “middle class” and how did the idea evolve in East Asia? How has the middle class in East Asia converged and diverged from global trends? How has the idea of a middle class driven politics, economics, education, and gender, or vice versa? What role has the middle class played in the shared and divergent histories of Japan and China? How have middle-class experiences become the dream of the social mainstream in East Asia? Through select primary and secondary sources, students will obtain an inside glimpse of East Asia, global modernity, and the discipline of social and cultural history. Students will produce two short essays, participate in class discussion, and submit a final paper.

### **Course Objectives**

This course has three main goals: First, we will engage key topics in class-formation in East Asia and the world from the nineteenth through twentieth centuries. We begin with the birth of the idea of class and its adaptation to East Asia in the nineteenth century, highlight the dramatic socio-economic developments in the twentieth century, and conclude with the rise of a mass middle-class society and its globalization. Second, we will probe the relationship between class and social change and use this as a prism to reflect upon the converging and diverging paths of China and Japan in the modern era. Finally, this course will introduce students to critical reading and argumentation.

### **Requirements and Grading Policies**

This course has no prerequisites, and, before we begin the discussion on specific reading assignments, I will provide a presentation overviewing the topic that we will cover each session. But students unfamiliar with East Asian History would benefit from reading portions of Keith Schoppa, *Revolution and Its Past* (2006) and Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan* (2003). I am happy to guide you to other sources of basic information in this field.

#### **1. Attendance and Participation: 20%**

Since this is a small group seminar, students are expected to come to class having read and reflected upon the course material and to actively participate in class discussions. To ensure a high level of discussion, you are required to submit analyses of readings before each class, which will be shared with your classmates on our Canvas course site. This write-up is due to 10 PM the day before class. Also, I encourage you to bring your texts to substantiate your arguments during class.

#### **2. Discussion Leader: 10%**

All students are required to serve as a discussion leader once during the semester. The discussion leader prepares a short presentation and questions to guide the day's deliberations. Please speak with me about this assignment at least one week prior to your assigned class.

3. Paper #1 15%

The first paper is to analyze how James Carville et al, *It's the Middle Class, Stupid!* (Plume, 2013) characterizes the middle class. The paper should be 3 to 4 pages and is due February 11.

4. Paper #2 15%

Address the rise of East Asian middle class in the context of world history. The other option is to compare the rise of a middle class in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century between in China and in Japan. The paper should be 5 to 6 pages and is due March 8.

5. Final Paper: 40%

The final assignment is a term paper of 10-15 pages, producing your own argument of the history of the middle class in East Asia. Although encourage you to capitalize on course readings, there is no thematic limit. In an effort to ensure adequate preparation for this assignment, please note the timetable of related exercises below.

Preliminary Paper Title and Bibliography:	Due March 25
Preliminary Introduction and Outline:	Due April 10
Final Paper Presentation:	Last session of this course
Final Paper Due:	May 5

## Course Policies

All assignments are due by the date stipulated on the syllabus or to be announced. Please inform me as soon as possible about medical emergencies or other compelling circumstances. Plagiarism and related offences will result in an F and potential disciplinary action by the Penn Office of Student Conduct.

## Course Itinerary

### Week I:

Session 1: Orientation

Orientation Meeting  
Discussion about *It's the Middle Class, Stupid!*

### Part I: The Idea of a Middle Class and its East Asian Context

#### Week II: The Idea of class and the Middle Class

Session 2

- 1) Karl Marx et al., *The Communist Manifesto* (Verso, 1998), pp.33-50.

- 2) Pierre Bourdieu (trans. Richard Nice), *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Harvard University Press, 1984), pp.1-6.
- 3) Wright Mills, *White Collar: The American Middle Classes* (Oxford University Press, 1952), pp.ix-xx, p.241.
- 4) Olivier Zunz, *Making America Corporate* (University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp.1-10.

Central Questions: 1. Address the nature of class in the works of Marx and Bourdieu. 2. Compare the nature of the middle class as described in the works of Mills and Zunz. Where is the middle class situated? Define the middle-ness of the middle class.

### **Week III: The Overview of Middle-Class History in China and Japan**

#### Session 3

- 1) Jie Chen, *A Middle Class without Democracy* (Oxford University Press, 2013), pp.29-65. "China's Middle Class: Definition and Evolution"
- 2) Andrew Gordon, "Short Happy Life of the Japanese Middle Class", in Oliver Zunz et al., *Social Contracts Under Stress: The Middle Classes of America, Europe, and Japan at the Turn of the Century* (Russel Sage Foundation, 2002), pp.108-129

Central Questions: Central questions: 1. How do these two authors characterize the middle class? Compare with our previous readings. 2. Compare the middle-class experiences of Japan and China described in the readings. To what extent do definitions of the middle class seem to depend upon contemporary developments in China and Japan?

**First Paper Due**

### **Week IV: The Rise of the Middle Class**

#### Session 4

- 1) Simon Gunn, "Between Modernity and Backwardness the case of the English middle class", López, A. Ricardo et al. ed., *Making of the Middle Class: Toward a Transnational History* (Duke University Press, 2011)
- 2) Marie-Claire Bergere, *The Golden Age of the Chinese Bourgeoisie, 1911-1937* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp.123-139. "The new Entrepreneurs in the City"
- 3) Earl Kinmonth, *Self-made Man in Meiji Japanese Thought: From Samurai to Salary Man* (University of California Press, 1982), pp.1-2, p.7, pp.9-43.
- 4) Nitobe Inazo, *Bushido, the Soul of Japan*, (New York & London: The G.P. Putnam's Sons Knickerbocket Press, 1905), p.177.

Central Question: 1. Please identify continuity and discontinuity in the transition from gentry to a modern bourgeoisie in China. Was there a middle class in pre-1840 China? 2. Please identify continuity and discontinuity in the transition from samurai to self-made men? 3. How is the idea of samurai reinvented in Nitobe's Bushido? 3. How much is the idea of a middle class an import from the West?

### **Week V: The Lower Middle Class**

#### Session 5

- 1) Arno J. Mayer, "The Lower Middle Class as Historical Problem", *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (September 1975), pp. 409-436.
- 2) Andrew Gordon, *Fabricating Consumers: The Sewing Machine in Modern Japan* (University of California Press, 2011), pp.57-90. "Selling and Consuming Modern Life",

- 3) Wen-Hsin Yeh, *Shanghai Splendor: Economic Sentiments and the Making of Modern China, 1943-1949* (University of California Press, 2008), pp.129-151. "Petit Urbanites and Tales of Woe"

Central Questions: 1. What is a lower middle class? What does the adjective "lower" mean? Were members of this class "lower" culturally, economically, or politically? 2. Compare lower middle class status in Britain and in East Asia. What socio-political context differentiates the two ends of the Eurasian Continent? 3. Compare the experiences of China and Japan. Identify the historical context that differentiates China and Japan.

## Week VI: Korean Experience

### Session 6

- 1) Denise Potrzeba Lett, *In Pursuit of Status: The Making of South Korea's New Urban Middle Class* (Harvard University Asia Center, 1998).

Central Question: 1. How do you compare Korean experience to Japanese, Chinese, and American experiences we have discussed so far?

## Part II: The Middle Class and Society

### Week VII: Public Sphere: East Asian Peculiarities?

#### Session 7

- 1) Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (MIT Press 1991), pp.14-26, pp.73-79.
- 2) Eugenia Lean, *Public Passions: The Trial of Shi Jianqiao and the Rise of Popular Sympathy in Republican China* (University of California Press, 2007), pp.1-20
- 3) Timothy S. George, "Tanaka Shozo's Vision of an Alternative Constitutional Modernity for Japan", in Gail Lee Bernstein et al ed., *Public Spheres, Private Lives in Modern Japan, 1600-1950: Essays in Honor of Albert Craig* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2005) pp.89-116.

Central Questions: 1. Compare state-middle-class relations described in these two works. 2. How does the public sphere portrayed by Lean and George echo or challenge Habermas? 3. What socio-political conditions differentiate the Chinese and Japanese public spheres from that described by Habermas?

**Second Paper is due**

SPRING BREAK: No Class

### Week VIII: Middle Class as Social Reformers

#### Session 8

- 1) Daniel J. Walkowitz, *Working with Class: Social Workers and the Politics of Middle-Class Identity* (The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), pp.27-55. "The Invention of the Social Workers"
- 2) David Amberas, "Social Knowledge, Cultural Capital, and the New Middle Class in Modern Japan," *Journal of Japanese Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 1, Winter, 1998
- 3) Zvia Lipkin, *Useless to the State: Social Problems and Social Engineering in Nationalist Nanjing, 1927-1937* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), pp.129-161. "Rickshaw-Pulling: An "Unscientific" Occupation"

Central Questions: 1. Define the middle class identity of these professional social reformers. Where do they fit in our definition of the middle class? How much do they take root in society and how much do they cross borders? 2. Identify the global convergence and national peculiarities in professional reformers in China and Japan.

### Week IX: Class, Gender, and Family

#### Session 9

- 1) Susan Glosser, *Chinese Visions of Family and State, 1915-1953* (Berkeley: University of California, 2003) Ch.3, pp.134-166. "Marketing the Family: You Huaigao and the Entrepreneurial Xiao Jiating"
- 2) Mark Jones, *Children as Treasures*, pp.173-196. "The Self-made Woman and the Superior Student"
- 3) Jukichi Inouye, *Home Life in Tokyo* (Tokyo, 1912), pp.195-207. "Family Relations"
- 4) Robert Coltman, *The Chinese, Their Present and Future: Medical, Political, and Social* (Philadelphia and London: F.A Davis Publisher, 1891), pp.94-112.

Central Questions: 1. Where does the idea of femininity fit in the middle-class family ideal, urban consumer culture, individual aspirations, and in the household economy? Are these roles mutually exclusive? Is there a clear demarcation between domesticity and the world outside the home? 2. What is the East Asian context that shapes the Japanese and Chinese experience in these readings? How would you compare the Chinese and Japanese experiences?

### Week X: Class and Consumption

#### Session 10

- 1) George Jacob Holyoake, *Self-help by the People: History of Co-operation in Rochdale, 1858*, pp.1-6
- 2) Andrew Gordon, *Fabricating Consumers: The Sewing Machine in Modern Japan*, pp.30-56. "The American Way of Selling"
- 3) Louise Young, "Marketing the Modern: Department Stores, Consumer Culture, and the New Middle Class in Interwar Japan", *International Labor and Working-Class History*, No.55 (1999)
- 4) Joyce Yanyun Man, *China's Emerging Middle Class*, pp.193-216. "China's Housing Reform and Emerging Middle Class"

Central Questions: 1. Does the class identity of consumers stimulate consumption or does consumption of certain commodities create a class identity for consumers? 2. What East Asian context affects the shape of middle-class consumers? What is the role of the state in creating modern consumers? 3. How do members of the middle class gain mainstream status in society through consumption?

### Week XI: Class and Education

#### Session 11

- 1) Donald Roden, *Schooldays in Imperial Japan* (University of California Press, 1980), pp.42-70. "Between Nation and Campus: The Making of the Higher School Gentleman",
- 2) Wen-Hsin Yeh, *Alienated Academy* (Harvard University Asia Center 2001), pp.49-88. "St. John's University and the Culture of the Shanghai Bourgeoisie"
- 3) Elizabeth Foreman Lewis, *Portraits from a Chinese Scroll* (Chicago, Philadelphia, & Toronto: The John C. Winston Company, 1938), pp.181-184. "Clerk"

\*We will watch Ozu Yasujiro, <Although I graduated from University> (15-minute version) in class.

Central Questions: 1. How do students of Japan's higher schools and St. Johns University fit in the category of middle class? Are they middle-class in themselves or only by virtue of their future career paths? 2. What is the role of "Westerners" in the establishment of both institutions? 3. Compare the context of higher education in China and Japan. 3. Does the contested class status of university students represent a crisis of the middle class or a lower entry barrier to middle-class status in institutions of higher education?

### **Week XII: The Middle Class as Social Mainstream**

Session 12:

- 1) Marina Moskowitz, "'Aren't We All?' Aspiration, Acquisition, and the American Middle Class", Ricardo Lopez and Barbara Weinstein ed., *The Making of the Middle Class: Toward a Transnational History* (Duke University Press, 2012)
- 2) Andrew Gordon, "Conditions for the Disappearance of the Japanese Working-Class Movement", Elizabeth Perry ed., *Putting Class in Its Place: Worker Identities in East Asia* (University of California Press, 1996)
- 3) Jing Lin and Xiaoyan Sun, "Higher Education Expansion and China's Middle Class", in Cheng Li ed., *China's Emerging Middle Class*

Central Questions: 1. How do these readings characterize the middle class? Does a middle class society exist in reality or only in the imagination? What does a shared class identity bring to a society? 2. Assess the expansion of education in China and Japan. Did such expansion bring a shared middle-class identity or break down such identity in Japan and China?

### **Week XIII: The Middle Class and Politics**

Session 13

- 1) Gisela Mettele, "The City as a Field of Female Civic Action: Women and Middle-Class Formation in Nineteenth-Century Germany", Ricardo Lopez ed., *The Making of the Middle Class* (Duke University Press, 2012)
- 2) Darryl Flaherty, *Public Law, Private Practice: Politics, Profit, and the Legal Profession in Nineteenth-Century Japan* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2013), pp.199-250. "The Possibilities and Limits of Politics: Legal Advocates and the Formation of Political Parties"
- 3) Jie Chen, *A Middle Class without Democracy*, pp.66-91. "How Does the Middle Class View Democracy and the Chinese Communist Party Government?"

Central Questions: 1. What do these three readings mean by "politics"? 2. Where is the place of politics in middle-class living? Is the social aspiration of middle-class citizens political or apolitical?

### **Week XIV: Personal Stories and Student Presentations**

Session 14: Myself as a member of a Class

No readings

Central Questions: Based on the readings in this course, Please identify your class-belonging. Please present your final projects in fifteen minutes.

Final Paper Due