

PO920-40 International Relations of the Asia-Pacific

26/27

Department

Politics & International Studies

Level

Taught Postgraduate Level

Module leader

Christopher Hughes

Credit value

40

Module duration

20 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

The Asia-Pacific is increasingly a region of pivotal importance, if not preeminent importance, in global politics and international relations. It is beset with big questions the answers to which have important implications both within and beyond the region. Does East Asia face greater challenges from 'traditional' or 'new' security and economic issues? Can American hegemony in the Asia-Pacific be maintained? Can China rise peacefully and what would this mean? What are the roles of Japan and ASEAN in the region? Is the region heading towards a US-China clash or new Cold War? Moreover, these questions often present seemingly paradoxical challenges to mainstream interpretations of international politics, the answering of which helps us better understand the study of international politics itself!

This module seeks to elucidate:

- patterns and characteristics of the international politics of regionalism and regionalisation in the Asia-Pacific;
- dynamic processes that drive political relations amongst the principal state and non-state actors in the Asia-Pacific, the issues generated as a result in the dimensions of politics, economics and security, and the ways in which these processes and issues have affected the evolution of the region;

==methods and conceptual tools in the study of IR, IPE, IS, ID and Public Policy which can be utilised in order to understand the complexities of the politics of the region.

The module analyses the characteristics and patterns of international politics in the Asia-Pacific by focussing on the central theme of the degree to which the region can be perceived to function as a coherent and integrated entity. The module investigates this theme through addressing questions of common and competing understandings of the location and division of the region in terms of geography, modes of political, economic and security interaction, 'Asian identity' and culture. In short, the module seeks to address the problem of 'what' exactly can be thought to have constituted the Pacific-Asia region in the past and in the contemporary era.

The module examines the dynamics of the international politics of the Asia-Pacific with reference to three interconnected and cumulative processes which are approximately congruent with three overlapping historical periods—decolonisation, bipolarisation and globalisation. In turn, the examination of the political dynamics of the region in relation to these processes highlights a variety of key themes and issues in the international politics of the Asia-Pacific and more generally for the study of the disciplines of IR and IPE. These include the imposition of Western norms of political and economic organisation within state-building projects and across the region; imperialism/colonialism; nationalism; regionalism; hegemony; security relations; and international political economy. Consequently, the module attempts to investigate not only 'what' constitutes the Asia-Pacific region, but the reasons for 'why' it is constituted in the way that it is.

The first dynamic process, decolonisation, refers not only to the eventual withdrawal of the colonial powers throughout the post-war period, but also to the creation of sovereign and nation states. This process, beginning in the Pacific War, is an ongoing one, which has been propelled and conditioned by the other two processes. The second, bipolarisation, is exemplified by the Cold War era—the establishment of two spheres of influence in the region by the great powers which shape both the international relations and the political economy of all regional states. The third, globalisation, has become quantitatively and qualitatively more important since the end of the Cold War. While there is no single model of capitalism in the region, globalisation is manifested in the increasing ideational contestation between neo-liberal and more state-led economic paradigms in the region. and how best to channel these for state-building purposes.

In conjunction with analysing the key patterns and processes of the international politics of the Asia-Pacific, the module considers also the utility of different conceptual and theoretical frameworks for the study of the region. The module applies and assesses theories from the generic disciplines of IR, IPE, Security Studies and more specific theories from regional and East Asian studies. It evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of each; the question of whether the study of the international politics of the region has been built upon the imposition of western paradigms and modes of analysis; and the value of assimilating and synthesising a range of theories in order to gain a firmer grasp of the complexities of the region. In essence, therefore, this module also asks 'how' we should attempt to study the politics of the Asia-Pacific region and the ways in which this helps us to sharpen our understanding of the study of IR and IPE in general.

The seminars for this module are designed to address these major questions of the 'what', 'why' and 'how' of the international politics of the region. The seminar series starts off by raising questions about the characteristics and current status of Asia-Pacific as a region. The seminars next establish the conceptual and historical frameworks that can be utilised for understanding contemporary regional affairs. Following on from this, the seminars examine the processes driving

politics in the Asia-Pacific from the period from the region's first contact with the West through to the colonial, post-war, Cold War and contemporary periods. The seminars then go on to consider the principal state actors in the region asking: what are their objectives, and how have they gone about attaining them? Finally, the seminar series considers a number of crucial issues in the dimensions of politics, economics and security, and concludes with an assessment of the future shape and challenges for the region.

This module is necessarily interdisciplinary and it should provide an opportunity for students to link the more theoretical material in other modules with the empirical experiences of international relations and regionalism in the Asia-Pacific.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

The aims of the module are:

- To provide an overview of the dynamics and characteristics of international relations in the Asia-Pacific.
- To offer a thorough grounding in past and contemporary issues of the international politics of the Asia-Pacific.
- To provide advanced-level knowledge of a region which is of growing international importance, and on which expertise is increasingly in demand
- To enable students to combine empirical knowledge of the Asia-Pacific with theoretical insight in all aspects of the module.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Section A: Introducing themes and conceptual frameworks

1. Introduction and organisation: what is a region?
2. International Politics theory and the study of regions
3. Area Studies versus Disciplinary Studies

Section B: Processes of regional formation

4. Chinese world order. Did Asia represent a different form of regional system?
5. Japanese colonialism. Leaving Asia and entering the West?
6. Reading Week—No Seminars
7. Decolonisation and the onset of the Cold War
8. Bipolarisation and Globalisation: Developmentalism, Regionalisation and the Plaza Accord

Section C: Regional players

9. US in Asia. After Hegemony, or just normal hegemony?
10. China and international norms. Joining the international system or set to dominate it?
11. Japan and Pacific-Asia. Independent agent or agent of US power?
12. ASEAN. Collective action without a *raison d'être*?

Section D: Regional problems and regional responses

13. The Korean Peninsula: Cold War time warp or post-globalisation phenomena?

14. Taiwan: crucible of conflict or interdependence?
15. Territorial disputes, energy security and non-traditional security issues
16. Reading Week—No Seminars
17. ASEAN Regional Forum and regional security frameworks
18. Economic integration, regionalisation and APEC
19. The political economy of financial cooperation and new economic statecraft
Section E: Conclusion
20. The future of Regionalism and regionalisation. Wars on Terror, ASEAN PLUS Three, East Asian Community, New Bilateralism, Minilateralism, Multipolarity, Free and Open Indo-Pacific?

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- To understand how the domestic and international levels of activity interact and impact on each other in the international politics of the Asia-Pacific region
- To be familiar with a wide range of contemporary literature concerned with the study of the international politics of the Asia-Pacific, and the applicability of general theories of IR and IPE to this regional case
- To examine the implications of the case of the international politics of the Asia-Pacific for our wider understanding of the global international system and IR and IPE
- To evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the various perspectives and arguments presented in the key debates surrounding the international politics of the Asia-Pacific
- To enable students to analyse critically complex ideas, both orally and in writing, in relations to the issues influencing the international politics of the Asia-Pacific
- To encourage students to develop the ability to work both independently and as part of group
- To allow students to develop sophisticated library and IT-based research skills through the study of a region about which information is not always readily available

Indicative reading list

[Reading lists can be found in Talis](#)

[Specific reading list for the module](#)

Subject specific skills

1. Analysis of the international structural and domestic drivers shaping Asia-Pacific regionalism
2. Application of international relations theories to understand Asia-Pacific politics.
3. Bridging knowledge of International Relations and more regional-specific Area Studies to appreciate the complexity of the Asia-Pacific region.
4. Acquire deep empirical knowledge of the Asia-Pacific and a range of states and issues in the region, including the US, China, Japan, ASEAN, North Korea.

Transferable skills

1. Written communication skills
 2. Oral communication and presentational skills
 3. Problem solving skills
 4. Information technology
 5. Critical analysis of International Relations literature and Japan's official policy documentation
 6. Intercultural competency through studying a 'non-Western' state and region
 7. Ability to conduct research and to reference work
 8. Time management and meeting of deadlines
 9. Collaborative working
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Study

Study time

Type	Required
Seminars	18 sessions of 2 hours (9%)
Private study	364 hours (91%)
Total	400 hours

Private study description

tbc

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A4

Assessment component	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
First Research Essay	50%		Yes (extension)

Weighting Study time Eligible for self-certification

A 5,000-word essay.

Reassessment component is the same

Assessment component

Second Research Essay 50% Yes (extension)
A 5,000-word essay.

Reassessment component is the same

Feedback on assessment

tbc

Availability

Courses

This module is Core for:

- Year 1 of TPOS-M9PP Double MA in Politics and International Studies (with Universität Konstanz, Germany)

This module is Core optional for:

- TPOS-M9PX Double MA in Global Governance (with University of Waterloo, Canada)
 - Year 1 of M9PX Global Governance Double MA (with University of Waterloo)
 - Year 1 of M96C International Politics and East Asia (Double Degree - Waterloo)
 - Year 2 of M9PX Global Governance Double MA (with University of Waterloo)
- TPOS-M9PV Double MA in Journalism, Politics and International Studies (with Monash University)
 - Year 1 of M9PV Journalism, Politics and International Studies Double Degree (with Monash University)
 - Year 1 of M94C Journalism, Politics and International Studies: International Politics and East Asia (Double Degree - Monash)
 - Year 2 of M9PV Journalism, Politics and International Studies Double Degree (with Monash University)
- TPOS-M9PW Double MA in Politics and International Service (with American University, Washington DC)

- Year 1 of M9PW Politics and International Service Double MA (with American University)
- Year 1 of M95C Politics and International Service: International Politics and East Asia (Double Degree - AU)
- Year 2 of M9PW Politics and International Service Double MA (with American University)
- Year 1 of TPOS-M9PE Double MA in Politics and International Studies (with NTU Singapore)
- Year 2 of TPOS-M9PP Double MA in Politics and International Studies (with Universität Konstanz, Germany)
- TPOS-M1P8 Postgraduate Taught International Politics and East Asia
 - Year 1 of M1P8 International Politics and East Asia
 - Year 2 of M1P8 International Politics and East Asia

This module is Optional for:

- Year 2 of TPOS-M9PX Double MA in Global Governance (with University of Waterloo, Canada)
- Year 1 of TPOS-M9PT MA in International Development
- Year 1 of TPOS-M1PA MA in International Politics and Europe
- Year 1 of TPOS-M9Q1 Postgraduate Politics, Big Data and Quantitative Methods
- Year 1 of TPOS-M1P3 Postgraduate Taught International Political Economy
- Year 1 of TPOS-M9P9 Postgraduate Taught International Relations
- Year 1 of TPOS-M9PC Postgraduate Taught International Security
- Year 1 of TPOS-M9PS Postgraduate Taught Political and Legal Theory
- Year 1 of TPOS-M9PF Postgraduate Taught Public Policy
- Year 1 of TPOS-M9PQ Postgraduate Taught United States Foreign Policy
- Year 1 of TPOS-M1PD Postgraduate Taught the Politics of Climate Change

This module is Core option list A for:

- Year 1 of TPOS-M9PE Double MA in Politics and International Studies (with NTU Singapore)

This module is Option list A for:

- TPOS-M9PV Double MA in Journalism, Politics and International Studies (with Monash University)
 - Year 1 of M9PV Journalism, Politics and International Studies Double Degree (with Monash University)
 - Year 2 of M9PV Journalism, Politics and International Studies Double Degree (with Monash University)
- Year 2 of TPOS-M9PW Double MA in Politics and International Service (with American University, Washington DC)
- TPOS-M9PE Double MA in Politics and International Studies (with NTU Singapore)
 - Year 1 of M91F Globalisation and Development (Double Degree - NTU)
 - Year 1 of M91L International Development (Double Degree - NTU)
 - Year 1 of M91B International Political Economy (Double Degree - NTU)
 - Year 1 of M91D International Politics and Europe (Double Degree - NTU)
 - Year 1 of M91G International Security (Double Degree - NTU)

- Year 2 of M91L International Development (Double Degree - NTU)
- Year 2 of M91B International Political Economy (Double Degree - NTU)
- TPOS-M9PP Double MA in Politics and International Studies (with Universität Konstanz, Germany)
 - Year 1 of M92L International Development (Double Degree - Konstanz)
 - Year 1 of M92D International Politics and Europe (Double Degree - Konstanz)
 - Year 1 of M92E International Relations (Double Degree - Konstanz)
 - Year 1 of M92G International Security (Double Degree - Konstanz)
 - Year 1 of M92K Political and Legal Theory (Double Degree - Konstanz)
 - Year 1 of M92J United States Foreign Policy (Double Degree - Konstanz)
 - Year 2 of M92B International Political Economy (Double Degree - Konstanz)
 - Year 2 of M92D International Politics and Europe (Double Degree - Konstanz)
 - Year 2 of M92E International Relations (Double Degree - Konstanz)
 - Year 2 of M92G International Security (Double Degree - Konstanz)
 - Year 2 of M92K Political and Legal Theory (Double Degree - Konstanz)
 - Year 2 of M92H Public Policy (Double Degree - Konstanz)
- Year 2 of TPOS-M9PT MA in International Development
- Year 1 of TPOS-M9Q1 Postgraduate Politics, Big Data and Quantitative Methods
- Year 2 of TPOS-M9PS Postgraduate Taught Political and Legal Theory
- Year 2 of TPOS-M9PQ Postgraduate Taught United States Foreign Policy

This module is Option list B for:

- Year 1 of TPOS-M9PE Double MA in Politics and International Studies (with NTU Singapore)
- TPOS-M9PP Double MA in Politics and International Studies (with Universität Konstanz, Germany)
 - Year 1 of M92B International Political Economy (Double Degree - Konstanz)
 - Year 1 of M92H Public Policy (Double Degree - Konstanz)

This module is Option list D for:

- Year 1 of TPOS-M9P9 Postgraduate Taught International Relations
- Year 1 of TPOS-M9PC Postgraduate Taught International Security
- Year 1 of TPOS-M9PQ Postgraduate Taught United States Foreign Policy