

UMBC UGC New Course Request: HIST 390 Asian Wars

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Proposed Effective Date: Spring 2017

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COURSE INFORMATION:

Course Number(s)	HIST 390
Formal Title	Wars in 20th Century East Asia
Transcript Title (≤30c)	Asia Wars
Recommended Course Preparation	HIST 103
Prerequisite NOTE: Unless otherwise indicated, a prerequisite is assumed to be passed with a "D" or better.	none
Credits	3
Repeatable?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Max. Total Credits	3 This should be equal to the number of credits for courses that cannot be repeated for credit. For courses that may be repeated for credit, enter the maximum total number of credits a student can receive from this course. E.g., enter 6 credits for a 3 credit course that may be taken a second time for credit, but not for a third time. Please note that this does NOT refer to how many times a class may be retaken for a higher grade.
Grading Method(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reg (A-F) <input type="checkbox"/> Audit <input type="checkbox"/> Pass-Fail

This course examines the political, social, economic, cultural and military aspects of the four major Asian wars of the last century: the Pacific War, the Chinese Civil War, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. We will explore theories about "absolute war" and "people's war." We then explore alternative approaches to understanding the origins and impacts of wars in East Asia, including the perspectives of international relations, sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, and literature.

RATIONALE FOR NEW COURSE:

Rationale: Please explain the following:

- Why is there a need for this course at this time?
- How often is the course likely to be taught?
- How does this course fit into your department's curriculum?
- What primary student population will the course serve?
- Why is the course offered at the level (ie. 100, 200, 300, or 400 level) chosen?
- Explain the appropriateness of the recommended course preparation(s) and prerequisite(s).
- Explain the reasoning behind the P/F or regular grading method.
- Provide a justification for the repeatability of the course.

- A. Dr. Song is our new Chinese historian, and this is one of the courses he would like to teach. We have a 400 level course on the Vietnam Wars, but nothing at the 300 level on Asian war. This course will look at four different wars, of which the Vietnam war is only one.
- B. The course will likely be taught every other year, or a bit more often. We expect it to be part of Dr. Song's regular rotation of courses.
- C. The course fits as explained under A. We offer broad courses at the 300 level, and in depth courses at the 400 level. This is a broad overview for second and third year students as well as history majors and Asian Studies Majors, and likely also Global Studies students.
- D. We expect this course to serve second and third year students generally as well as history major and Asian Studies majors. Many students are interested in war, and many are interested in Asia. This course will be cross-listed with Asian studies eventually.
- E. The course is offered at the 300 level because it looks at the wars in greater depth than a 100 or 200 level course would, but it is not focused enough to be a 400 level course.
- F. We recommend that students have taken HIST 103, to be broadly familiar with the place and time, but they will be ok without it, which is why we did not make it a prereq.
- G. All our courses allow for all grading methods, to accommodate the largest number of students.
- H. The course is not repeatable.

ATTACH COURSE OUTLINE (mandatory):

**Wars in 20th Century East Asia (Spring 2017, 200 level)
HIST 390**

Prof. Nianshen Song

Class schedule: Two 75 minutes' classes per week

Course Description:

This course examines the political, social, economic, cultural and military aspects of the four major Asian wars of the last century: the Pacific War, the Chinese Civil War, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. We will begin with the big questions of modern war—What is it? What are its major features? What make war “modern”? —and examine the theories of “absolute war” (Karl von Clausewitz) and “people’s war” (Clausewitz and Mao Zedong). We then explore alternative approaches to understanding the origins and impacts of wars in East Asia, including the perspectives of international relations, sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, as well as literature. This is NOT a course in military history; instead, we pay special attention to 1) the social origins of the four wars and 2) the organic socio-historical linkages that connected those four wars. We will also emphasize the domestic politics in the U.S. and China, as both countries were deeply involved in all the four wars.

The ongoing competitions among East Asian countries and the U.S. in the west Pacific region constitute a backdrop for this course. Students are encouraged to follow them in the newspapers and online, and bringing their own observations to the class. Some of the most important current affairs include, but not exclusive to, the Obama government’s policy of “Pivot to Asia”; the disputes over territories and historical memories between Japan and other nations in the region; the North Korean nuclear issue, etc.

Requirements and Grading:

The course is composed of three parts: lectures, documentary films, and discussions. Regular attendance is crucial. In class discussion is highly encouraged.

The reading of this class is both important and challenging. For each war we will read 2 monographs. Students should cultivate their skill of “skip reading”: instead of reading every sentence from the first page to the last page, you should train yourself to grasp the main arguments and themes presented by the authors, and to present them with your own understanding/critique (and know that some details are more important than others). I will assign you some questions/tasks to guide your reading. You need to email me your answers to these questions 24 hours before of our class, and to prepare yourself for random discussion in class. Please note that readings and lectures are distinct and complementary; they do not repeat or substitute for each other. They are designed to form the basis of collective inquiry and conversation carried out in class discussions.

The class has 4 discussion sessions. These sessions will be run like a conference: students will be divided into small groups/panels and each group/panels will do a collaborative presentation about a certain theme of a certain war. There will be discussions and Q and A. The purpose is to encourage students to generate, challenge, and defense their views in the format of academic conversation.

In addition to the emphasis on reading and class discussion, students should complete 4 critical essays. The first 3 are about 3 to 4 pages (double space) each, in which you choose one of two options: a short research paper on a subject related to the main concerns of this course, or an review essay on the required/suggested readings or documentary (or both). The last essay is about 10 pages long, in which you write an in-depth research paper (based on primary and secondary sources) on wars in East Asia, using one or more of the wars we covered to support your analysis. Students are especially encouraged to understand the organic connection among the four wars. Among the 4 essays, the final one weights more than the other 3. Students should see it as in lieu of a final exam.

Email answers/responses to reading assignments: 20%

Debate Session: 20%

First essay: 10%

Second essay: 10%

Third essay: 10%

Fourth essay: 30%

Readings:

Karl von Clausewitz, *On War* (Penguin Classics, 198, with an introduction by Anatol Rapoport)

Mao Zedong, two sections from “*Quotations from Mao Zedong.*” (on Moodle)

Saburo Iyenaga, *The Pacific War 1931-1945* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1968).

John Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (Pantheon, 1987)

Odd Westad, *Decisive Encounters: The Chinese Civil War, 1946-1950* (Stanford University Press, 2003)

Michael Szonyi, *Cold War Island: Quemoy on the Front Line* (Cambridge University Press, 2008)

Bruce Cumings, *The Korean War: A History* (Modern Library, 2011)

Ha Jin, *War Trash* (Vintage, 2005)

Mark Bradley, *Vietnam at War* (Oxford University Press, 2009)

Heonik Kwon, *Ghosts of War in Vietnam* (Cambridge University Press, 2008)

Four documentary films are shown in class:

Hiroshima: Why the bomb was dropped

China: A Century of Revolution, 1911-1949

They Choose China

The Weather Underground

Schedule:

(The Schedule is subject to minor changes)

Week One: Introduction and Definition of War

1) What is “war”?

Required Reading: Clausewitz, *On War* (especially Rapoport’s “Introduction” and “Concluding Remarks”)

2) What is “People’s War”?

Required Reading: Clausewitz, *On War* (Book VI, Chapter 26) (on People’s War)

Mao, Zedong, “*War and Peace*” and “*People’s War*”

Week Two: The Pacific War I

1) Origins, 1931-37

2) The Meaning of Pearl Harbor

Required reading: Iyenaga, *The Pacific War*

Week Three: The Pacific War II

1) Atrocity and Victims

2) Race and Gender in War

Required reading: Dower, *War Without Mercy* (Part I & II)

Week Four: The Pacific War III

1) A War of Memory

2) Documentary *Hiroshima: Why the bomb was dropped*

Week Five: Two Wars in China

1) The Pacific War Discussion Session

2) Two Wars in China: War as Revolution

Required reading: Dower, *War Without Mercy* (Part III & VI)

First essay due Sunday of the fifth week.

Week Six: The Chinese Civil War I

1) Documentary *China: A Century of Revolution, 1911-1949*

2) Internal Origin: Communist and Nationalist

Required Reading: Westad, *Decisive Encounters* (Intro and Chapter 1 to Chapter 5)

Week Seven: The Chinese Civil War II

1) External Origin: Cold War framework in China

2) World’s First People’s War?

Required readings: Westad, *Decisive Encounters* (Chapter 6 to end)

Week Eight: The Chinese Civil War III

1) Cold War Island and Legacies

2) Discussion Session

Required Reading: Szonyi, *Cold War Island*

Second essay due Sunday of the eighth week

Week Nine: The Korean War I

1) Historical Origins of the Korean War

2) What does the 38th Parallel mean?

Required reading: Cumings, *The Korean War* (Chapter 1 to 6)

Week Ten: The Korean War II

- 1) Social Origins of the Korean War
 - 2) Global Origins of the Korean War
- Required Reading: Cumings, *The Korean War* (Chapter 7 to end)

Week Eleven: The Korean War III

- 1) Modern Legacy: a War without ending
 - 2) Documentary *They Choose China*
- Required reading: Ha, *War Trash*

Week Twelve: From Korea to Vietnam

- 1) The Korean War Discussion Session
 - 2) Comparing French Colonization in Vietnam and Japanese Colonization in Korea
- Required reading: Bradley, *Vietnam at War* (till Chapter 4)

Third essay due Sunday of the twelfth week

Week Thirteen: The Vietnam War I

- 1) Origins of the Vietnam War
 - 2) U.S., China, Soviet, Korea
- Required reading: Bradley, *Vietnam at War* (till the end)

Week Fourteen: The Vietnam War II

- 1) 1968: Global Vietnam
 - 2) Vietnam and Aftermath
- Required reading: Kwon, *Ghosts of War in Vietnam*

Week Fifteen: The Vietnam War III

- 1) Documentary: *The Weather Underground*
- 2) Discussion session

Fourth (final) essay due

Requirements of Writing:

Your writings will be graded in accordance to the following four criteria:

- 1) A clear and strong argument, which is supported by:
- 2) ...accurate and creative use of evidence from primary or secondary materials.
- 3) Argumentation is logical and
- 4) ...well organized.