

East Asian International Relations

Code: 101526
ECTS Credits: 6

2025/2026

Degree	Type	Year
East Asian Studies	OB	3
International Relations	OT	4

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Teaching groups languages

You can view this information at the [end](#) of this document.

Prerequisites

There are no formal prerequisites for enrolling in this course. However, students are expected to have a genuine interest in the international politics of East Asia and the broader Asia-Pacific region. A regular habit of reading news and analytical articles from diverse perspectives is highly recommended. In addition, students should possess a sufficient command of English (at least B2 level of the CEFR) to effectively follow lectures and engage with written and audiovisual materials in the language.

Objectives and Contextualisation

The aim of this course is to provide students with the analytical tools and historical context necessary to understand and interpret the international politics of East Asia today. The Cold War serves as a temporal starting point, as it laid the foundations for many of the region's enduring tensions and alignments. Building on this historical backdrop, the course focuses on contemporary developments, including the strategic competition between China and the United States, evolving relations between key regional actors such as China, Japan, and South Korea, as well as unresolved legacies of the Cold War such as the Korean Peninsula and the Taiwan Strait.

Particular attention is given to the region's increasingly complex geopolitical landscape, marked by processes of strategic realignment, competing visions of regional order, and intensified military modernisation and defence spending. The course also examines other areas of competition, including economic interdependence and rivalry, soft power projection, and the battle for technological leadership. These dynamics are situated within broader debates about the future of multilateralism and the balance of power in East Asia.

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the main paradigms in the discipline of International Relations.
- Understand the historical and contemporary role of major powers in shaping East Asia's regional order.
- Analyse the nature of international relations within the region, particularly interactions between China, Japan, the Korean Peninsula, and the United States.
- Identify key continuities and ruptures in East Asian international politics since the Cold War.
- Apply theoretical and empirical knowledge to interpret current dynamics of conflict and cooperation in the region's geopolitics.

Competences

East Asian Studies

- Comparing and critically assessing the different social environments in the field of East Asia.
- Developing critical thinking and reasoning and communicating them effectively both in your own and other languages.
- Developing self-learning strategies.
- Ensuring the quality of one's own work.
- Following the characteristic code of ethics of the professional practice.
- Know and understand politics and international relations in East Asia.
- Knowing and using the information and communication technology resources (ICT) in order to collect, produce, analyse and present information related to the East Asian Studies.
- Knowing the history, values, beliefs and ideologies of East Asia in order to understand and critically assess social issues, phenomena, and processes related with that region.
- Respecting the diversity and plurality of ideas, people and situations.
- Solving conflict situations.
- Working in teams in an international, multilingual and multicultural context.

International Relations

- Analyse international society and its structure and understand its importance for real-life problems and professional practice.
- Analyse the structure and operation of international institutions and organisations (political, economic, military and security, environmental, development and emergency aid) both in the universal and regional spheres, with particular emphasis on the European Union, from either real or simulated cases.
- Identify data sources and carry out rigorous bibliographical and documentary searches.
- Learn and analyse the impacts of the globalisation process on domestic political systems and on the behaviour of the political actors and the public.
- Students must be capable of applying their knowledge to their work or vocation in a professional way and they should have building arguments and problem resolution skills within their area of study.
- Students must be capable of collecting and interpreting relevant data (usually within their area of study) in order to make statements that reflect social, scientific or ethical relevant issues.
- Students must develop the necessary learning skills to undertake further training with a high degree of autonomy.
- Use different tools for analysing the contemporary international system and its functional and regional or geographical subsystems.
- Use metatheoretical data to argue and establish plausible relation of causality and establish ways of validating or rejecting them.

Learning Outcomes

1. Analyse the historical and comparative roles of the different actors in the large regional areas.
2. Analyse the operation of international regional and functional subsystems, their structure and dynamics and the probable evolutionary trends.
3. Analyse the policies and responses to the impacts of globalisation, identifying differences and similarities in each of the states of the regional subsystems studied.
4. Assessing the obtained results in the search information process in order to update the knowledge about political sciences, economy and sociology.
5. Comparing and critically assessing the different social environments in the field of East Asia.
6. Critically evaluate the impacts of globalisation in different areas: security, environment, human rights, migrations and peace.
7. Describe the characteristics of each of the regional subsystems studied, signs of historical and comparative change and continuity and the role played by the different national and non-national actors in each subsystem.
8. Developing critical thinking and reasoning and communicating them effectively both in your own and other languages.

9. Developing self-learning strategies.
10. Ensuring the quality of one's own work.
11. Following the characteristic code of ethics of the professional practice.
12. Identify data sources and carry out rigorous bibliographical and documentary searches.
13. Identify the main international institutions and organisations in each regional subsystem (Middle East, Eastern Asia, Latin America) and analyse for them the roles and actions, in line with the subject.
14. Know and understand politics and international relations in East Asia.
15. Knowing the history, values, beliefs and ideologies of East Asia in order to understand and critically assess social issues, phenomena, and processes related with that region.
16. Make a critical comparison of the evolution of the large regional areas that are covered in the subject.
17. Respecting the diversity and plurality of ideas, people and situations.
18. Solving conflict situations.
19. Students must be capable of applying their knowledge to their work or vocation in a professional way and they should have building arguments and problem resolution skills within their area of study.
20. Students must be capable of collecting and interpreting relevant data (usually within their area of study) in order to make statements that reflect social, scientific or ethical relevant issues.
21. Students must develop the necessary learning skills to undertake further training with a high degree of autonomy.
22. Use metatheoretical data to argue and establish plausible relation of causality and establish ways of validating or rejecting them.
23. Using different tools for specific purposes in the fields of political sciences, economy and sociology.
24. Using the specific terminology of political sciences, economy and sociology.
25. Working in teams in an international, multilingual and multicultural context.

Content

Part I. Analytical Tools for the Study of East Asia's International Politics

The discipline of International Relations and the study of international politics.

The configuration of the contemporary world order and of the regional order in the Asia-Pacific.

The role of theory in International Relations: realism, liberalism, constructivism, and critical approaches.

Levels of analysis: system, state, individual.

Theoretical foundations and concepts relevant to East Asia: regional order, balance of power, strategic rivalry, middle powers, hedging.

Part II. Historical Foundations of the Contemporary Asia-Pacific Regional Order

The regional order in Asia after World War II.

The creation of the People's Republic of China and its international implications.

The U.S. occupation and remaking of Japan as a pacifist state.

The division of the Korean Peninsula and the emergence of two rival regimes.

Cold War dynamics in East and Southeast Asia, including U.S. containment strategies, triangular diplomacy, Japan's regional engagement, China's reintegration, the role of the Soviet Union, and the post-Cold War transition.

Part III. Contemporary Issues in East Asia's International Politics

The presence and role of the United States in the region: continuity, transformation, and the question of the end of the *Pax Americana*.

The rise of China and its foreign policy goals and strategies.

U.S.-China strategic competition and its global and regional implications.

Competing visions for the regional order: alliances, minilateralism, and regional leadership claims.

The evolution of Japan's international role: normalization and strategic repositioning.

The Korean Peninsula: inter-Korean relations and North Korea's nuclear diplomacy.

The Taiwan Strait: deterrence, ambiguity, and the risks of escalation.

East Asia's security architecture and the transformation of alliance networks.

Military modernization and arms races in the region.

Economic interdependence, decoupling, and regional connectivity strategies (e.g., BRI, CPTPP, IPEF).

Competition in other domains: technological supremacy, digital governance, and soft power projection.

The role of other regional actors: ASEAN, Russia, Mongolia, Australia, India.
 Middle powers and small states: strategies of adaptation to the new geopolitical environment.
 Regional cooperation and integration: achievements, limits, and future prospects.
 Theoretical perspectives on the region's future: bipolarity, multipolarity, fragmentation?

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Lectures	50	2	11, 14, 9, 8, 18, 17, 25, 23, 24, 10
Type: Supervised			
Written assignments	34	1.36	11, 5, 14, 9, 8, 17, 25, 23, 24, 10
Type: Autonomous			
Reading and study	45	1.8	11, 14, 15, 9, 8, 17, 25, 23, 24, 10

To achieve the intended learning outcomes, the course combines theoretical sessions with practical activities and critical reflection. The syllabus is developed in a structured and progressive sequence, with selected materials designed to support students' understanding and analytical engagement with the topics.

Students are expected to follow the schedule of readings and activities proposed by the instructor, as these form the basis for in-class sessions and individual work. Successful completion of the course requires not only regular attendance and active participation, but also a strong commitment to individual study.

The main learning activities include:

- Reading and analysis of academic texts and complementary materials.
- Attendance at lectures and active participation in classroom discussions.
- Preparation of individual or group assignments on topics covered in the course.
- Engagement in debates and practical activities proposed in class.
- Independent study and continuous review of course content.

Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

Assessment

Continuous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Class activity (in groups)	15%	2	0.08	2, 1, 3, 22, 4, 16, 14, 8, 7, 12, 13, 21, 19, 20, 18, 17, 25, 23, 24, 6
Content development assignment, individual or groupwork	20%	15	0.6	11, 2, 1, 3, 22, 4, 16, 5, 14, 15, 9, 8, 7, 12, 13, 21, 19, 20, 17, 25, 23, 24, 6, 10

Test 1	30%	2	0.08	1, 4, 14, 15, 8, 7, 13, 21, 23, 24
Test 2	35%	2	0.08	11, 1, 4, 14, 15, 9, 8, 7, 13, 21, 23, 24, 10

Continuous assessment

Students must provide evidence of their progress by completing various tasks and tests. These activities are detailed in the table at the end of this section of the Study Guide.

Review

When publishing final marks prior to recording them on students' transcripts, the lecturer will provide written notification of a date and time for reviewing assessment activities. Students must arrange reviews in agreement with the lecturer.

Missed/failed assessment activities

Students may retake assessment activities they have failed or compensate for any they have missed, provided that those they have actually performed account for a minimum of 66.6% (two thirds) of the subject's final mark and that they have a weighted average mark of at least 3.5.

The lecturer will inform students of the procedure involved, in writing, when publishing final marks prior to recording them on transcripts. The lecturer may set one assignment per failed or missed assessment activity or a single assignment to cover a number of such activities. Under no circumstances may an assessment activity worth 100% of the final mark be retaken or compensated for. In case of retaking, maximum grade will be 5 (Pass).

Classification as "not assessable"

In the event of the assessment activities a student has performed accounting for just 25% or less of the subject's final mark, their work will be classified as "not assessable" on their transcript.

Misconduct in assessment activities

Students who engage in misconduct (plagiarism, copying, personation, etc.) in an assessment activity will receive a mark of "0" for the activity in question. In the case of misconduct in more than one assessment activity, the student involved will be given a final mark of "0" for the subject. Assessment activities in which irregularities have occurred (e.g. plagiarism, copying, impersonation) are excluded from resitting.

Single assessment

This subject may be assessed under the single assessment system in accordance with the terms established in the academic regulations of the UAB and the assessment criteria of the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting.

Students must make an online request within the period established by the faculty and send a copy to the teacher responsible for the subject, for the record.

Single assessment will be carried out in person on one day during week 16 or 17 of the semester. The Academic Management Office will publish the exact date and time on the faculty website.

On the day of the single assessment, teaching staff will ask the student for identification, which should be presented as a valid identification document with a recent photograph (student card, DNI/NIE or passport).

Single assessment activities

The final grade for the subject will be calculated according to the following percentages:

- Multi-choice test. The student will have to answer a set of multiple-choice questions with only one correct answer. Points will be deducted for incorrect answers. This test is worth 35% of the final grade.
- Written essay. The student will be required to develop in writing a question or topic to choose between two options. This exam is worth 35% of the final grade.
- Oral commentary. The professor will pose an open-ended question related to the major geopolitical challenges the East Asian region faces today. The student will have to answer by demonstrating an adequate mastery of the content, concepts, and tools of the discipline of International Relations. This assignment is worth 30% of the final grade.

Grade revision and resit procedures for the subject are the same as those for continuous assessment. See the section above in this study guide.

More information:

<http://www.uab.cat/web/study-abroad/undergraduate/academic-information/evaluation/what-is-it-about-13456700>

Bibliography

Recommended bibliography

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Other reference resources

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- Barbé, Esther (2007). *Relaciones Internacionales*. Madrid: Tecnos.
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- Welch, D. A., Soeya, Y., & Tadokoro, M (2011). *Japan as a "Normal Country"?: a Nation in Search of its Place in the World*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Software

This course does not require any specific software.

Groups and Languages

Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2025. You can check it through this [link](#). To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject.

Name	Group	Language	Semester	Turn
(TE) Theory	1	English	first semester	morning-mixed