SYLLABUS

Course Programme

Current Political and Economic Developments in the Asia-Pacific Region

The course is designed by:
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Moscow, 2019
“Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.” (Benjamin Franklin)

Course Description

Title of the Course
Current Political and Economic Developments in the Asia-Pacific Region

Prerequisites
The course is aimed at developing the students’ thorough understanding of and innovative thinking about the most critical areas of international relations in Asia-Pacific based on the innovative theory of imbalances in international relations which is currently being developed by a team of Russian scholars including the author.

The tasks of the course stem from its aim:

➢ To discuss the influence of Asia-Pacific processes upon the global economy, politics and security and the repercussions of global trends upon the regional developments;

➢ To thoroughly analyze the specificity of multilateral cooperation in Asia-Pacific along with the trans-Pacific and East Asian – South Asian and Eurasian tracks. Specifically, the emphasis is placed on APEC, Trans-Pacific Partnership, ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN+3, ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting plus Eight, East Asia Summit, SAARC and Shanghai Cooperation Organization;

➢ To give insights into the evolution and the present state of the key regional security challenges – the North Korean nuclear issue, the problem of Korean unification, the Taiwan, the South China Sea, the North Limit Line and the Mekong issues, as well as non-traditional security challenges.

➢ To comprehensively understand Russia’s policy in Asia-Pacific and the Russian dimension of Asia-Pacific economy, politics and security.

The Reading List given below each section is comprised of selected monographs, journal articles and on-line publications aimed to provide students with an in-depth, comprehensive and intellectually-stimulating analysis of topics under consideration. The list is constantly supplemented with new publications in specific subfields.

Course Type Elective.

Abstract
The course offers an advanced analysis and discussion of main trends shaping Asia-Pacific economic, political and security landscape. It is aimed at developing the students’ thorough understanding of and innovative thinking about the most critical areas of international
relations in Asia-Pacific based on the innovative theory of imbalances in international relations which is currently being developed by a team of Russian scholars including the author.

The Reading List given below each section is comprised of selected monographs, journal articles and on-line publications aimed to provide students with an in-depth, comprehensive and intellectually-stimulating analysis of topics under consideration. The list is constantly supplemented with new publications in specific subfields.

The course is taught by Prof. Evgeny Kanaev, who writes extensively on economic, political and security developments in Asia-Pacific and is involved in political consulting of Russian government bodies with relevance to Russia’s policy in Asia-Pacific.

**Learning objectives:**

- To discuss the influence of Asia-Pacific processes upon the global economy, politics and security and the repercussions of global trends upon the regional developments;
- To thoroughly analyze the specificity of multilateral cooperation in Asia-Pacific along with the trans-Pacific and East Asian – South Asian and Eurasian tracks. Specifically, the emphasis is placed on APEC, Trans-Pacific Partnership, ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN+3, ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting plus Eight, East Asia Summit and Shanghai Cooperation Organization;
- To give insights into the evolution and the present state of the key regional security challenges – the North Korean nuclear issue, the problem of Korean unification, the Taiwan, the South China Sea, the North Limit Line and the Mekong issues, as well as non-traditional security challenges.
- To specify the present priorities and outline the policies of main regional actors from Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia and South Asia;
- To comprehensively understand Russia’s policy in Asia-Pacific and the Russian dimension of Asia-Pacific economy, politics and security.

**Learning Outcomes**

On completing the course, students will have:

- a comprehensive understanding of Asia-Pacific multilateral cooperation on economic, political and security issues;
- in-depth knowledge of Asia-Pacific security challenges and approaches to keep them manageable;
- a conceptual approach to Asia-Pacific policies of main regional actors from Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia and South Asia;
detailed knowledge and a well-grounded perspective of Russian regional policy and priorities;

improved analytical and presentational skills.

Course Plan

Part I. Asia-Pacific in Global Economy, Politics and Security

The specificity of Asia-Pacific in terms of geography, history and civilizational dimension. Asia-Pacific during the Cold War: trends of economic and political-security development.


Part II. Multilateral Cooperation in Asia-Pacific

2.1. The Trans-Pacific Vector (APEC, Trans-Pacific Partnership, ASEAN Regional Forum).

APEC as a multilateral dialogue platform: key priorities and directions. APEC in China’s, ASEAN and Russia’s policies: main proposals and outcomes. TPP as a cooperative initiative: key reasons behind launching and interim results. China and TPP: an assessment of risks with relevance to prospective planning.

The ASEAN Regional Forum as a multilateral venue on security issues in Asia-Pacific. Confidence-building, preventive diplomacy and military transparency: an assessment of theoretical background and the results obtained. Main directions of cooperation developed within ARF and the “ASEAN Dilemma”. Assessing the influence of ARF in developing relations between key regional actors: main issues and debates.

The evolution of Trans-Pacific economic and security cooperation in short-term perspective and its presumable implications for Asia-Pacific countries.

2.2. The East Asian Vector (ASEAN Plus Three, East Asia Summit, ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting Plus Eight, Summit China – Japan – South Korea).
ASEAN Plus Three as a multilateral dialogue platform. Infrastructure projects in Southeast Asia and contribution from ASEAN+3. Cooperation between ASEAN Plus Three members in the spheres of finance and food security: projects and outcomes.

The East Asia Summit (EAS) as a multilateral venue. EAS membership: the intra-ASEAN debates. EAS agenda in 2005-2015: continuity and change. Key factors behind inviting the US and Russia. East Asia Summit and East Asia Community: reasons for moving apart and main dividing lines. Russia and the US in EAS: reasons behind participation and key policy outcomes.


2.3. The Eurasian Vector (Shanghai Cooperation Organization).

China’s interests in SCO: the interplay of political, economic, security and prospective interests. SCO in debates with China political and expert community. Practical directions of China’s policy. SCO and China’s “March West”: the Economic Belt Silk Road Connection. SCO expansion: what does it mean for China?

SCO in Russian foreign policy priorities: the economic, geopolitical and reputational dimensions. Russia’s policy in SCO: trends, outcomes, tasks ahead. SCO as a linkage between the Asia-Pacific and the Eurasian vectors of Russia’s foreign policy. Russia and China in SCO: competition or cooperation?

ASEAN and SCO: the need to coordinate prospective planning. Points of convergence and divergence in SCO and ASEAN agendas. The dialogue between ASEAN and SCO Secretariats: directions and issues discussed. Further prospects for ASEAN-SCO cooperation: expectations and limitations. ASEAN-SCO full dialogue partnership: main reasons and tasks ahead.

SCO expansion: issues, challenges, tasks ahead. India’s and China’s membership in SCO and its implications for Eurasian geopolitical and geo-economic order.

**Part III. Asia-Pacific Security Challenges and Responses**


Origins and evolution of North Korean nuclear issue. Main phases of its development. Reasons behind the intention of North Korean leadership to develop and upgrade nuclear
weapons. The plutonium and the uranium programs. Attempts to find a negotiated settlement of the issue: the United Nations/International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) track, the 5+5 track, the Six-Party Talks. Main results of Six-Party talks and factors behind its failure.

Three nuclear crises on the Korean peninsula: issues and assessments. Prospects for restart of the Six-Party Talks: aspirations, possibilities and limitations. Approaches of Russia, China, Japan, South Korea and the US: points of convergence and divergence.

The crisis of bilateral and multilateral instruments in resolving the North Korean nuclear issue. Relations between Russia and North Korea and its possible implications for the problem. Prospects for the trilateral cooperation (Russia – China – the US) upon the issue: a short-term and a long-term assessment.

3.2. The Unification of the Korean Peninsula.

Inter-Korean dialogue: main phases and issues discussed. Change and continuity in the positions of North and South Korea. The comparison of North Korea’s and South Korea’s views on unification: their advantages and limitations. Economic and social costs of the Korean unification: views from Pyongyang and Seoul.


3.3. The North Limit Line Issue


Border clashes between North Korea and South Korea since 1999. The Cheonan (March 2010) and the Yeonpyeong (November 2010) incidents and their implications for Northeast Asian geopolitics.

The key reasons for the deadlock of the current state of the issue. The international law vs the geopolitical realities. The great power factor. The confidence factor. China, the US and the North Limit Line issue: positions and interests. Main points of Sino-American disagreements over the issue.

3.4. The South China Sea Issue
The key reasons behind the South China Sea dispute: the interplay of economic and political-security factors. The South China Sea resources: a comparison of various assessments. The global trade and geostrategic factors behind the South China Sea issue. Claims and claimants in the South China Sea.

China and ASEAN: the dialogue over the South China Sea issue. Early attempts to find a negotiated settlement and the Declaration on Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (2002). Moving from Declaration 2002 to Code on Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea: main obstacles seen by China and ASEAN.


3.5. The Mekong Issue


The Mekong issue in China’s overall strategy in Southeast Asia. Possible impacts on future development projects: the ASEAN and individual countries’ dimension.

Part IV. Russia’s in Asia-Pacific: Trends, Outcomes, Tasks Ahead.

Russia’s main Asia-Pacific priorities (geo-economic, geopolitical, civilizational, prospective) and their national, regional and global dimensions.

Russia and multilateral cooperation of Asia-Pacific: in search of a consolidating agenda. Russia and APEC: the priorities of Russia’s APEC chairmanship and the present Russian policy in APEC. Russia and ASEAN-led multilateral security initiatives: ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus Eight, East Asia Summit: the proposal of “indivisible security” and its practical implications.

Russia and Asia-Pacific security challenges. Russia and North Korean nuclear issue: the approach and the practical steps. Russia and the South China Sea issue: developing a pragmatic
and problem-solving approach. Russia and non-traditional security challenges in Asia-Pacific: the food security and the energy security dimensions.


**Reading List**

**Required**

Chung C. China’s Multilateral Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific Institutionalizing Beijing’s “Good Neighbor Policy”. Routledge.

**Optional**

Findlay C. Free Trade Agreements in the Asia Pacific. World Scientific.

**Grading System**

The *final grade* for the coursework consists of:
- Class attendance and discussion – 20%;
- The essay – 30%;
- The examination – 50%.

**Guidelines for Knowledge Assessment**

The knowledge assessment is a function of the knowledge control.
The on-going control consists of class attendance and discussion. Class attendance is obligatory. Each student is allowed no more than 2 absences (both excused and unexcused) during the two modules. With the specific respect to discussion, the students must be familiar with academic publications in the Reading List given below each section. In this regard, the students’ anticipatory learning activities are encouraged. Among other activities in line with the innovative teaching methods, the participation in brainstorming and role debates are most highly appreciated. The results obtained by each student are carefully recorded in the List of Academic Results.

The interim control is presented by the essay which is the mandatory component of the course. The length of the essay is from 1000 to 1200 thousand words, the suggested topics for the essays are presented in the program. The students are encouraged to approach the chosen issues from the innovative perspective so as to critically appraise the existing views and approaches and brainstorm a truly pioneering research. The essays are out-of-audience activities.

The final control is presented by an examination at the end of the course, which is supposed to evaluate the students’ knowledge acquired during the two modules course. Forty topics presented in the program are under discussion at the exam. In the students’ answers, thorough knowledge of academic literature, innovative approaches to the problems discussed and foresights related to the anticipated mega-trends of regional evolution are encouraged and most highly appreciated.

The method of knowledge assessment includes three main components:

- A complete review of the existing sources and academic literature;
- A clear structure of the presentation, essay or answer;
- Innovative ideas as conclusions.

Methods of Instruction

During the course innovative teaching technologies with a special emphasis on interactive forms of training are prioritized. Apart from academic lectures, these forms include round-table talks and expert debates, collective brainstorming in small groups, role plays, case studies and master-classes commissioned by the students. The emphasis is on developing skills of foresight in terms of identifying main future trends of Asia-Pacific economy, politics and security. Interactive forms of training account for no less than 30% of overall activities.

Also, the students will be involved in practical activities carried out by think-tanks and discussion platforms which analyze Russia’s policy in Asia-Pacific and make recommendations to the relevant government agencies.
Last but not least, the students are encouraged to approach the topics from the innovative perspective so as to develop the students’ soft power and breakthrough decision-making abilities.

**Special Equipment and Software Support**

For teaching the discipline “Current Political and Economic Developments in the Asia-Pacific Region”, a notebook and a projector are required.

**Software**

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**Professional, informational and educational databases**

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