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# History of Communism in Asia

## Asia after the Second World War

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KSCB055

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Time ... Room ...

### Overview

Asian continent had experienced dramatic changes in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Those historical transformations cost lives of millions and the numbers of bombs used in these conflicts greatly outnumber the amount of explosives used in the whole Second World War. All of these significant historical events had also another similar aspect except millions of dead; they were more or less influenced by the U.S. policy as a part of a long Cold War.

Without no doubt, China became a superpower in last decades. What was China's way from a broken nation to a superpower? Does China have the right to claim all of its territories, such as Taiwan or Tibet? The Korean War claimed over 3 million lives and led to the division of Korea, the isolation of China, and the rise of postwar Japan. In America, it helped push massive military buildup and McCarthyism. It was one of the first battlefields of the Cold War. The Vietnam War is one of the most spoken conflicts in human history. In Vietnam it is also known as the 'war against Americans to save the nation' and for American politicians this war has become a benchmark for what *not* to do in all future U.S. foreign conflicts. Foreign involvement in Asian affairs can turn into unexpected results. The Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, a regime that had killed more of its own citizens than any other. Pol Pot's political experiment resulted into a Cambodian genocide.



### Goals

The course covers the origins, events and consequences of historical milestones in Asian Cold War. The course will cover China's historical events such as China's civil war, Mao's policy: Great Leap Forward, Cultural Revolution and the development after Mao's death; America's painful lesson in Korea; Vietnam conflict and a tragic rule of Khmer Rouge.

## Brief Outline of Lectures

1. **Prelude to a disaster** – the situation in Asia after the World War II.
  - Course introduction
  - The U.S. involvement
  - Communism in Asia
2. **China's struggle**
  - The fight for China (Communist Party of China x Kuomintang)
  - The rise of Mao Zedong
3. **Mao's bright vision**
  - Great Leap Forward – an 'awesome' plan
  - Cultural Revolution – Kill the traitors!
4. **China's way to superpower**
  - China after Mao – Capitalism with Chinese characteristics (Special Economic Zones, social changes, such as prostitution, women's inferiority, minorities, education)
  - Is Taiwan independent?
  - Taiwanese miracle
5. **Korean War: a Divided Nation**
  - Americas painful lesson
  - The role of Soviet and American intervention, China's entry into the war
  - The trauma of a Korean nation
6. **Nothing to Envy: Life of Ordinary People in North Korea**
  - Kim's dynasty
  - Post-war development
7. **Vietnam War: Afraid of the Domino Effect**
  - French Indochina: The trouble begins
  - Cold war comes to the Southeast Asia (The secret war: The CIA in Indochina)
  - World's response
8. **Vietnam War: The Reasons for a Failure of American Policy**
  - American presidents and Vietnam: Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon
  - American withdrawal: Peace with honor?
  - Full Metal Jacket/Platoon (movie)
9. **Vietnam War: Counting the dead**
  - Aftermath of the war (Agent Orange,)
  - Personal ties (Ho Chi Min, McNamara, Le Duan, Ngo Dinh Diem...)
  - Trauma of the war (American soldiers, Vietnam: a disabled nation)
10. **The Khmer Rouge: Educated? Wearing glasses? Able to speak foreign languages? Older than 40? You do NOT deserve to live!**
  - The Killing fields

- Khmer Rouge irony
- Pol Pot

### 11. The Khmer Rouge

- Consequences of the Khmer Rouge rule
- Movie The Killing Fields

### 12. Discussion/Overview

- The international relations
- Social changes in Asia

### 13. Conclusion

## Requirements and Evaluation

1. Course attendance - baseline attendance in a course is 75% of classes (3 allowed absences)
2. Class participation accounts for 20% of your grade
3. Term paper

Your grade in the course will be based mainly on the written work I have assigned. You cannot do extra papers for extra credit. You can improve your grade by participating in class discussion. The best way to pick up extra points is to argue (constructively) against me in class; If you present a good clear argument that I am wrong about something, with evidence, then your grade may be boosted even if you do not succeed in convincing me.

I do not emphasize trivial factual details in this course. I will NOT ask you to tell me the date of the Battle of "Hamburger Hill", or to name the American units that fought in it. There are some facts you need to know, but they are more important things than dates. On the other hand, I will expect you to get an idea of the sequence of events, what came first and what came later.

The most important single part of your grade will be the course paper. You can write it on whatever topic you please, within the limit of the subject matter of this course. **The actual text of your paper, not counting title page, bibliography, maps, and illustrations, should be about ten pages long, typed double-spaced.** Longer papers are acceptable.

When you are trying to decide what sources to use for your term paper, or if you are just curious about something that has come up in the course, I suggest you consult the bibliography with me. But bear in mind that, this does not necessarily mean you will actually be able to find a copy of that book, in or near the faculty.

**The paper is due ... (will be specified at the beginning of semester).**

You can have a pretty free choice of topics for this paper, within the limits of the subject matter of this course. You must write me an email about your paper, and discuss the sources you will be using. It is not enough to say to me as we are walking out of the classroom one afternoon "Is it OK if I write about the U.S. bombing of the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos?" 😊

If you bring in a preliminary draft of your paper long enough before the deadline (at least two weeks) so I can read it and get it back to you in time, with suggestions about how you can improve it, you will then have adequate time to take advantage of my advice.

Bibliography will be hand out at the beginning of this course.