

Identities in Taiwan, Past and Present

Masaryk University

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Course Description:

In the contemporary world, Taiwan contains a vibrant, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic society, in which people embrace numerous identities and identity politics defines and divides current public discourse. These circumstances are not new, but rather have characterized this small island off the Asian mainland for centuries. Indigenous peoples, various Chinese groups, Europeans, Japanese, Southeast Asians—all of these national, ethnic, and/or racial groups call or have called the island home. On top of these senses of self and group, residents embrace(d) a range of other social identities linked to territory, lineage, religion, gender, sexuality, profession, and so on. This course will examine the historical forces that have forged the Taiwan of today, with particular attention to how different identities have come into being—that is, how they have been constructed, and by whom, from within and without—over the course of Taiwan’s history from the early 1600s to the present day.

Objectives:

After successful completion of this brief course, students should understand the following:

1. the general outline of Taiwan’s history;
2. the historical factors that have shaped identities in Taiwan;
3. the origins and features of some of the major identity groups in Taiwan’s history;
4. how current identities came into existence and influence Taiwan’s politics and its place in the world.

Expected Academic Background:

None

Reading Materials:

All students should complete the following reading assignments over the course of the week, and be ready to discuss them in our final session:

Wu Zhuoliu, *Orphan of Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006); available in pdf

Selections from the interviews/oral histories with participants in Taiwan's Sunflower Movement of 2014 (collected at The Daybreak Project, <https://daybreak.newbloommag.net>)

In several of the daily sessions there will be short readings that we will use as the basis for discussion.

Students looking for overviews of Taiwan's history should consider reading one of the following (or at least having access to it for reference):

Murray Rubinstein, ed., *Taiwan: A New History* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe 2007)

John Manthorpe, *Forbidden Nation: A History of Taiwan* (New York: Palgrave, 2009)

John Copper, *Taiwan: Nation-State or Province* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2013)

Assessment:

Your grade in this course will be based on your attendance and participation in in-class activities, and on the discussion and writing exercise on the on the final day of the course. For that last exercise, students should be ready to discuss, Wu Zhuoliu's novel and its commentary on Taiwan's identities, as well as recent/contemporary identity politics in Taiwan; and write a short commentary on how the identities of the past interact with and shape those of the present.

Suggested Readings before the Start of the Course:

Students who wish to acquire some basic knowledge of Taiwan before the course begins should consider these readings:

BBC. "Taiwan Profile."

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-16164639>

United States Library of Congress. "Taiwan: Country Profile." 2005.

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Taiwan.pdf>

Detailed Class Schedule:

Day 1: Monday, October 7 Times and Locations To Be Determined

An Overview of Taiwan's History

On the first day of class, the instructor will provide a broad overview of Taiwan's history from the 1600s to the present. We will also introduce ideas and theories of identity construction and formulation. Some questions to consider: Who were and are "the Taiwanese"? How and why did Taiwan become part of Qing China? How did it become of part of Meiji Japan? Of the Republic of China? What influence did these regime transitions have on the identities of Taiwan's residents? Where do identities come from? Who creates them, how, and why?

1. Taiwan in Imperial China

- early contact with the mainland
- aborigines: *yuanzhumin* 原住民; *shandi tongbao* 山地同胞; *shengfan* 生番 = “raw” aborigines; *shufan* 熟番 = “cooked”/assimilated aborigines
- Dutch and Spanish colonization
- Ming/Qing transition
- Zheng Chenggong 鄭成功; a.k.a. Koxinga 國姓爺
- part of China's frontier: 移民社會 (immigrant), 移墾社會 (“frontier”)
- indigenization (*bentuhua* 本土化) vs. Sinicization (*neidihua* 內地化)

2. Japanese rule

- Treaty of Shimonoseki (*Maguan tiaoyue* 馬關條約)
- economic development and exploitation
- employment and education opportunities, and discrimination
- stability and a police state
- movements for expanded autonomy
- changing Taiwanese elite

3. The Republic of China and Taiwan

- Retrocession (*guangfu* 光復)
- Nationalist government (*Guomin zhengfu* 國民政府) preparations, Cairo Conference
- February 28 Incident (*Ererba shijian* 二二八事件, *shibian* 事變, *can'an* 慘案, *tusha* 屠殺)
- martial law and the White Terror (*baise kongbu* 白色恐怖)
- 1952 Peace Treaty with Japan and 1954 Mutual Security Treaty (MST) with the United States (*Gongtong fangyu tiaoyue* 共同防禦條約)
- Economic success, uneven distribution
- Taiwanization (*Taiwanhua* 臺灣化) of the party, state, and economy
- loss of the U.N. seat and loss of diplomatic recognition
- the end of martial law and the process of democratization

Readings:

None. (But begin reading Wu Zhuoliu, *Orphan of Asia*, and selections from The Daybreak Project.)

Day 2: Tuesday, October 8 Times and Locations To Be Determined ***Taiwan's Indigenous Peoples***

This day's session will examine the history of Taiwan's indigenous peoples, and their identities, largely based upon materials written about them by others who settled in Taiwan. It will explore theories about their origins and dispersal, aspects of their cultures and societies, their interactions with foreign governments and settlers, and the birth of an Indigenous Movement in late 20th-century Taiwan. Some questions to consider: Who were and are Taiwan's indigenous peoples?

Who defined them? Were their identities ascribed by others or internally defined? What is their role/position in “Taiwanese identity”?

Reading:

None. (But continue reading Wu Zhuoliu, *Orphan of Asia*, and selections from The Daybreak Project.)

Day 3: Wednesday, October 9 Times and Locations To Be Determined
Chinese Settlers and Their Identities

On day three, we will study the arrival of Chinese peoples in Taiwan during three crucial periods: up through 1683; during the era of Qing rule (1684-1895); and during the era of early KMT rule (1945-1950). We will examine the local, regional, national and other identities that they brought with them, how they sought to impose those identities, and the results of those efforts. Some questions to consider: who were “the Chinese” who settled in Taiwan? To what extent did they share an identity and to what extent were they internally divided? How was their identity (or identities) transformed by their migration to Taiwan?

Readings:

None. (But continue reading Wu Zhuoliu, *Orphan of Asia*, and selections from The Daybreak Project.)

Day 4: Thursday, October 10 Times and Locations To Be Determined
The Construction of Taiwanese Consciousness

On the fourth day of our course, we will explore the historic origins of Taiwanese consciousness, of an identity (or identities) that were rooted in Taiwan as a place, and defined to link people and island together. Some questions to consider: When and how did people become Taiwanese? What did it mean to be Taiwanese at different points in time? Is Taiwanese consciousness an internally or externally generated identity?

Readings:

None. (But continue reading Wu Zhuoliu, *Orphan of Asia*, and selections from The Daybreak Project.)

Day 5: Friday, October 11 Times and Locations To Be Determined
Discussing Identities in Taiwan, Past and Present

In the final class we will discuss manifestations of Taiwanese identities in mid-20th century fiction and in recent events in Taiwan, on the basis of readings completed during the week. Our

goal will be to understand the historical construction of Taiwanese consciousness, and the influence of historical processes on contemporary identities and actions, by analyzing the factors that gave rise to these identities, and that promoted these particular manifestations of them. Most of the class will be taken up with a collective discussion of questions of identity, and students will also have time to complete a final written reflection on Taiwanese identities (the instructor will provide possible questions to answer).

Readings:

Finish reading Wu Zhuoliu, *Orphan of Asia*, and selections from The Daybreak Project.

Some Useful Online Resources:

China Websites:

China-Taiwan <http://eng.taiwan.cn/>
This is a key site that combines data from many sources on the mainland.

[New China News Agency](http://www.xinhua.org/english/index.htm) www.xinhua.org/english/index.htm
[People's Daily](http://english.peopledaily.com.cn) english.peopledaily.com.cn
[PLA Daily](http://english.pladaily.com.cn) english.pladaily.com.cn

Taiwan Websites:

Central Daily News <http://focustaiwan.tw/>
China Post <http://www.chinapost.com.tw/>
[Taiwan Security Research](http://www.taiwansecurity.org) www.taiwansecurity.org
Taipei Times www.taipeitimes.com

Because of Taiwan's democratization, there is a plethora of websites offering different views of the island and cross Strait relations.

Nationalist Party <http://www.kmt.org.tw/>
(current opposition party)
Democratic Progressive Party: <http://www.dpp.org.tw/>
(current ruling party)
E-government (Taiwan) <http://english.www.gov.tw/index.jsp>
(links for information on Taiwan)
Mainland Affairs Council <http://www.mac.gov.tw/mp.asp?mp=3>
(body for handling cross-Strait relations)
Taiwan Solidarity Union <http://www.tsu.org.tw/>
(pro-independence, allied with DPP)
TaiwanDC, a pro-independence group <http://www.taiwandc.org/>

United States Websites:

American Institute on Taiwan <http://www.ait.org.tw/en/>
(US rep. in Taiwan)

Japan Websites:

Japan's Foreign Ministry <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/taiwan/index.html>