Master of Arts in Asian and International Studies

Mode of funding | Non-government funded
---|---
Programme code | P38
Mode of study | Combined mode†
Class schedule | Weekday evenings and Saturday mornings to afternoons. Some meetings may be structured as intensive 1-day workshops.
Minimum no. of credits required | 30
Normal duration of programme | Full-time: 1-year; Part-time 2 to 3 years

Programme leader | Dr Nicholas Thomas  
**BA (Asian Studies)** ANU, **BA (Joint 1st Hons)** UQ, **PhD UTas**  
+852 3442 5301 (Phone)  
+852 2788 8092 (Fax)  
[ndthomas@cityu.edu.hk](mailto:ndthomas@cityu.edu.hk)

Remarks: subject to approval by the University

† Combined mode: Local students taking programmes in combined mode can attend full-time (12-18 credit units per semester) or part-time (no more than 11 credit units per semester) study in different semesters without seeking approval from the University. For non-local students, they will be admitted to these programmes for either full-time or part-time studies. Non-local students must maintain the required credit load for their full-time or part-time studies and any changes will require approval from the University.

Programme Aims and Objectives

In 2005 the US National Intelligence Council released a landmark report entitled *Mapping the Global Future*, in which it stated that ‘In the same way that commentators refer to the 1900s as the “American Century,” the 21st century may be seen as the time when Asia …comes into its own.’ It is essential, therefore, to equip students with the necessary skill sets to not only understand the dynamics of this rise but also the implications of it on their daily lives, the functionality of their societies and economies, the performance of their states and governments. Without such an understanding students will be passive receptors of change and remain ill-equipped to maximise their potential in an ever-globalising workplace.

This programme is designed to provide students with a deeper understanding of regional and international affairs. This knowledge will not only help to upgrade their professional abilities but will also ensure that they are equipped with the necessary tools to understand the global and regional forces that shape our world. It will provide advanced training for students seeking to upgrade their analytical capacity, research and data collection skills as well as their communication and presentation capacities.
Target Group

We welcome applications from
(1) those holding a bachelor’s degree or a higher degree from disciplines of relevance to Asian and International Studies, including:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asian Studies</th>
<th>International Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>Public and Social Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>Political Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) mid-career professionals working in related fields, including:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corporations</th>
<th>International Organizations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diplomatic core</td>
<td>Mass Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government agencies</td>
<td>Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course Description

There are four core courses:

- Asian Regional Governance
- Applying theory in International Relations
- International Political Economy
- State & Economy in East Asia

Plus electives from the following:

- Asian Security
- Authoritarian Resilience and democratic Change in East Asia
- Good Governance and Politics in the Developing World
- East Asia and the US: Conflict and Interdependence
- Welfare Regimes & Social Policies in East Asia
- Institutions and Economy in East and Southeast Asia
- Institutions and Movements in Global Contexts
- Disaster Management
- As well as other new electives to be announced

And/Or a thesis in a chosen specialization
Entrance Requirements

To be eligible for admission, you must satisfy the General Entrance Requirements and have a Bachelor's degree in a relevant discipline from a recognized tertiary institution or an equivalent qualification.

One or more years of working experience in a related field would be an advantage.

Applicants whose entrance qualification is obtained from an institution where the medium of instruction is not English should also fulfill the following minimum English proficiency requirement:

- TOEFL score of 550 (paper-based test) or 213 (computer-based test) or 79 (internet-based test); or
- Overall band score of 6 in International English Language Testing (IELTS); or
- Score 450 in the new College English Test (CET-6) of Chinese mainland or a pass in the old CET-6 test; or
- Other equivalent qualifications

Bonus Features

Students will acquire the ability:

1. independently identify the forces shaping the interplay of Asian and international policies and programmes;
2. conduct theory-based analyses of regional and international issues across the fields of political economy, political science, security studies and international relations;
3. investigate governance challenges facing international organizations, governments, markets and civil societies; and
4. apply advanced research skills to contemporary international relations problems.

Further Study Opportunities

Students opting to take the major thesis and with a sufficiently high GPA can be considered for entry into a PhD programme.

Did You Know?

1. The Programme, commencing in 2010, is the first and the ONLY one of its kind in Hong Kong that develops expertise on issues of Asian and International Studies. This is an essential skill for anyone who wants to understand the future and forge an international, successful career.
2. The Department of Asian and International Studies is the only academic department dedicated to the study of this subject in Hong Kong.
3. You will be taught by a group of Asian and International scholars who have research and teaching expertise as well as in-country professional experience, providing you with unparalleled access to the latest knowledge and research.
Brief Course Descriptions

Core Courses

AIS5021 Asian Regional Governance

This course begins by highlighting the key concepts behind the theories of both regionalism and governance. It then goes back in time to look at earlier models of regional integration in Asia. In moving into the present, the role of organisations such as ASEAN and APEC as well as ASEAN+1 and ASEAN+3 are explored, before looking at the development of the three key Communities currently emerging in Asia. Towards the end of the course the course will analyse sub-regional entities and consider the role played by actors that lie in on periphery of the region but who are being increasingly drawn into regional processes.

AIS5022 Applying Theory in International Relations

This subject surveys the key theories in international relations: realism, liberalism, critical theory, feminism and postmodernism. Students are introduced to key texts in each theoretical tradition and then invited to develop a research problem applying one of the approaches.

AIS5023 International Political Economy

International Political Economy is a thriving sub-discipline that seeks to combine political and economic variables in its analysis of the changing global economy. As Andrew Walter writes, "why do most countries ignore economists and raise barriers to trade?" Turning to questions like this, students will be asked to consider whether politics is the cause and economics is the effect, whether the reverse is the case or whether neither of these standpoints is appropriate for theorizing global economic relations. Case analysis will be drawn from the realms of production and finance.

AIS5024 State & Economy in East Asia

This seminar examines the relation between state and economy in comparative and international perspective. The seminar is especially concerned with states and economy in East & Southeast Asia, but examines these in light of ongoing processes of globalization. The course introduces but moves beyond well-known debates concerning neo-liberalism and developmentalism and considers more recent issues and controversies.

Note: Taken together these four core courses provide an essential foundation for understanding Asian and International Studies. They combine both a substantial theoretical approach with case studies drawn primarily from the contemporary period. The theories not only seek to equip the students with an intellectual basis for addressing the materials in the elective courses but also provide a life-long framework for applying the knowledge in future professional situations. At the same time, the contemporary focus of the case study materials will help reinforce the relevance of the topics covered as well as help encourage the students to deepen their understanding of issues which arise in the daily media. The four core courses are designed to be mutually reinforcing.
Elective Courses

AIS5002 Institutions and Movements in global contexts

This course aims to equip students with a comparative understanding of different theoretical approaches to institutions and movements in global contexts, which they can apply to real-world cases.

AIS5013 Disaster Management

This course aims to examine fundamental concepts in disaster studies and disaster management practices. In so doing, the course will focus on disaster epidemiology, natural history of disasters, rapid epidemiologic assessment, strategy of disaster management, agencies involved in relief operations, development through disaster planning, and mission craft. In addition, the course will also pay special attention to the evolution of disaster policy, the practice of emergency management the major policy issues, including the utility of the “all-hazard” or comprehensive model of emergency management, the role of the military in disaster operations, state and local capacity building, and the design and implementation of hazard mitigation policies and programs. Lessons are drawn from major disasters ranging from the Indian Ocean tsunami, Burma’s Cyclone Nargis disaster and various major earthquakes in China and Japan to food crisis in East Timor.

AIS5031 Asian Security

This course exposes students to the field of security studies. It does so within the geographical context of East Asia. The course begins with an introduction to the key theories and methodological approaches of the discipline, before moving onto an exploration of contemporary non-traditional security issues. Topics covered in this section of the course will range from the political and economic threats still facing the region to the challenges posed by human and drug trafficking, environmental degradation and public health concerns.

AIS5032 Authoritarian Resilience and Democratic Change in East Asia

The East Asian region, ranging from North Korea to Indonesia, displays a greater diversity of political regimes than any other part of the world. Whereas uniform waves of political change and regime outcomes prevail across Europe, Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia, a variety of authoritarian politics and uncertain democratic transitions have characterized the East Asian setting. In this course, we will examine the sources of authoritarian durability, as well as the pressures and processes by which democratization can take place. To guide analysis, we will consider a range of contemporary theories of political continuity and change. But we will also investigate empirically a half-dozen country cases.

AIS5033 Good Governance and Politics in the Developing World

Good governance promotion has become a key objective of foreign policy and aid agencies. Despite significant external development interventions in poor countries towards building democracy there has been little success. Why might this be? In this subject we consider the nature of regimes in developing countries, the legacy of colonialism and the impact of modern political contest. Why is that liberal forms of democracy are not so easily established in such countries? Understanding the complexity of politics in developing countries can throw light on why democracy promotion often fails.
AIS5034 Asia and the US: Conflict and Interdependence

This course surveys the post-war relationship between East Asia and the US with a particular focus on economic issues. Students will assess the nature, depth and direction of economic flows. Global supply chains and international trade connect Asia to the US while these two parts of the global economy are also more bound together financially than ever before. What is the balance of conflict and interdependence in this economic relationship? The course will also examine two other features of the US-Asia relationship: the evolving security alliances and fractures and socio-cultural ties, such as immigration and popular culture.

AIS5035 Welfare regimes & social policies in East Asia

This course examines institutional arrangements governing the creation and allocation of welfare across East Asia and in international perspective. It examines the political and economic dimensions of social policy and problems in the selection and conduct of social policies. It develops comparisons of social policies across and within countries.

AIS5036 Economy & Society in East Asia

This course develops a rigorous examination of economic institutions and social change in East Asia. It examines general aspects of economic change as well as more specific problems concerning relations between states, firms and labour. The course explores organizational and operational attributes of several key industries in East Asia. Students will gain a sociological understanding of economic conditions and change in the region and beyond.

Note: These six elective courses extend on the foundation material provided in the core courses. Covering a wide range of topics: security studies, the role of the US, governance, economic change, social policies and political systems, they will provide students with scope to explore topics of personal interest and professional relevance. These options will be buttressed by two further electives drawn from the Masters of Social Sciences (Development Studies) (MSSDS) programme, which are of relevance to aims of this proposed degree.

Thesis-based courses

AIS6010 Minor Thesis

Students will develop a research hypothesis on a topic to be agreed upon with their supervisor. The thesis will be between 10-12,000 words in length, not including references or footnotes.

AIS6011 Major Thesis

This is a more advanced module than that offered by the Minor Thesis and may offer a path towards further postgraduate study. Students will develop a research hypothesis on a topic to be agreed upon with their supervisor. The thesis will be between 20-24,000 words in length, not including references or footnotes. For part-time students, the topic will be chosen after the first year of study. For full-time students, the topic will be chosen at the conclusion of Semester A.