History of East Asia

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This seminar investigates the interactions among China, Korea, Japan, Vietnam and Taiwan before the West, the collapse of the Sinocentric regional system, as well as the domestic and international social, political and cultural repercussions resulted from the insertion of East Asia into the Western political order. While the Sinocentric hierarchy and the impact of the West from the mid-19th century onwards are too consequential to be disparaged, non-Chinese East Asian countries are far from being passive recipients of the traditional Chinese hegemony and Western imperialism was not the driving force of the tremendous changes that the region went through. From this historiographical perspective, interplays between non-Chinese East Asian regimes, domestic cultural, social and political dynamics, the region's relationships with other Asian areas, as well as each East Asian country’s active participations in – or even appropriation and co-creation of – the major regional orders and events will be accentuated to diversify and enrich key historical and political notions, such as the tributary system, imperialism and the Cold War. Through discussions on these issues, the very concept of East Asia will be further refined, clarified, and differentiated.

Schedule: November 8, 15, 22, 29; December 6, 13, 20.

Plan and Reading:

1. China and Sinocentrism


2. Japan, Korea and Vietnam in the Sinocentric regional order

David C. Kang, East Asia Before the West: Five Centuries of Trade and Tribute (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 1-16.


3. **Rise of nationalism and presence of the West at the 19th century**


4. **Localism, Nationalism and Asianism before WWII**


5. **Japanese imperialism and Western imperialism**


6. **Post-war nation-states and the Cold War**


7. The rise of the East and regional confrontations

