

REGIONAL WORLDS, 1998-99

VISUAL CULTURE, REGIONAL
IDENTITIES, AND
TRANSNATIONAL MODERNITIES
IN EAST ASIA

Pedagogical Strategies and Curricular Materials

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THE GLOBALIZATION PROJECT
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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PREFACE

The materials gathered into this publication reflect the activities and achievements of Regional Worlds 1998-99, "East Asia: Visual Culture, Regional Identities, and Transnational Modernities." Readers of these documents will find the various aspects of

a stimulating and comprehensive program that brought scholars from different disciplines and institutional backgrounds together to examine the construction of modern East Asia, its contemporary cultural developments, and questions of pedagogy. The principal activities made possible by the Ford Foundation and by complementary funding from the Center for East Asian Studies at the University of Chicago were in all three two-day seminars, two presentations by our post-doctoral fellows, and a three-day conference entitled "Shifting Boundaries: East Asia in Area Studies."

As the faculty coordinator of this program, I would like to thank all the colleagues, Midwest fellows, and students who generously contributed their time and energy to the success of this program. It is impossible for me to list all those who helped shape the course of the program, especially when much collective collaboration went into all important decisions, from inviting scholars from other institutions to deliberating on the title of the culminating conference. Throughout the year, Professor Prasenjit Duara was relentlessly supportive and stood behind all the major decisions that I had to make. Also instrumental to the operation of the year-long program was John Crespi, who as program assistant almost single-handedly brought all loose pieces together and at the same time proved to be a crucial intellectual presence on all occasions. Finally I must thank the Globalization Project for a wonderful opportunity to examine East Asia in a new light.

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INTRODUCTION AND THEME

During the 1998-99 academic year the Globalization Project and the Center for East Asian Studies at the University of Chicago collaborated on the third year of a four-year, Ford Foundation-funded research and curricular development program entitled *Regional Worlds*. The intellectual goal of this year's and previous year's efforts has been to develop a critical discussion of how research and teaching in area studies might be transformed, and how innovations in curricular form, content and pedagogic approach in area studies may have the broadest possible impact on institutions of higher education in the Midwest.

Regional Worlds is in part a direct response to the call from scholars, funders and policymakers for the development of new ways of teaching about global histories, cultures and societies in the aftermath of the Cold War. The program builds on the outstanding existing resources in international studies at the University of Chicago and has several innovative features. First, it is both interregional and interdisciplinary—faculty and students from a range of departments and areal affiliations participate. Second, it focuses on teaching—*Regional Worlds* is working to create new curricular materials and classroom procedures for post-secondary area studies teaching. Third, faculty from colleges in the region are directly involved in the program's activities.

Regional Worlds 1998-99 built on the results of two preceding years of *Regional Worlds* activities. The pilot year (1996-97), "Reconceptualizing South Asia," considered new approaches to the study of South Asia. During its second year (1997-98), *Regional*

Worlds explored the theme "Latin America: Cultural Environments and Developmental Debates." The Regional Worlds theme for 1998-99 is "East Asia: Visual Culture, Regional Identities, and Transnational Modernities." In its concluding year, the program is working with the general theme "Diasporas, Minorities and Counter-Geographies." Throughout these four years of activities and events Regional Worlds has sought to create new linkages between area studies, cultural studies and the natural and social sciences by conceptualizing world areas and research issues from more flexible and potentially integrative perspectives.

The theme of Regional Worlds for the 1998-99 academic year was "East Asia: Visual Culture, Regional Identities, and Transnational Modernities." To explore these topics Regional Worlds organized a series of colloquia and a culminating conference. The scholars who participated in these events examined how the existing national cultures in East Asia can be seen and represented in the context of a dialogue between enduring geopolitical formations and regionally circulated discourses such as Confucianism, Asian capitalism, and nationalism. Working with the notion of "process geographies" that regards "identity" or "culture" as formed by diasporic, interactive, and large-scale processes and configurations, we focused on the dimensions of contemporary visual culture and mass media across the region, articulations of regionalism and Pan-Asianism, and the transnational nature of East Asian modernities.

TEACHING REGIONAL WORLDS: ISSUES AND INSIGHTS OF THE SEMINAR SESSIONS

John A. Crespi

A guiding premise behind the Regional Worlds Program is that restructuring the Cold War imagination of the world's "areas" into a more flexible, process-based imagination of "regional worlds" begins with the intensive restructuring of college and university-level area studies-related curricula. How this might be achieved, and the obstacles to doing so, became one of the recurrent topics of discussion during the Regional Worlds 1998-99 colloquia.

Regional Worlds 1998-99 held three colloquium seminars over the course of the year, each co-chaired by the two visiting speakers and attended by the Midwest Fellows as well as faculty and students from the University of Chicago and other area institutions. In the fall, two scholars of Japanese history led a discussion on "Decentering the Global History Curriculum." The winter colloquium, which centered on political economy, brought together specialists on China and Korea to discuss "Long-Run Change and Regional Constructs: East Asian Economies in Global Perspective." For the spring colloquium seminar Regional Worlds invited overseas scholars of literature and history for the seminar "Alternative Frameworks: History, Nation, and Area Studies in Australia and Taiwan." Seminars opened with short presentations by the co-chairs. The floor was then opened to general discussion.

Seminar participants made use of these three sessions as forums for exchanging ideas on how to apply innovative materials and teaching strategies to break down traditional area studies biases. At the same time the seminars addressed the difficulties involved in initiating change. While participants agreed that new pedagogical approaches to area studies are needed, they also recognized that resistance to change, typically in the form of institutional constraints and ideological inertia, has to be overcome, bypassed or negotiated if a paradigmatic shift in East Asia area studies is to become a reality.

Obstacles to Change

Input from the Midwest Fellows drew particular attention to the problems that small, liberal arts colleges confront when attempting to implement curricula that transcend traditional area studies boundaries. At the most basic level lay the question of how small colleges with very limited resources can do justice to the interdisciplinary demands of an East Asia area studies curriculum. In a small history department catering to undergraduates, for instance, it is only with great difficulty that one can even begin to properly represent East Asia—including such "non-core" regions as Vietnam and Korea—when departments typically allocate courses according to the proportion 1/3 North America, 1/3 Europe, 1/3 "The Rest." Given these limited resources, how can an East Asianist at a small college convince non-Asianist colleagues to participate in a global studies curriculum, especially when allocation of resources to such a curriculum may be seen as "cuts" by these same colleagues? Similarly, how should one go about mobilizing administrative support for area studies or global studies? And when designing area studies curricula, how does one respond to practical financial and institutional

pressure to provide area studies courses that serve the "public" interest, where the public, especially in the last two decades, has tended to become indistinguishable from international business interests?

Neither are students themselves uninterested parties in the creation of college and university curricula. Referring to their own experience, seminar participants pointed out students' frequently strong desire to compartmentalize knowledge. Quite often, students are not interested in or even object to mixing disciplines, a problem exacerbated by the burdensome financial outlays they may have to make when purchasing carefully customized, but quite costly interdisciplinary course packets.

Faculty, too, must pay a price when committing themselves to the sort of inter-regional comparative studies called for by a more globalized curriculum. Most importantly, pressure to specialize professionally (for younger professors, the scramble for tenure) precludes many interdisciplinary pursuits. In a situation where academic rewards and recognition go mainly to specialists, experimentation with wide-ranging comparative studies can work against the advancement of one's personal career. Moreover, especially at small liberal arts schools where instructors are saddled with heavy course loads, one may have the desire to take part in a variety of creative projects and collaborations, but simply lack the time and energy. Finally, the Midwest Fellows noted that the demands of specialization and teaching also lead to the atomization of faculty from different disciplines, a problem that can only endure without the provision of structured time for exchanging ideas.

Practical Pedagogy

While acknowledging the constraints on revising existing pedagogical practices, seminar participants also discussed practicable methods for altering the way students think about the world's regions. As in years past, one of the major themes was the pedagogical dilemma of operating simultaneously at two levels: that of constructing and deconstructing knowledge. In other words, how do you "decenter" or "connect" areas and regions if students don't know what they are connecting?; and, how does an instructor balance "constructive" pedagogy aimed at producing substantive background knowledge of areas with "deconstructive" theoretical methodologies? Participants noted that achieving a balance between the "substantive" and the "critical" is easier in smaller higher-level reading courses than large survey courses. For instance, how can the instructor of a large-enrollment World Religions course condense the complexities of Buddhism into a two-week "package" that students can apprehend, but do so without sacrificing the critical and historical detail necessary to de-exoticize Asian religion and culture? Is it possible within such tight constraints to lead students to reconsider their own views on religion, or will the result be merely a reinforcement of their preconceived notions?

If self-critical methodologies are to reach an audience beyond that of East Asia majors and graduate students, instructors must adapt them to the standard "100-level" survey course. From the seminar participants' discussion, it became apparent that there is no single, tried and true way to go about doing this. The methods devised depended upon

the instructors' own specialty, the nature of the subject being taught, and the composition of the student body. Some suggestions, however, included the use of visual media to "shock" students into making comparisons and parallels. Slides of seventeenth century Japanese erotic art, for example, can be employed to destabilize students' conceptions of gender construction and "pornography." Another participant recommended avoiding the use of twentieth-century political maps, which instantly reinforce naturalized national boundaries, in favor of pre-modern world maps that present alternative imaginations of regions and areas constituted by pre-modern trading networks.

Other ways of "constructively deconstructing" knowledge would be to take advantage of students' "America-centricness"—that is, their familiarity and interest in America—as grounds for world historical interregional comparison, and as a way to question American historical myths. An example of this would be to compare the history of the US grain belt with Southeast Asian paddy-building. Mixing disciplines can also open up alternative points of view on historical events. For instance, one might try problematizing positivistic statistical studies of the modern Chinese economy by juxtaposing them with the 1930s-era Chinese realist short story "Spring Silkworms." An instructor might also introduce the cultural and historical dimensions of science as a way of involving undergraduate science majors, or stress environmental history as a way to transcend traditional conceptions of regional boundaries. Another way to productively cross regional and disciplinary boundaries is by team-teaching. Collaborating with Americanists and Europeanists on large-enrollment world history courses, while appealing on the one hand to cost-conscious administrators, can also challenge students'

America-centered understanding of the world by highlighting historical parallels and simultaneity.

Concrete application of the diversity of insights generated by the seminar discussions may be found in the syllabi included in this publication. The materials, themes, and thoroughly interdisciplinary and inter-regional perspectives offered by these course prospectuses will, we hope, act as a broad-based source of ideas and innovation for the future design of East Asia-related area studies curriculum.

Events

NOVEMBER 12-13, 1998 *FALL QUARTER COLLOQUIUM*

Lectures:

**NEW GEOGRAPHIES OF CULTURE IN EARLY MODERN AND
MODERN JAPAN**

Marcia Yonemoto (Department of History, University of Colorado,
Boulder)

"Great Japan" and the "Small Pacific": Maps and Geo-Cultural
Consciousness in the Early Modern Period

Kären Wigen (History Department, Duke University)

The "Regional Worlds" of Prewar Japanese Geography Texts

Seminar:

DECENTERING THE GLOBAL HISTORY CURRICULUM

JANUARY 28-29, 1999 *WINTER QUARTER COLLOQUIUM*

Lectures:

**EAST ASIA WITHOUT MIRACLES: GROWTH, CRISIS,
AND ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS**

Meredith Woo-Cumings (Department of Political Science, Northwestern
University)

All in the Family: Reforming Business Governance in East Asia

Kenneth Pomeranz (Department of History, University of California,
Irvine)

Normalizing the East Asian Miracles: Markets,
Environment and Development

Seminar:

**LONG-RUN CHANGE AND REGIONAL CONSTRUCTS: EAST ASIAN
ECONOMIES IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE**

MARCH 25-26, 1999 SPRING QUARTER COLLOQUIUM

Lectures:

SPACES OF IDENTITY IN EAST ASIA

Tessa Morris-Suzuki (Research School of Pacific & Asian Studies,
Australian National University)

Remembered Worlds: Globalization and the
Spatial Frameworks of History

Sebastian Hsien-hao Liao (Dept. of Comparative Literature, National
Taiwan University)

Nativism at the Crossroads: *Fin de Siecle* and
the Nationalization of Identity

Seminar:

DEBATING ALTERNATIVE FRAMEWORKS OF HISTORY

April 15-17, 1999 Conference

SHIFTING BOUNDARIES: EAST ASIA IN AREA STUDIES

(see next section)

May 17, 1999 Postdoctoral Fellow Lecture

Jinim Park

Experiences of "Soldiers of Fortune": Vietnam War
Narratives by Korean Writers

May 27, 1999 Postdoctoral Fellow Lecture

Aida Yuen Wong

Three Modes of Representing "The East" in Japanese and Chinese
Painting of the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries:
Ethnographic, Historical, and Idealistic

CONFERENCE

SHIFTING BOUNDARIES: EAST ASIA IN AREA STUDIES

International Conference, The University of Chicago, April 15-17, 1999

REFLECTIONS ON AREA STUDIES: A ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Thursday, April 15 1999, 2:00-5:00 pm

Bruce Cumings (University of Chicago), Benjamin Lee (Rice University), Norma Field (University of Chicago), Vicente L. Rafael (University of California, San Diego), Bernard Silberman (University of Chicago)

Moderator: Prasenjit Duara (University of Chicago)
Commentator: Arjun Appadurai (University of Chicago)

THE ASIAN METROPOLIS

Friday, April 16 1999, 9:00-12:00 noon

Breasted Hall

Chair: Kathleen Ryor (Carleton College)

Nora Taylor (Arizona State University), "Dreaming Desolation: Romantic Visions of Old Hanoi in New Vietnamese Painting"

Melissa Wender (University of Chicago), "Mothers Write Ikaino"

Michael Douglass (University of Hawaii), "Unbundling National Identity: Global Migration and the Advent of Multicultural Societies in East Asia"

Discussant: Gil Latz (Portland State University)

REFIGURING REGIONS AND CIVILIZATIONS

Friday, April 16 1999, 2:00-5:00 pm

Chair: Martin Farrell (Ripon College)

William Schaefer (University of Chicago), "Fragmented Images, Global Montage: Locating Shanghai Modernism"

Prasenjit Duara (University of Chicago), "The Discourse of Civilization and Area Studies"

Shawn McHale (The George Washington University), "Mapping a 'Confucian' Vietnamese Past and Its Transition to Modernity, 1930-1998"

William A. Callahan (University of Durham), "Civilization and Barbarians in a Transnational World: Reading 'Greater China' Discourse"

SYMPOSIUM: GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON CONTEMPORARY CHINESE ART

Saturday, April 17 1999, 9:30 am-4:30 pm

Co-sponsored by the Regional Worlds Program and the Smart Museum of Art.

PANEL ONE

9:30 am-12:00 noon

Chair: Kimerley Rorschach (Director, Smart Museum of Art)

Johnson Chang (Hanart TZ Gallery), "Vanguard of the Middle Way"

Wu Hung (University of Chicago), "The Birth of Ruins: Inventing a Modern Visual Culture"

PANEL TWO

1:30-3:00 pm

Chair: Wu Hung

Gao Minglu (Harvard University), "Chinese Art in Transition"

Hou Hanru (independent critic), "On the Midground, Chinese Artists and Global Art"

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

3:00-4:30 pm

"Exhibiting Contemporary Chinese Art to the World," led by Andrew Solomon (The New York Times). With a short introduction.

Conference Sponsors:

University of Chicago's Globalization Project, Center for East Asian Studies, Center for International Studies, and the David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art.

SYLLABI AND CURRICULAR BIBLIOGRAPHIES

Regional Worlds 1998-99 participants generously contributed a variety of course syllabi and curricular bibliographies. Some are concept papers for new courses; others are courses already offered. Full text versions of all are available in the hard copy of this publication, available free of charge from:

The Regional Worlds Program
University of Chicago
Pick Hall 116
5828 South University Avenue
Chicago, IL 60637
regionalworlds@uchicago.edu
(773) 834-4274

or

The Center for International Studies
University of Chicago
5828 South University Avenue
Chicago, IL 60637
(773) 702-7721
(773) 702-9286 *fax*

1. Marcia Yonemoto
Department of History
University of Colorado at Boulder

Thinking Across Space/Time: Connective Histories of the Early Modern Era

2. Martin F. Farrell
Department of Politics and Government, Coordinator of Global Studies
Ripon College

GLOBAL STUDIES 111
OUR WORLD TODAY: IDENTITY, BELIEF, EXPRESSION

3. Martin F. Farrell
Department of Politics and Government, Coordinator of Global Studies
Ripon College

**GLOBAL STUDIES 501
SENIOR SEMINAR**

4. John Y. Cha
Department of Religion
Gustavus Adolphus College

**ON THE RETRIEVAL OF IMAGINARY ORIGINS: THE FORMATION OF CRITICAL SPACE IN
CRITICAL BUDDHISM**

A Report on Course Development for Regional Worlds 1998-1999

5. Richard Leitch
Department of Political Science
Gustavus Adolphus College

**CAPITALIST ENCOUNTERS: "JAPAN" IN EARLY AND
PRE-MODERN INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ECONOMY**
Intersession Term Course

6. Melissa Wender and William Schaefer
University of Chicago

EAST ASIAN CULTURES OF CIRCULATION
Curricular Bibliography

7. Melissa Wender and William Schaefer
University of Chicago

**MEDIATIONS OF ETHNICITY AND GENDER:
CHINA, JAPAN, KOREA, AND THE UNITED STATES**
Curricular Bibliography

8. Melissa Wender and William Schaefer
University of Chicago

FRONTIERS IN CHINA AND JAPAN
Curricular Bibliography