



Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology

## **COSM54, Asian Studies: Body Politics in East Asia, 7.5 credits**

*Asienstudier: Kroppspolitik i Östasien, 7,5 högskolepoäng*

**Second Cycle / Avancerad nivå**

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### **Details of approval**

The syllabus was approved by The Pro Dean of First and Second Cycle Studies at The Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology on 2026-03-05 (U 2026/109). The syllabus comes into effect 2026-03-05 and is valid from the autumn semester 2026.

### **General information**

The course is an elective component of the third semester of the Master of Science Programme (120 credits) in Asian Studies. It is also offered as a freestanding course in Asian Studies.

*Language of instruction:* English

*Main field of study*      *Specialisation*

Asian Studies      A1N, Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements

### **Learning outcomes**

On completion of the course, the students shall be able to:

#### **Knowledge and understanding**

- describe and explain key issues concerning body politics and their impact on the development of modern governance in Twentieth- and Twenty-First-Century East Asia,
- distinguish between and summarize key theories and concepts related to body politics and governance from multiple disciplines,

## Competence and skills

- compare and evaluate different modes of governing bodies and populations across East Asian contexts, using empirical evidence from course literature and lectures,
- apply selected theories of body politics to analyze empirical cases concerning bodies of children, women, and families in East Asian societies,

## Judgement and approach

- critically assess the strengths and limitations of different theoretical frameworks for analyzing body politics in diverse Asian settings and justify the choice of framework in their own analyses.
- reflect critically and ethically on the implications of governance practices for differently positioned subjects (for example in terms of gender, class, race, disability, and sexuality), and on their own scholarly positionality when working with contested issues of body politics.

## Course content

This course aims to examine East Asia, broadly defined to include Korea, Japan, China, and Vietnam, through the lens of the body. It focuses on how the bodies of children, women, and families have been critical sites of politics and governance in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The course situates body politics within broader regional and global contexts, while also emphasising the local particularities of how such politics are articulated and manifested.

Drawing on historical and contemporary cases ranging from population control and military prostitution to transnational adoption and disability activism, students will examine how governance operates through the regulation of bodies, reproduction, and care—and how people respond, from navigating institutions to more direct forms of contestation and resistance. The course highlights the complexities of political membership in East Asia and shows how they are shaped by intersecting dynamics of gender, race, class, disability, and sexuality.

## Course design

The course consists of lectures, 2-3 seminars with oral presentations, and film screenings.

Compulsory participation is required in seminars.

Absence from a compulsory seminar can be compensated for by an assignment in accordance with instructions from the course director.

## Assessment

The course is assessed through one oral presentation (3 credits) and one individual take-home exam (4.5 credits).

The course includes opportunities for assessment at a first examination, a re-sit close to the first examination and a second re-sit for courses completed in the past academic year (catch-up exam).

The examiner, in consultation with Disability Support Services, may deviate from the regular form of examination in order to provide a permanently disabled student with a form of examination equivalent to that of a student without a disability.

## Grades

Grading scale includes the grades: U=Fail, E=Sufficient, D=Satisfactory, C=Good, B=Very Good, A=Excellent

The highest grade is A and the lowest passing grade is E. The grade for a non-passing result is Fail.

The grade for the entire course consists of a weighted average of all components assessed with differentiated pass grades (in which A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2 and E=1). For a grade of Pass (at least E) on the entire course, the student must have been awarded at least a Pass (E) on all assessed components and have participated in all compulsory components.

At the start of the course students are informed about the learning outcomes stated in the syllabus and about the grading scale and how it is applied in the course.

## Entry requirements

Bachelor's degree in social sciences or humanities, and English 6.

A general exemption from the requirement of proficiency in Swedish is applied.

## Further information

- The course is offered at the Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies, Department of History, Lund University.
- The course replaces COSM52: Body Politics in East and South-East Asia
- The credits allocated for course content that in whole or in part is commensurate with another course can only be credited once for a degree.
- For further information, refer to the current registration and information material.