

Code

GEN/ASC2111

Title**Description**

The course is designed to introduce students into the process of how society and culture were historically connected in Central Asia and politically constructed. The course will start with the historical introduction into how present day societies in the region emerged, with major emphasis on sedentary and nomadic legacies of societies and culture with colonial and soviet interludes. The central focus of the course is how traditional societies and cultures strive to survive under the pressure of state/nation building processes, ethno-nationalization, globalization and modernization. How political elites employ traditions and cultures to construct new nations and define the role and place of their country in the regional and global contexts? The course combines analytic approaches of social sciences with approaches of the Humanities, anthropological and sociological perspectives with cultural history. This course is an introductory interdisciplinary by approach to the topics that will focus on socio-cultural methods of analyzing and interpreting Central Asian cultures and societies. The study of kinship, social organization, ethnic group relations, identity, and other cultural phenomena are fundamental to the understanding the modern day processes and their impact on making a new history and geopolitics of the region. These subjects are rarely covered in many other classes from social and cultural prisms. Special attention will be paid to widely ignored but underlying problems of clans and tribal affiliations: their origin, nature, evolution, changing concepts through time. Another sensitive hot issues is identity that will viewed through evolution in history, nature and current concepts, contested identities will be discussed. Special attention is given to assessment of the soviet times and post 1991 stages. The course will explore varied dimensions of Central Asian cultures in this course, from the basis of tribal and ethnic identities to food and gender relations. The students will combine theoretical readings, in-class discussions and consider anthropological, cultural, sociological case studies and limited fieldwork that would allow them to see how empirical observational research can allow us to better understand people from different cultures. An aim of this course is to help you understand Central Asian societies as an "insider" with cultural understandings that a person raised in the region would have.

Objectives

1. How historically societies and cultures were formed in Central Asia, and evolved under domestic and external pressure 2. How governance systems shaped social and cultural processes 3. How and why societies adopted /rejected cultural intrusions and set a platform for cultural exchanges: food, family practices, sports and entertainment, music, literature, popular culture, etc. 4. Critically analyze political documents on social and cultural policies administration after 1991, and how they construct new faces of countries and the region

Assessment

60 % -first and second assessments

40 % -final assessment