

## M.A. (IRAS) Programme

Course Number	: IA 505
Course Title	: Indo-Pacific Construct: Geo-Political and Geo-Economic Challenges
Course Teachers	: <b>Professor Shankari Sundararaman</b>
Course Credits	: 4
Semester	: Third Monsoon semester
Instruction Method	: Lectures, Seminars/ Tutorials
Evaluation Method	: Sessional Work and End Semester Exam
Course Duration	: One Semester
Contact Hours	: 3-4 per week

### Introduction:

The Indo-Pacific is a newly emerging concept, critically linking the Indian and Pacific Oceans as a single maritime construct. The terminology began to gain greater significance over the last decade given that challenges related to maritime security have emerged both in terms of traditional as well as non-traditional security issues. The reference made by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe that the coupling of the two oceans in a dynamic way as seas of freedom and prosperity, shifted the focus towards a broader Asia, which in itself was a departure as to what constitutes the Asia-Pacific. Today this region is being viewed within the broad spectrum of three terminologies – Asia-Pacific, Indo-Pacific and the Indo-Asia-Pacific. This contesting terminology lays emphasis to the fact that regional contours are shifting on the basis of strategic limits, rather than being contained by geographic boundaries. While the definitional content of this terminology remains very diverse, there is a growing emphasis on the geo-political limits which it seeks to define. In the pursuit to sustain norms and institutions across the two regional connectives of the Indian and Pacific Ocean, several geo-political and geo-economic challenges have to be addressed. Given the shifting nature of global power plays and the focus on safeguarding the global maritime commons, the notion that geo-political and geo-strategic linkages can 'construct' regional identities such as the Indo-Pacific are beginning to emerge.

### Learning Outcomes:

1. To assess the transformation of the regional space that was defined as the Asia-Pacific to the Indo-Pacific.
2. To evaluate the shifts in the regional dynamics that have led to the profound changes in definition and context of the Indo-Pacific.
3. To understand the relevance of Southeast Asia in the broader context of the Indo-Pacific region.
4. To organically understand the region of Southeast Asia and how the region lies at the core of the Indo-Pacific, especially the multilateral processes of the Indo-Pacific.
5. To evaluate the geopolitical and geoeconomic shifts shaping the megaregion and its implications on Southeast Asia.

## Course Evaluation:

Sessional Work 50 % comprising the assignments listed below:

- Book review 10%
- Term Paper 20%
- Class Presentation 10%
- Class participation 10%

End Semester Exam: 50 %

**Module I: Definition and Conceptualizing the Indo-Pacific** – This section will focus on the changing nomenclatures and the definitional challenges that are associated with the Indo-Pacific. The region has been described by various competing terminologies which will be discussed, as to how these contexts apply to this dynamic region. It will look at the salience of the Indian and Pacific Oceans through the colonial period, as a background to how the region emerged following the colonial withdrawal. The post colonial order led to most of these states developing a more inward looking focus in order to address issues of nation building and this is changing in the post cold war period with greater economic interdependence and the engine of global economic growth shifting eastwards.

### Module II: Regional Interpretations on the Indo-Pacific:

This module will focus on how various countries have interpreted the concept of the Indo-Pacific. At its core lies the region of Southeast Asia which acts as the linkage between the Indian and the Pacific Oceans. This section will look at how countries along this regional expanse have identified and adapted the concept to their foreign policies. Focus will be on the ASEAN states and their primacy at the core, particularly on how countries like Indonesia and Vietnam have critically defined their approach to the Indo-Pacific, as well as states such as Australia, Japan, India, US and its strategic pivot to Asia/rebalancing etc which have been focusing on incorporating the Indo-Pacific in their respective foreign policies. This section will also look at how some of the European countries have recalibrated their approach to the region, particularly how both UK, France and EU have clarified their respective approaches.

### Module III: Maritime Security and its Challenges:

This section will look at the growing impact of maritime connectivity as a potential for boosting both economic and security level ties. The debates relating to the importance of the global maritime commons, the focus on both traditional and non-traditional security threats challenging the safety of the seas and the norms and institutions currently in place will be studied. The importance of the Indian and Pacific oceans remains critical to these challenges, which will form the core of this module.

### Module IV: Geo-Political Challenges in the Indo-Pacific:

The focus of this section lies in the issues dominating the Straits of Malacca, which acts as a 'commercial and economic lifeline'. With a huge volume of the global trade passing through this region the vital importance and challenges to the Straits Malacca, Sundah, Lombok and Makassar are vital lifelines. This region is critically impacted by the South China Sea dispute and its implications among the regional

players. China's ADIZ claims in the East Sea and the nine-dash line in the SCS, counters the principles of UNCLOS impacting the relations among states in the region.

#### Module V: Geo-Economic Challenges:

The challenge of geo-economics has led to a situation where countries of the region are today looking at possibilities where there is both cooperation at the economic level and interdependence, while also competing for crucial resources. The issues relating to energy security and the contestation for scarce resources among states. The changing economic balance where the shift is eastwards is creating its own dynamics – emergence of the Asian Regional Economic Integration such as RCEP as an economic strategy to counter TPP and its implications.

#### Module VI: Regional Diplomacy and Implications:

This module will focus on the existing regional mechanisms that are in place to address the issues and challenges in the Indo-Pacific region. In May 2013, The Indonesian Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa emphasized the need to have a treaty of Friendship and Cooperation for the Indo-Pacific States based on the expansion of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation that was the foundational basis of the East Asian Summit. There is already a range of multilateral mechanisms in place – IORA, ASEAN, ADMM+, ARF, EAS, IONS, SAARC, BIMSTEC, PIF, etc which are in place. The core will be on the ASEAN mechanisms. The focus will look on how these institutional mechanisms may address the three core issues plaguing the region – trust deficit, unresolved territorial claims and managing the impact of change to the existing global order. Success / or lack thereof for these institutions in addressing these key issues. As the institutional mechanisms are studied the importance of how the ASEAN and the Quad interact with each other will also be assessed and understood as distinct approaches to the management of the Indo-Pacific region, with a look at the AOIP.

#### Module VII: Future Options that are Emerging:

- Maritime Silk Route
- One Road One Belt
- Cotton Route/ Spice Route
- Indonesia's Global Maritime Fulcrum
- Project Mausam
- Indo-Pacific Economic Corridor
- Indo-Pacific Economic Framework
- Blue Dot Network

