Topics in Comparative Politics:
Southeast Asia in Comparative Perspective
(Writing Intensive)

Ms. Duyen Bui
Office Hours: Mon. 10:00am – 12:00pm and by appt.
POLS 307 B
Office: Saunders Hall Room 617
Lecture: Wed. 1:30-4:00 pm
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Room: WEB 103

Course Description
This course is designed to introduce undergraduate students to the field of Southeast Asian Politics. Southeast Asia is a diverse and dynamic region politically, economically, and culturally. Over the past several decades the region has seen the rise and collapse of authoritarian regimes, democratization, economic boom and bust, and the prevalence of identity-based conflict. How can we make sense of these dynamics and what can we learn from the region?

The course begins with background information on the region. Then, the themes of colonialism, independence/nationalism, and democracy/authoritarianism are examined. Though these themes are relevant to the entire region, this course will focus on five countries: Burma/Myanmar, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. The course ends with the global impact of the region, particularly through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Course Objectives
The first objective of this course is to gain a firm understanding of the historical roots of modern day politics in the region. A historical understanding of Southeast Asia grounds our knowledge and emphasizes the importance of key figures and historical trajectories.

Second, this course introduces and analyzes several theoretical approaches to understanding political phenomena. With our historical foundations in place, we can begin to ask broader and more thematic questions.
1. Where does power lie during critical episodes of colonialism, independence, and nation-building?
2. What are the sources of authoritarianism and democracy?
3. How can we understand economic growth and collapse?
4. How do people come to embrace one identity over another?
We will explore and debate these and other issues.

Finally, this course highlights the comparative approach through intensive writing. Comparing and contrasting the experiences of the countries in the region allows us to think critically about the theories that we put forth. Looking at Burma/Myanmar, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam offers an opportunity to deepen our understanding of political change in the region and beyond.
Course Structure

Lectures: Classes will consist of lectures, group activities, and Q&A. Students should feel free to ask questions during lecture if something is not clear.

Assignments: To develop analytical and writing skills, in-class and online writing exercises will be assigned based off the lectures and readings. These will be graded on a five-point scale, but are weighted heavily in your final grade.

Readings: Reading assignments are very important and must be done before each lecture. All readings will be posted on the course website Laulima. Two books will be referenced often and you can purchase these books on Amazon or from other booksellers.


Research Paper: The research paper should be about 10 pages in length or 2,500 words (double-spaced), using both primary and secondary sources. As a writing intensive course, the process of producing a strong paper is important. There will be several stages before the final paper is due, including submission of a draft and peer review.

- January 30 – Students should meet with the instructor to settle on a topic.
- February 6 – Submit a brief paper proposal (1-2 paragraphs) discussing aim, scope, and organization of paper. Include a preliminary bibliography
- March 20 – Research Paper Draft Due
- April 10 – Peer Review
- May 1 – Final Research Paper Due

Exams: There will be one midterm and one final exam.

- Midterm Exam: consist of short answer IDs and essays. Short answer IDs will come from lectures and readings. You are expected to define or describe the term and state its significance to Southeast Asian politics. Short essays address broad historical or analytical issues across the five countries we discuss.
- Final Exam: a take-home final exam that covers major themes in the course. Students will be given one week to complete this exercise, which is open book. Citations are necessary. Exams without references may be cited for plagiarism.

Extra Credit: Students are highly encouraged to keep up with current events about the region. Earn extra credit by writing a reaction paper about (1) an event hosted at UHM on Southeast Asia (film screening, panel discussion, etc) (2) three current event newspaper articles/stories. (3) podcasts or videoblogs about Southeast Asia from think tanks such as East-West Center or Pacific Forum CSIS. Papers should be 400 to 500 words long, including a very short summary, an analysis of the arguments, and conclude with three questions. You may submit up to two reaction papers.
Grading:
Assignments: 30%
Research Paper: 30%
Midterm Exam: 15%
Final Exam: 15%
Attendance, participation: 10%

Course Policies
Attendance: Class attendance is mandatory. Three unexcused absences will cause one full letter grade reduction.

Deadlines: Assignments submitted late will be docked one full letter grade every 24 hours past deadline.

Grading Scale: The scale is as follows:

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Academic Integrity: Plagiarism is unacceptable. Please refer to the UHM website on academic dishonesty and related issues. All such matters will be referred to the department chair.
http://www.catalog.hawaii.edu/about-uh/campus-policies1.htm

Disability Issues: Please see me and refer to the UH Kokua Program on issues related to disability. I am more than happy to make accommodations on all aspects of the course on a case-by-case basis.
http://www.hawaii.edu/kokua/
Helpful Resources
(I encourage your to keep up on the current affairs in the region. There is a great deal of information available on the Internet.)

Regional Newspapers:
The Straits Times (Singapore daily) www.straitstimes.asia1.com.sg
The Jakarta Post (Indonesia daily) www.thejakartapost.com
The Bangkok Post (Thailand daily) www.bangkokpost.com
The Nation (Thailand daily) www.nationmultimedia.com
Philippine Daily Inquirer (Philippines Daily) www.inq7.net
The Philippine Star (Philippines Daily) www.philstar.com
Irrawaddy (Burma & Southeast Asia) http://www.irrawaddy.org/
The Myanmar Times (Myanmar Weekly) http://mmtimes.com/
SaigonBao.com (Collection of Vietnamese media) http://www.saigonbao.com/

Additional Websites:
ASEAN http://www.asean.org/
Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies http://www.apcss.org/
Asian Studies WWW virtual library (ANU) coombs.anu.edu.au/WWWVL-AsianStudies.html
AsiaSource (The Asia Society) www.asiasource.org
Center for Southeast Asian Studies (UHM) http://www.cseashawaii.com/wordpress/
Democratic Voice of Burma http://www.dvb.no/
East-West Center http://www.eastwestcenter.org/
Inside Indonesia (quarterly) www.insideindonesia.org
International Crisis Group www.crisisweb.org
Pacific Forum CSIS http://cis.org/program/pacific-forum-csis
SEAsia on-line news services www.niu.edu/acad/cseas/seanews.html
Thai Development Research Institute www.tdri.or.th
The Brookings Institution http://www.brookings.edu/
Course Schedule and Readings

Section 1: Regional Background

January 9 | Introduction: What’s in a name?
(Optional Reading)
  • Owen | Changing Names, pp. xvii-xxii
  • SarDesai | Ch. 1: The Land and Its People, pp. 3-7

January 16 | The People and Their Politics
  • Owen | Ch. 2: Inner Life and Identity, pp 35-51
  • Owen | Ch. 3: The Struggle for Political Authority, pp 52-70

Section 2: Colonialism

January 23 | Colonialism, but not in Thailand?
  • Owen | Ch. 4: Dynasties and Colonies, Boundaries and Frontiers, pp. 75-82
  • Owen | Ch. 14: Consolidation of Colonial Power and Centralization of State Authority, pp. 201-221
  • Owen | Ch. 16: Perceptions of Race, Gender, and Class in the Colonial Era, pp. 243-251
  • Owen | Chapter 6: Siam: From Ayutthaya to Bangkok, pp 93-105

  • Owen | Ch. 5: Myanmar Becomes British Burma, pp. 83-92
  • Owen | Ch. 7: Vietnam, 1700-1885, pp. 106-116
  • Owen | Ch 9: Realignments: The Making of the Netherlands East Indies, 1750-1914, pp. 123-136
  • Owen | Ch. 11: The Spanish Philippines, pp. 147-157
**Please see instructor about research topic

Section 3: Independence/Nationalism

February 6 | Changing Tides
  • Owen | Ch. 17: Channels of Change, pp. 252-267
  • Owen | Ch. 18: Depression and War, pp. 268-279
  • Owen | Ch. 24: Siam Becomes Thailand, 1910-1973, pp. 350-359
**DUE: Brief paper proposal

February 13 | Making of a Nation: The Philippines, Indonesia, Burma, Vietnam
  • Owen | Ch. 19: The Philippines, 1896-1972, pp. 283-295
  • Owen | Ch. 20: Becoming Indonesia, 1900-1959, pp. 296-311
  • Owen | Ch. 22: British Burma and Beyond, pp. 322-334
  • Owen | Ch. 23: Vietnam, 1885-1975, pp. 335-349
February 20 | Midterm Exam

Section 4: Authoritarianism/Democracy

February 27 | Where does power lie?
- Mutiah Alagappa, “The Bases of Legitimacy” in Muthiah Alagappa (ed), Political Legitimacy in Southeast Asia (Stanford 1995)

March 6 | Wobbly Democracies: Indonesia and Thailand
- Owen | Ch. 31: Indonesia: The First Fifty Years, pp. 431-447
- Owen | Ch. 32: The Kingdom of Thailand, pp. 448-454

March 13 | Civil Society: Possible in an Authoritarian Regime?
- Owen | Ch. 34: Vietnam after 1975: From Collectivism to Market Leninism, pp. 468-480
- Russell Hiang-Khng Heng, “Civil Society Effectiveness and the Vietnamese State – Despite or Because of the Lack of Autonomy,” in Lee Hock Guan, Civil Society in Southeast Asia

March 20 | People Power
- Owen | Ch. 33: The Philippines since 1972, pp. 455-467

**DUE: Research paper draft

March 27 | SPRING BREAK

April 3 | A Democracy Movement
- Owen | Ch. 37: Burma becomes Myanmar, pp. 497-506
- SarDesai | Ch. 20: Myanmar: Toward Integration and Democracy

April 10 | Writing Workshop/Peer Review
Section 5: The Southeast Asian Worldview

April 17 | The ASEAN Way & Asian Values
- Donald Weatherbee, *International Relations in Southeast Asia*:
  - Ch. 4: ASEAN and Regionalism in Southeast Asia
  - Ch. 5: Conflict and Conflict Resolution in Southeast Asia

April 24 | Southeast Asia-US relations
- Guest Speakers: Panel Discussion

May 1 | Transnational Threats in Southeast Asia
- SarDesai | Ch. 27: Tsunami, Cyclone, and Terrorism in Southeast Asia

May 6-10 | Final Exams