GVPT 409W: Southeast Asia in Contemporary Global Politics
Spring 2019
TuTh 3:30-4:45 TYD 2110
Syllabus v.1.0

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Office Hours: M 11:00-12:00; Th 2:00-3:00 and by appointment

Course Objectives:
Southeast Asia is one of the most politically diverse regions of the world. Comprising eleven countries, the region includes imperfect but established democracies (such as the Philippines); transitioning, and sometimes politically volatile, states (Cambodia and Thailand); two of the world’s five remaining communist regimes (Laos and Vietnam); and even a sovereign sultanate (Brunei). Furthermore, it includes states with majority populations across three major religious cultures – Islam, Buddhism, and Christianity – and the largest Muslim state in the world (Indonesia). While the region is unique for its social and political diversity, its states nonetheless face challenges that are common in other parts of the world including economic globalization; the threat of global terrorism; and external pressure to improve the standards of human rights, the environment and democracy. Given this dynamic political context, this course is designed to give students a greater understanding of the problems and prospects of the region, as well as the ability to assess its efforts to adapt to the changing regional and international environment.

The course will begin with a brief historical overview of the region, including the legacies of colonization and the Cold War period. This overview will be followed by a study of the dominant political systems within each state in order to introduce students to the political diversity within the region. Once this foundation has been established the course will focus on the region in international context. Here we will explore the region’s major political, economic and security issues, as well as the relevance and role of ASEAN. Particular attention will be paid to the competition for influence in the region; China is increasingly present as an economic and military power, and the Trump Administration appears to be putting competition with China at the forefront of its Asia strategy. This marks a distinct turn away from the Obama administration’s “rebalance” toward Asia and may make it more difficult for countries in the region to navigate these relations. In addition to traditional security threats, we will spend ample time exploring the non-traditional security threats that plague the region, including drug trafficking, human trafficking, and environmental insecurity.

This course is an upper-level seminar. No previous knowledge of the region is required, but students should be familiar with the key concepts and approaches to the study of international relations. Students are expected to come to class having completed the readings and prepared to discuss them in
class. I will lecture on background material and guide the discussion as needed, but the success of the course rests on the preparation and active engagement of every student.

**Learning Objectives:**
At the end of this course, each student should:

1) Be able to identify different regime types in the region;
2) Understand how colonialism and the Cold War have shaped these states’ political trajectories;
3) Recognize Southeast Asia’s relevance to contemporary transnational economic and security interests, including terrorism, geopolitical competition between China and the United States, and economic globalization;
4) Be familiar with the regional dynamics and foreign relations of the Southeast Asian nations, including the role of ASEAN; and
5) Be able to assess the future prospects for regional cooperation.

**Course Readings:**
- You are encouraged to read a major daily newspaper that includes coverage of Southeast Asia. Staying informed on world news will help you apply the course material to current events. Suggested sites include:
  - Asia Society: [http://asiasociety.org/policy](http://asiasociety.org/policy)
  - Asia Times Online: [http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia.html)

**Course Requirements:**
1. Map Quiz: 5%
2. Country Spotlight Presentation: 5%
3. Reading Responses (Four): 10% each – You may submit up to five, and I will drop the lowest score.
4. Research Paper: 35%
   - Approved research question and annotated bibliography (5%)
   - Outline (5%)
   - Peer Reviews (10%)
   - Final paper (15%)
5. Attendance and Participation: 15%
Map Quiz: A map quiz will be held in Week 5 of the course. Students will be expected to correctly label countries, capitals, and major bodies of water on a blank political map of the region. A sample map and study guide will be provided.

Country Spotlight Presentation: Starting in the third week of the course, we will “visit” the 11 countries within Southeast Asia. A team of 2-3 students will prepare a 20-25 minute PowerPoint presentation that will familiarize the class with the country’s regime type, economy, security concerns, foreign policy, and relevant historical background. These presentations should emphasize contemporary issues and events in order to help students gain a deeper understanding of the country’s challenges and priorities.

Reading Responses: Discussion questions will be provided in advance for course days in which a discussion of reading material is scheduled. These days are marked by an asterisk on the syllabus. You are required to complete 4 written responses to these discussion questions over the duration of the course. You may submit up to 5 responses, in which case I will drop your lowest grade. These responses must be submitted online *before* the class in which the readings are discussed or in hard copy at the beginning of class, as they are meant to assist you in preparing for class discussions. These are not meant to be lengthy (1-2 pages single spaced) and no outside research is expected, but they should reflect an understanding of the key points in each of the assigned readings. You are required to submit one reading response before Spring break. (If you do not do this, a zero will be recorded for this assignment and cannot be dropped.) Under no circumstances, including absences and technical difficulties, will responses be accepted after the class discussion begins.

Research Paper: Each student will write a research paper on a topic of his or her choosing, in consultation with the instructor. Students will be required to submit a research proposal including their research question and annotated bibliography in March. A draft outline will be required later in the course to ensure that each student is progressing satisfactorily, and will be shared with other students for peer review. More details will be provided in a separate handout, and significant class time will be spent in Week 5 on choosing an appropriate topic. This approach is used to demonstrate the process of writing a strong research paper, rather than simply focusing on the outcome. Take advantage of this opportunity to create a strong product that you can use to demonstrate your research and writing skills!

Attendance and Participation: Your participation will be measured by your attendance AND your involvement in classroom discussions. You must come to class prepared to discuss the material. The breakdown of the 15 points will be 10 points for attendance and 5 points for participation. If students have questions about their performance, it is their responsibility to proactively communicate with me for feedback. For students who find class participation challenging, please reach out early in the course to talk about your concerns so that I can work with you on developing strategies to overcome this.

Participation grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

5 = highly effective participant; insightful questions/comments; obviously prepared for class each day.
4-3 = consistent participant; thoughtful questions/comments; normally prepared for class.
3-2 = occasional participant; regularly attends class, sporadic involvement in discussions, often based more on personal opinion than careful reading and analysis of the material.
2-1 = observer; regularly attends class but usually does not get involved in class discussions.

1-0 = occasional visitor to the class; sporadic attendance, no participation.

**Grading Scale**

A = 93-100
A- = 90-92
B+ = 87-89
B = 83-86
B- = 80-82
C+ = 77-79
C = 73-76
C- = 70-72
D+ = 67-69
D = 63-66
D- = 60-62
F = < 60

**Course Policies and Expectations**

1. Use of laptops is permitted, but only for the purpose of notetaking and referencing assigned readings. Inappropriate or unauthorized use as observed by the professor or teaching assistants will count against your participation grade for the course.

2. Assignments that are turned in past the due date will be penalized one letter grade per day for each day or a fraction thereof that the assignment is late. Late reading response assignments are not accepted for credit at all, under any circumstances.

3. It is our shared responsibility to know and abide by the University of Maryland’s policies that relate to all courses, which include topics like:
   - Academic integrity
   - Student and instructor conduct
   - Accessibility and accommodations
   - Attendance and excused absences
   - Grades and appeals
   - Copyright and intellectual property

Please visit http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html for the Office of Undergraduate Studies’ full list of campus-wide policies and follow up with me if you have questions.

4. While I am happy to answer brief questions by email, meeting during office hours is the preferred form of communication and should be used if you have a substantive question about the course material. It also helps us get to know each other, which can be a good investment of your time if you need recommendation letters or career advice down the line. Take advantage of the opportunity!
Course Structure:
(Reading selections may be changed throughout the course. Please check ELMS for updates.)

Week 1
Course Introduction
Jan 29
**Snow Day!**

Jan 31
What is Southeast Asia?
- Weatherbee, Chapter 1.

Week 2
Historical Legacies: Colonialism, the Cold War, and their Aftermath
Feb 5
The Lasting Impact of Colonialism

Feb 7
The Cold War and 20th Century Foreign Influence
- Weatherbee, Chapter 3.
- Lam Peng Er “Japan and China in Post-Cold War Southeast Asia,” in Lam Peng Er and Victor Teo (eds.) Southeast Asia Between China and Japan. (Newcastle: Cambridge, 2012). pp. 48-53 only

Week 3
Looking Inward: Culture and Politics in the Region
Feb 12
In-Class Debate: “Asian Values” and Political Culture in SE Asia
- Also, please review the concepts, methods and trends in the Economist Intelligence Unit’s “Democracy Index 2016.” You do not need to read the whole report, but should pay attention to the trends and rankings relevant to Southeast Asia. The report can be downloaded for free here: https://www.eiu.com/topic/democracy-index

Feb 14
Political Regimes 1: Prosperity and (Non-)Democracy
Country Spotlight Presentations: Singapore and Malaysia
- **Dayley, Chapters 10 and 11**

**Optional:**

**Week 4**

**Political Regimes 2: Typologies of Authoritarianism**

**Feb 19**

Country Spotlight Presentations: Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam

- **Dayley, Chapters 4, 5 and 6.**

**Optional:**

**Feb 21**

Country Spotlight Presentations: East Timor, Brunei and Myanmar

- **Dayley, Chapters 3, 9 and 12**

**Optional:**

**Week 5**

**Political Regimes 3: Democratic Backsliders?**
Feb 26

Country Spotlight Presentations: Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia
- Dayley, Chapters 2, 7 and 8

Optional:

Feb 28

****MAP QUIZ****
Lecture on Choosing a Research Question
- No reading assigned

Week 6

Regional Integration and Disintegration: ASEAN and Regional Security

*March 5

ASEAN: Its Evolution and Structure
- Weatherbee, Chapter 4 (all) and Chapter 5 to page 147.

Optional:
- Dayley, Chapter 13

*March 7

ASEAN in Critical Perspective: How Cooperative is Regional Cooperation?

Optional:

Week 7

Southeast Asia in Foreign Policy: The View from the Great Powers

*March 12

Great Power Influence Since the End of the Cold War

Optional:

****RESEARCH QUESTION AND ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE****

*March 14
Competing for Regional Influence: China, the US .... And Japan
- Lam Peng Er “Japan and China in Post-Cold War Southeast Asia,” in Lam Peng Er and Victor Teo (eds.) Southeast Asia Between China and Japan. (Newcastle: Cambridge, 2012). pp. 53-63 (finish chapter started in Week 2)

**Enjoy Your Spring Break!!**

Week 8

Week 9

“Traditional” Interstate Conflict: Land Disputes and Ethnic Conflict
*March 26
Simmering Land Disputes: The Spratlys, Paracels, and South China Sea
- Weatherbee, Chapter 6.

Optional:

*March 28
Ethnic Conflicts and their International Effects
- Finish Weatherbee Chapter 5, p. 147-158.


Optional:

Week 10

Transnational Security Threats

*April 2

Transnational Terrorism: Southeast Asia as the “Second Front”

- Weatherbee, Chapter 6 pages 193-200 only

Optional:

*April 4

Troubled Waters? Piracy

- Weatherbee, Chapter 6 pages 200-206 only

Week 11

Southeast Asia in the Global Economy

*April 9

From Miracle to Crisis to Recovery to .... ?

- Weatherbee, Chapter 8.
- Paul Krugman. “The Myth of Asia’s Miracle,” Foreign Affairs, Nov/Dec 1994, pp. 62-78 (Note that this piece was written before the 1997 crisis ...)

*April 11

Globalization and Economic Integration

Optional:

Week 12

Development Challenges
*April 16

Foreign Aid: Why Hasn’t it Helped?

Optional:

*April 18

Patronage, Corruption and Illicit Economies
- Weatherbee, Chapter 6 pages 206-222 only
- Brigbauer, Peter (2013). “Myanmar: Bust to Boom or Bust to Bust?” The Diplomat.
**Week 13**

**The Cambodian Genocide**

April 23

****PAPER OUTLINE DUE****
- No reading assigned

April 25
Finish Movie and Discussion
- No reading assigned

**Week 14**

**Human Rights and Human Security**

*April 30

Human Security in Theory and Practice
- Weatherbee, Chapter 9.

May 2

Human Rights Abuses, Continued

****PEER REVIEWS DUE****

**Week 15**

**Finish Human Rights / Begin Environmental Politics**

*May 7

Regional Responses, Political Cover and “Non-Traditional Security”

*May 9

Whose Rights, Whose Resources? Water Rights and Land Tenure
- Weatherbee, Chapter 10.

**Week 16**  
**Environmental Politics and Course Wrap-Up**  
*May 14*  
Competing Perspectives in Environmental Governance

