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 it remains to be seen how the Trump administration will respond to the human rights and security challenges in the region. Will the United States return to the “benign neglect” that characterized relations after the Vietnam War, or pursue some aspects of the Obama administration’s “rebalance” toward Asia? 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 (Five): 10% each – You may submit up to six, and I will drop the lowest score.
4. Research Paper: 30%
   - Approved research question and annotated bibliography (5%)
   - Outline (5%)
   - Peer Reviews (5%)
   - Final paper (15%)
5. Attendance and Participation: 10%
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 5 written responses to these discussion questions over the duration of the course. You may submit up to 6 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 or detailed, but should show and understanding of the key points in each of the assigned readings. 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 October, with questions finalized by the end of the month. 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!

Participation: Your participation will be measured by your attendance AND your involvement in classroom discussions.

Grading Scale

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Course Policies and Expectations

1. 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.

2. With respect to quizzes and exams, there will be no make-up unless: 1) there is an official excuse for having missed an exam (proper documentation is required); or 2) prior arrangement is made. Medical excuses will only be accepted with a doctor’s note on official letterhead with a contact phone number.

3. Attendance is required. The professor reserves the right to give unannounced quizzes if attendance or preparation is unsatisfactory.

4. Neither cheating nor plagiarism in any form will be tolerated. Infractions will be penalized in accordance with university policy, and may result in a failing grade for the course. Should you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please do not hesitate to contact me via email or during office hours.

5. Cell phones and other such disrupting devices must be turned off before you enter the classroom. Laptops may be used to access course material as needed, but must be put away during classroom discussions. If you are checking your email or social media, you are not giving this course your full attention. If I see it, you will be considered “absent.”

6. Any student with disabilities/special needs or who will miss class due to a religious observance should contact me during the first week of classes so that the proper arrangements can be made.

7. I know that some students find class participation challenging. If you have particular concerns or anxieties about participating in class discussion, please talk to us about it early in the semester. I will gladly work with you over the course of the semester to make your participation less stressful and more effective. But I can only work with you to make that happen if we talk about your concerns and develop a strategy to respond to them.

8. 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!

9. For additional information on university-wide policies, including on topics of academic integrity, student conduct, sexual misconduct, discrimination, accessibility, attendance, absences, missed assignments, student rights regarding undergraduate courses, official UMD communications, midterm grades, complaints about final exams, copyright and intellectual property, final exams, course evaluations, and campus resources for students, please see the following link: http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html

Note: The reasons for setting the above, seemingly strict, ground rules are to provide everyone with a fair and honest environment for academic pursuits.

Course Structure:
(Reading selections may be changed throughout the course. Please check ELMS for updates.)
**Week 1**  
Course Introduction  
Aug 29  
Syllabus Review  

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

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

Sept 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  
Sept 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

Sept 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
Sept 19
Country Spotlight Presentations: Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam
- Dayley, Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

Optional:

Sept 21
Country Spotlight Presentations: East Timor, Brunei and Myanmar
- Dayley, Chapters 3, 9 and 12

Optional:

Week 5
Political Regimes 3: Democratic Backsliders?
Sept 26
Country Spotlight Presentations: Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia
- Dayley, Chapters 2, 7 and 8

Optional:

Sept 28

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

Week 6

**Regional Integration and Disintegration: ASEAN and Regional Security**

*Oct 3*

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

Optional:
- Dayley, Chapter 13

*Oct 5*

ASEAN in Critical Perspective: How Cooperative is Regional Cooperation?

Week 7

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

*Oct 10*

Great Power Influence Since the End of the Cold War

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

*Oct 12*

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)

**Week 8**

**“Traditional” Interstate Conflict: Land Disputes and Ethnic Conflict**

*Oct 17*

Simmering Land Disputes: The Spratlys, Paracels, and South China Sea
- Weatherbee, Chapter 6.

*Oct 19*

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

**Week 9**

**Transnational Security Threats**

*Oct 24*

Transnational Terrorism: Southeast Asia as the “Second Front”
- Weatherbee, Chapter 6 pages 193-200 only

*Oct 26*

Troubled Waters? Piracy
- Weatherbee, Chapter 6 pages 200-206 only

**Week 10**

**Southeast Asia in the Global Economy**

*Oct 31*

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 ... )

*Nov 2*  

Globalization and Economic Integration


**Week 11**

**Development Challenges**

*Nov 7*

Foreign Aid: Why Hasn’t it Helped?


*Nov 9*

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 12**

**The Cambodian Genocide**

Nov 14

****PAPER OUTLINE DUE****

- No reading assigned

Nov 16
Finish Movie and Discussion

- No reading assigned

**Week 13**

**Individual Research and Peer Review**

Nov 21

****PEER REVIEW****

Class does not meet; feedback submitted electronically

Nov 23

NO CLASS – Happy Thanksgiving! 😊

**Week 14**

**Human Rights and Human Security**

*Nov 28
Human Security in Theory and Practice

- Weatherbee, Chapter 9.

*Nov 30
Regional Responses, Political Cover and “Non-Traditional Security”


**Week 15**

**Environmental Politics**

*Dec 5*

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

*Dec 7*

Climate Change, Pollution and Regional Cooperation