

Department of Political Science
Rockefeller College
University at Albany, SUNY

RPOS 377

POLITICS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA

Fall 2011

Professor Meredith Weiss

Class: TTh 11:45-1:05, BA 130

Office hours: TTh 10:30-11:30, Uptown Campus, HU 016
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Course Description

Southeast Asia—the swath of land and water bounded loosely by China, India, and Australia—includes Brunei, Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam. These nations share important historical, cultural, economic, political, and social ties, and all but Timor-Leste are members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Nonetheless, the region is far from homogenous, encompassing a vast array of ethnic and linguistic groups, most major and many “minor” religions, various sociopolitical and economic institutions and ideologies, and a range of landscapes and climates. Its strategic location put Southeast Asia at the crux of Cold War power struggles; more recently, the Asian economic “miracle” and its dramatic collapse in 1997-98, continuing struggles for regime change and consolidation, and resurgent radicalisms in several states have kept the region in the limelight.

This class will introduce you to the politics of Southeast Asia. No prior knowledge of the region is expected, however welcomed—although all students should have taken at least one class in comparative or international politics. (If you have not done so, please come see me in the first week of class.) The course begins with an overview of the region, including a brief sketch of its geography, culture, and history. We then learn about each country’s sociopolitical order. Building on that foundation, we will explore three key themes in comparative politics with especial relevance to Southeast Asia: regionalism, economic development, and human rights, including issues of ethnoreligious pluralism.

An optional three-week study abroad class will follow this course (during the 2011/12 wintersession) in Singapore and Malaysia (contingent on sufficient student interest). Details will be provided in class.

Objectives

The goals of this course relate both to the specific content presented and to critical thinking and communication. By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Summarize and compare the key sociopolitical attributes and dynamics of the eleven states of Southeast Asia.
- Evaluate several key issues in comparative politics in the context of Southeast Asia, appraising also how these might be understood differently by Southeast Asians.
- Distinguish the particular perspective and goals of one Southeast Asian state in its regional context.
- Demonstrate ability to think critically and to analyze and contextualize historical and political-cultural materials and concepts relevant to Southeast Asia.

These goals align with those of the General Education category, Regions Beyond Europe, for which this course offers credit.

Evaluation Criteria

This course utilizes Team-Based Learning. On the first day of the semester, you will be assigned to a team that will work together for the duration of the course. Your final grade will be influenced by team performance and team-based assignments. While in many courses, group work is structured in such a way that some students end up doing all the work while everyone shares the credit, two factors will prevent that from happening in this class. First, most graded team work will be preceded by one or more preparatory tasks for which each individual will be accountable, thus ensuring that individual team members are each prepared to contribute to the team effort. Second, each individual's contribution to team work will be assessed by his or her teammates at the midterm point and again at the end of the semester. Those assessments will tally for a Peer Assessment Score (PAS): a factor by which your team's overall score for that half of the course is multiplied, giving you your own team work grade. A sample peer assessment form is available on Blackboard.

Individual work (65% of total grade)

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| • iRATs* (drop 1) | 10% |
| • Quizzes | 10% |
| • Midterm exam | 15% |
| • Cumulative final exam | 25% |
| • Written/in-class assignments | 5% |

Team work (35% of total grade; your team grade will be multiplied by your PAS as described above)

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| • tRATs (drop 1)* | 10% |
| • Leading class discussion | 5% [@] |
| • Simulation | 5% |
| • In-class assignments | 15% |

* iRATs and tRATs are individual and team Readiness Assessment Tests. We will do a sample RAT sequence in the first class session.

[@] Each team will be assigned a Southeast Asian country for the duration of the course. In the first half of the semester, each team will kick off the class discussion on its assigned country. Be creative! You may focus on the discussion questions in the syllabus, circulate additional

questions of your own, design a team exercise, etc. Plan for around 15 minutes. If you need more time (or if you would like to include a graded component), you **MUST** clear your plans with me first—and all teams are strongly advised to consult with me before their presentation, regardless.

My expectations

I expect you to complete *all* readings, attend class regularly, and participate meaningfully in class discussions and activities. In turn, I promise you will learn *a lot*, as painlessly as possible.

- **You WILL FAIL the course if you do not do the reading**—this is NOT the sort of course in which you can skip or skim the reading and just wait for me to lecture on it! I expect you to come to class prepared; we will then focus our limited class time on your questions and on deepening and applying your new knowledge.
- Each team will sit together in class and will have a team folder. One member of each team should pick up the folder at the start of each class and note any absences. Any handouts and/or returned work will be in the folder.
- Absences will only be “excused” for religious observance (and then only if cleared with me at the start of the semester) or documented medical or family emergency (i.e., with a note from a doctor or dean).
- There is no separate score or penalty for attendance or participation. However, **being absent or inactive will count against you**, in two ways. First, if you do not come to class and/or do not participate actively in tRATs and team assignments, you can expect a lower peer assessment score. Second, we will have frequent quizzes and in-class activities. I will drop your lowest score in each of these categories (see above)—but after one unexcused absence, you will accumulate zeros. You will *not* receive credit for tRATs or team assignments for which you are not present.
- I will *only* accept late assignments in the case of an excused absence (see above).
- This class uses Blackboard (BLS). This syllabus, all assigned non-textbook readings, and any other materials will be hosted there. You are encouraged to use BLS, too, for online conversations with your classmates.
 - Make sure that your email address on Blackboard is correct. If you are not in the habit of logging on regularly, change your settings to have Blackboard forward your emails to a regular email account.
- *Keep up with news on Southeast Asia*—and hopefully not just for the duration of the course! Coverage in US media is spotty; try Asia Times Online (www.atimes.com), Channel News Asia (www.channelnewsasia.com), or Asia Sentinel (www.asiasentinel.com). The *Wall Street Journal* and *Time* both publish separate Asian editions, so tend to have good coverage (especially online), as does the *Economist*. Many English-language newspapers from the region are also available online, for instance Singapore’s *Straits Times*, Malaysia’s web-based *Malaysiakini*, Thailand’s *The Nation*, or Indonesia’s *Jakarta Post*.

Class etiquette

- Be aware that not everyone in the class shares the same political or other views—and that these views do tend to emerge in Political Science classes. Please be respectful of your classmates and professor. All perspectives are welcomed in this class.
- Cellphone use during class is disrespectful, and thus prohibited (voice or text).

- You may use a laptop in class, but *only* for valid class-related reasons.

Special needs

Students with special needs due to physical, learning, or other disabilities will be accommodated. To request such accommodation, first register with the Disability Resource Center (Campus Center 137, <http://www.albany.edu/disability/DRC/>); they will provide you with a letter to me, detailing the provisions requested. To ensure equitable treatment of all students, please submit these letters within the first two weeks of the semester (in person, so we can discuss appropriate arrangements), then also *remind me* before each relevant event (exam, etc.).

Academic honesty

I expect all students to be ethical and honest in completing all work for this class. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with the university's guidelines on academic integrity (http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html); ignorance is NOT an excuse. Violations of this code, such as plagiarism, cheating, copying, or misrepresentation of work as your own, will meet with appropriate penalties and discipline as outlined in UAlbany's regulations, up to and including loss of course credit, suspension, or expulsion from the university. It is the responsibility of every student also to report any observed violations. If you have any question as to the limits of acceptable team collaboration, please ask me.

Course readings

Two required texts are available for purchase from either the UAlbany bookstore or Mary Jane Books. *Do not purchase earlier editions!*

- Robert Dayley and Clark D. Neher, *Southeast Asia in the New International Era*, 5th edition, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2010.
- Mark Beeson (ed.), *Contemporary Southeast Asia: Regional Dynamics, National Differences*, 2nd edition, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Unless otherwise noted, all other readings are available electronically on Blackboard.

Expect to read around 80-100 pages per week. *Read carefully and critically*: ask yourself as you read what the main ideas of the reading are, what questions you have for us to discuss in class, and how that day's reading relates to what has come before.

Assignments may change over the course of the semester from what is listed below. You are responsible for knowing what is assigned and for completing the reading.

SCHEDULE

Readings are due on the date under which they are listed.

Possible discussion questions (to help you focus your reading) are listed with a ❖.

In-class assignments, activities, and deadlines are listed with a ➤.

30 Aug: Introduction

- Team creation and country assignments
- *RAT sequence #1* (knowledge assessment—ungraded)
- Overview of course structure and content

1 Sept: No class

- Begin the reading due Tuesday!

6 Sept: Overview of the region and its cultures

- ❖ How coherent is Southeast Asia as a region?
- ❖ What key cultural, political, economic, or geostrategic patterns and variations can we identify across the region?
- **Map quiz** (11 countries and capitals)
- Clark Neher, *Southeast Asia: Crossroads of the World* (DeKalb, IL: SEAP-NIU, 2000), chap. 2
- Mary Somers Heidhues, *Southeast Asia: A Concise History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000), pp. 65-86.
- Donald Emmerson, “Southeast Asia”: What's in a name?” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 14:1 (1984), 1–21.
 - Don't get lost in the details of this piece; focus on the main idea: how “Southeast Asia” came to be understood, and Southeast Asians to understand themselves, as a region.

8 Sept: Colonialism

- ❖ Which colonial powers controlled which parts of SE Asia, and how did their policies or approaches (e.g., direct vs. indirect rule, etc.) differ?
- ❖ What key legacies (positive or negative) has the colonial era left in SE Asia?
- D. R. SarDesai. *Southeast Asia: Past and Present* (Boulder: Westview, 1997), pp. 82-4, 140-1
- Milton Osborne, *Southeast Asia: An Introductory History*, 10th ed. (Crow's Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2010), chap. 5-6

13 Sept: The Philippines

- ❖ In what ways does the Philippines differ from other states in the region?

❖ What are the primary obstacles to deeper democratization in the Philippines?

- Dayley & Neher, chap. 3
- Patricio Abinales, "The Philippines in 2010," *Asian Survey* 51:1 (2011), 163-72

15 Sept: Indonesia & Timor-Leste/East Timor

❖ How has Indonesia changed since the late 1990s?

❖ Can Timor-Leste survive as an independent state?

- Dayley & Neher, chap. 4 and 12
- Ehito Kimura, "Indonesia in 2010," *Asian Survey* 51:1 (2011), 186-95
- Matthew Arnold, "Timor-Leste in 2010," *Asian Survey* 51:1 (2011), 215-20

20 Sept: Malaysia

❖ Why has ethnoreligious pluralism been so fraught a political issue in Malaysia?

❖ Is Malaysia a democracy?

- Dayley & Neher, chap. 5
- Michael O'Shannasy, "Malaysia in 2010," *Asian Survey* 51:1 (2011), 173-85

22 Sept: Singapore & Brunei

❖ What accounts for Singapore's extraordinary economic success?

❖ Is Singapore a democracy?

❖ Can absolute monarchy survive in Brunei once oil supplies dwindle?

➤ *RAT sequence #2* (on insular SE Asia)

- Dayley & Neher, chap. 6 and 7
- Cherian George, *Singapore: The Air-conditioned Nation* (Singapore: Landmark, 2000), introduction.

27 Sept: In-class activity

29 Sept: No class (Rosh Hashanah)

4 Oct: Thailand

❖ Why has Thailand experienced so many changes of regime?

- Dayley & Neher, chap. 5
- Catharin Dalpino, "Thailand in 2010," *Asian Survey* 51:1 (2011), 155-62
- Pavin Chachavalpongpun, "A Balancing Act in Bangkok," *Wall Street Journal*, 8 Aug. 2011

6 Oct: Myanmar/Burma

- ❖ Why and how has the Burmese regime so successfully resisted democratization?
- ❖ Why were the recent elections so controversial?
- Dayley & Neher, chap. 8
- Sean Turnell, “Myanmar in 2010: ” *Asian Survey* 51:1 (2011), 148-54
- Michael Martin, “Burma’s 2010 Elections: Implications of the New Constitution and Election Laws,” Congressional Research Service report, 29 April 2010

11 Oct: Vietnam

- ❖ How “communist” is Vietnam?
- Dayley & Neher, chap. 9
- Andrew Pierre, “Vietnam’s Contradictions,” *Foreign Affairs*, 79:6 (2000), 69-86
- Ramses Amer, “Vietnam in 2010: ” *Asian Survey* 50:1 (2011), 196-201

13 Oct: Cambodia

- ❖ Has democratization succeeded in Cambodia?
- ❖ What are the main legacies of the Khmer Rouge era in Cambodia?
- Dayley & Neher, chap. 10
- Steve Heder, “Cambodia in 2010: ” *Asian Survey* 51:1 (2011), 208-14
- Ben Kiernan, “Recovering History and Justice in Cambodia,” *Comparativ*, 14:5/6 (2004), 76-85
- Browse <http://www.krtrial.info/> and <http://www.yale.edu/cgp/>

18 Oct: Laos

- ❖ What accounts for Laos’s low level of economic development?
 - *RAT sequence #3* (on mainland SE Asia)
 - *Midterm review*
- Dayley & Neher, chap. 11
- William Case, “Laos in 2010: ” *Asian Survey* 51:1 (2011), 202-7

20 Oct: Midterm exam (in class)

25 Oct: ASEAN: The process & progress of regionalization

- ❖ How does ASEAN compare with earlier efforts at regionalization?
- ❖ How sturdy are supranational norms and institutions in SE Asia?
 - *Midterm Peer Assessment*

- ASEAN simulation (guidelines to be distributed in class)
- Nicholas Tarling, “Regionalism and Nationalism,” *Cambridge History of Southeast Asia* (II:2), pp. 257-86
- Beeson, chap. 11 and 15 (Bellamy and Stubbs)
- Browse <http://www.aseansec.org/>

27 Oct: ASEAN

- ASEAN simulation
- No reading

1 Nov: ASEAN

- ASEAN simulation
- No reading

3 Nov: Political change: Liberalization and Democratization

- ❖ Are SE Asian democracies doomed to remain “low-quality” at best?
- ❖ What role can and do the middle classes play in political change in SE Asia?
- ❖ How has ASEAN’s role in shaping the domestic politics of SE Asian states evolved?
- Beeson, chap. 6 (Case)
- Martin Gainsborough, “Political Change in Vietnam: In Search of the Middle Class Challenge to the State,” *Asian Survey* 42:5 (Oct. 2002), 694-707.
- Amitav Acharya, “Democratisation and the Prospects for Participatory Regionalism in Southeast Asia,” *Third World Quarterly* 24:2 (2003), 375-90.

8 Nov: Political Change: Civil Society

- ❖ How can we compare the development and political impacts of civil society across the region?
- *RAT sequence #4* (on political change)
- Beeson, chap. 8 (Hughes)
- Eva-Lotta Hedman, “Contesting State and Civil Society: Southeast Asian Trajectories,” *Modern Asian Studies* 35:4 (2001), 921-51

10 Nov: Economics: Development challenges

- ❖ What patterns and trends can we find in SE Asian development trajectories?
- ❖ What is the role of the state in economic development in the region?
- ❖ What steps are states in the region taking to address environmental externalities and make development more sustainable?
- Beeson, chap. 4 and 16 (Felker and Elliott)

- ASEAN Secretariat, Yangon Resolution on Sustainable Development, <http://www.aseansec.org/15522.htm>

15 Nov: Economics: From miracle to crisis to recovery to ???

- ❖ Which aspects of the “Washington consensus” have been especially appropriate or inappropriate for SE Asia over the past 20+ years?
- ❖ Can high growth rates be maintained in SE Asia?
- ❖ What steps have helped or could help protect SE Asia from the current global economic crisis?
 - *RAT sequence #5* (on economics)
- Paul Krugman, “The Myth of Asia’s Miracle,” *Foreign Affairs*, Nov/Dec 1994, 62-78
 - Note that this piece was written *before* the 1997 crisis ...
- Jonathan Rigg, “Of Miracles and Crises: (Re-)interpretations of growth and decline in East and Southeast Asia,” *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 43:2 (Aug. 2002), 137-56
- Joseph Stiglitz, “The Insider: What I Learned at the World Economic Crisis,” *The New Republic* 222: 16-17 (17-24 April 2000), 56-60
- Ajay Chhibber, et al., *The Global Financial Crisis and the Asia-Pacific Region* (Colombo: UNDP Regional Centre for Asia and the Pacific, Nov. 2009), pp. 1-6

17 Nov: Pluralism: Ethnic Dimensions

- ❖ What factors contribute most to the political salience of ethnicity in SE Asia?
- ❖ How have states in the region responded to ethnonationalist demands?
- Beeson, chap. 9 (Brown)
- Leo Suryadinata, “Ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia: Overseas Chinese, Chinese Overseas or Southeast Asians?,” in Leo Suryadinata (ed.), *Ethnic Chinese as Southeast Asians* (Singapore: ISEAS, 1997), chap. 1 (and commentary following)
- Jemma Purdey, “A Common Destiny,” *Inside Indonesia* 95 (Jan-Mar 2009)

22 Nov: Pluralism: Religious Dimensions

- ❖ What accounts for the different political implications of Islam in Indonesia and Malaysia?
 - *RAT sequence #6* (on pluralism)
- Beeson, chap. 10 (Fealy)
- Kikue Hamayotsu, “Islam and Nation-building in Southeast Asia: Malaysia and Indonesia in Comparative Perspective,” *Pacific Affairs* 75:3 (Fall 2002), 353-75

24 Nov: No class

29 Nov: Human rights: The “Asian values” debate

- ❖ To what extent do SE Asian societies tend toward communitarianism rather than individualism?
- ❖ How much credence should we give the notion of “Asian values”?

- Beeson, chap. 7 (Chua)
- Amartya Sen, "Human Rights and 'Asian Values,'" *The New Republic* 217:2-3 (14-21 July 1997), 33-40
- Donald K. Emmerson, "Singapore and the 'Asian Values' Debate," *Journal of Democracy* 6:4 (1995), 95-105

1 Dec: Human rights: Gender

- ❖ What accounts for the widespread, but generally short-lived, dominance of female leaders in Asian political transitions?
- ❖ What factors are most likely to lead SE Asian states to liberalize policies related to gender and sexuality?
- Mark Thompson, "Female Leadership of Democratic Transitions in Asia," *Pacific Affairs* 75:4 (Winter 2002/03), 535-5
- Meredith L. Weiss, "Who Sets Social Policy in Metropolis?: Economic Positioning and Social Reform in Singapore," *New Political Science* 27:3 (Sept. 2005), 267-89

6 Dec: Wrap-up and review

- *Final Peer Assessment*

Friday, 16 Dec, 1-3pm: Final exam (date and time set by registrar)

Southeast Asia, circa 2003:

http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/southeast_asia_pol_2003.pdf



To practice for the map quiz:

http://www.eduplace.com/ss/maps/pdf/se_asia_pac_polnl.pdf

