POSC 237-00  
Southeast Asian Politics

**Syllabus**

Monday and Wednesday: 11:10 a.m. – 12:20 p.m.  
Friday: 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Fall Term 2007: September 10 – November 14

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**Preface**

Southeast Asia is a diverse and dynamic region of the world. This course will cover key thematic issues of Southeast Asian politics, including the challenges of nationalism, state formation, regional integration, the rise of the power of non-state actors, democracy, and the struggles for citizen-sovereignty of the people. We will examine these frontier issues against the backdrop of Southeast Asia’s societal evolution through kingdoms, colonial eras, emergence of nation-states, and the influence of globalization on politics. This course emphasizes on understanding conceptual issues, empirical evidences, and theoretical puzzles that resonate in the Southeast Asian politics but are relevant to many other regions of the world. The general aim of the course is to study the current issues of Southeast Asian Politics in light of historical evolution of different and diverse societies.

This course is designed for students to: (1) gain conceptual and empirical understanding of the dynamic processes of the Southeast Asian Politics; (2) achieve contextual and theoretical understanding of emerging issues in Southeast Asian Politics; (3) locate Southeast Asian politics within the global context and to view comparatively with other regions of the world. In so doing, this course will balance the focus on both country specific politics and thematic issues relevant to regional countries.
Course Outline

Week 1: Interpretations of “Southeast Asia”
Week 2: Biogeophysical Worlds of Southeast Asia
Week 3: Colonialisms, Nationalisms, and “State” Formation
Week 4: Peasants, Borderless People, and States
Week 5: Regional Integration
Week 6: Democracy and Its Challenges
Week 7: Politics of Development
Week 8: Struggles for Livelihoods Freedom
Week 9: Social Ecological Complexities
Week 10: Final

Required Texts


Tyner, James, America’s Strategy in Southeast Asia: From the Cold War to the Terror War, Rowman & Littlefield, 2007.

Optional

Assignments, Expectations, and Grade

There are four components in course assignments. You have voted for these ones to be the course assignment. These four components will be used to evaluate your performance in this course. The percentage worth of each assignment for your final grade is in parentheses. The details of assignments are as below:

(1) **Participation (25%)**: Your participation in this class begins with reading assigned materials before the day of class for which readings are assigned. Raising questions, reflecting on lectures and your colleagues’ discussion in class are all counted as participation. This course will be conducted mostly in interactive lecture style. There will also be group-led and group-based discussion sessions. What this means is that you will have many opportunities to participate during the lecture. For group-led discussion sessions, I will assign a group of students to prepare a list of questions and ideas that are related to the readings and current Southeast Asian Politics prior to the class discussion session. This assigned group is responsible for leading discussion with puzzles and questions. For group-based discussion sessions, I will assign the problems related to the readings to each group during the class. After discussion within each group in class, groups will be responsible for reporting to the entire class and generate discussion. To be an effective participant, you will be better off paying attention to current day Southeast Asian politics and thinking about issues along with readings of this course. Needless to say, this requires you to read news in hard and soft media that cover Southeast Asian Politics. Kristin Partlo, a Reference and Instruction Librarian for Social Sciences, has created an online Research Guide for this course where you will find the url links to academic journals on Southeast Politics and to the websites of major newspapers covering Southeast Asian Politics.

(2) **A Review of an Article (20%)**: Each student will select an academic journal article from the list of articles in e-reserve for the course, and write a 2 to 3 pages review of the article. The review should identify (1) the main issue; (2) explicit or implicit research questions; (3) method of research and reasoning; (4) a critique of the article; and (5) the article’s contribution to our understanding of Southeast Asian politics. Your review should reflect on theories and empirical evidences we learn from the course readings. This exercise aims at preparing you for peer review and presentation you will be conducting at the Mini-conference at the end of the term. The due date for this review is October 19.

(3) **One term paper (35%)**: I have a list of topics and cases that you can select for the term paper. You are free to choose from the suggested list or choose your own topic of interest in Southeast Asian Politics. There will be three stages in developing your paper. **First**, the topic proposal and an outline of your term paper is due on October 5. This proposal is not graded. The proposal should include: (1) topic, (2) your research question and puzzles; (3) an outline of the paper; and (4) a preliminary list of references. **Second**, based on your proposed topic and discussion with me, you will develop a draft for the final paper. This draft paper of up to 10 pages is due on October 26. I will meet with you to discuss your draft of the paper individually. This draft will not be graded. **Third**,
the term paper is due on November 2. This final paper will be graded. You will submit two hard copies and a pdf file to me. One copy is for me and the other copy is for your peer who will review and present your paper at the mini-conference. The process of writing this paper is designed for you to develop an in-depth learning and understanding of the topic of Southeast Asian Politics you chose to write.

(4) Peer review and mini-conference presentation (20%): After receiving the final paper from your classmate on November 2, you will read and prepare to give 10 minute presentation at the Mini-conference. The author of the paper will have 5 minutes to respond to the reviewer.

NOTE: All written assignments should be double-spaced pages with 12 point Times New Roman font and with page numbers.

Schedule of Assignments and Due Dates

10/05  - Outline of the term paper is due
10/19  - A review of an academic journal article is due (graded)
10/26  - The draft of term paper is due
11/02  - The term paper is due (graded)
11/07  - Mini-conference (graded)
11/09  - Mini-conference continue… (graded)
11/12  - Mini-conference continue (graded)
11/14  - Final Class

No final exam for the course.
Course Policy

a. **Attendance:** Attendance is required for this course. If you need to be absent from the class, it is your responsibility to notify me in advance. When you are absent, it is in your benefit to borrow notes from your classmate or ask your classmates to learn what you missed. If you wish, I will be available during office hours or by appointment at your request to meet with you and go over what you missed while you were absent. For the record, I will have attendance markup-sheet for every class.

b. **Plagiarism:** There is zero tolerance for plagiarism. A summary of the College’s policy on plagiarism states: “At Carleton College, an act of academic dishonesty is therefore regarded as conflicting with the work and purpose of the entire College and not merely as a private matter between the student and an instructor; all cases involving such dishonesty are referred for appropriate action to the Academic Standing Committee (ASC) via the Associate Dean of Students or the Associate Dean of the College.” For more information on Carleton’s policy on academic honesty, please consult http://apps.carleton.edu/campus/dos/handbook/academic_regs/?policy_id=21359

c. **Policy on late assignments:** Assignments are due on the dates specified in this syllabus or in the assignment sheet. Late work **will not be accepted** and will receive zero credit. If you are unable to complete an assignment on time due to illness or personal emergency, you can request an extension with the supporting documents such as a medical note from a doctor or the Wellness Center. The request for extension has to be made no later than two days before the due date.

d. **Policy on special needs:** If you require special accommodation due to a documented physical or medically classified different learning capacity, please come see me during the first week of class or any time throughout the semester to discuss how I might best assist you in meeting the objectives and requirements of this course.
Schedule of Classes and Readings

WEEK 1: INTERPRETATIONS OF “SOUTHEAST ASIA”

Essential readings:

9/10  Introduction to the Course

This syllabus

9/12  Historical Dimensions


   Chapter 1: Part A – Rethinking Southeast Asia, pp. 1-66.

9/14  Evolution of States and Societies


WEEK 2: BIOGEOPHYSICAL WORLDS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA

9/17  Land Used and Land Cover Change


9/19  Water and Livelihoods


The case of Nam Theun 2 Dam in Lao P.D.R, (see www.namtheun2.com for “project overview,” no other readings required).

9/21  Politics of Biogeophysical Settings


WEEK 3:  COLONIALISMS, NATIONALISMS, AND “STATE” FORMATION

9/24  Economics and Politics of Farmers

Scott, James C. Moral Economy of Peasants: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia, Yale University Press, 1976. (Hereafter “Scott”)
   Chapter 1: The Economics and Sociology of the Subsistence Ethics, pp. 1-34.
   Chapter 3: The Distribution of Risk and Colonial Change, pp. 56-90.

9/26  Colonial Landscapes

Scott, Chapter 4: The State as Claimant, pp. 91-113.

Tyner, James, America’s Strategy in Southeast Asia: From the Cold War to the Terror War, Rowman & Littlefield, 2007. (Hereafter “Tyner”).
   Chapter 1: Geographic Imperatives, pp. 1-25.
   Chapter 2: A Model Empire in Asia, pp. 27-66.
9/28        Roots of Nationalisms and Postcolonial States


   Chapters 1 – 4, pp. 1-52.

Scott, Chapter 5: The Depression Rebellions, pp. 114-156.

**WEEK 4:**          BORDERLESS PEOPLE AND BORDERED STATES

10/1        Politics of People and Boundaries


10/3        Library Research Guide for the Course, this class will be led by Kristin Partlo, a reference and instruction librarian at Gould Library 306, the PC Lab.

10/5        Struggles for identities


[Outline of term paper is due]


**WEEK 5: REGIONAL INTEGRATION**

**10/8 Theoretical dimensions**


**10/10 Empirical Realities**


Tyner, Chapter 5: Neoconservative Making of Southeast Asia, pp.159-212.

**10/12 Challenges of regional community formation**


Chapter 6: Controversy over Burma’s admission into ASEAN, pp. 125-150.


**10/13 – 10/15 MID-Term Break**
WEEK 6:  DEMOCRACY AND ITS CHALLENGES

10/17  Democracy in Southeast Asia


Chapter 1: Challenges in authoritarianism in Indonesia and Malaysia, pp. 1-23.

Chapter 2: Public Intellectuals, media and democratization: cultural politics of the middle classes in Indonesia, pp. 24-59.

The King, the Military, and the Struggle for Democracy in Thailand: Examining Institutional Incompatibilities (no reading required).

10/19  Challenges of Democracy

Heryanto et al., Chapter 5: Islamization and democratization in Malaysia in regional and global contexts, 117-144.


[A Review of an academic journal article is due]

WEEK 7:  POLITICS OF DEVELOPMENT

10/22  The Meaning of Development


10/24  Human Rights

Heryanto et al. Chapter 3: Developing dissent in industrializing localities, pp. 60-89.

Chapter 6: The blessed tragedy: the making of women’s activism during the *reformasi* years, pp. 145-177.

10/26  Globalization


[The draft of term paper is due]

WEEK 8:  CHALLENGES OF LIVELIHOOD FREEDOM

10/29  Complex Relations between Citizens and of States


10/31  States’ Development Projects and Citizens’ Livelihood Freedom


Scott, Chapters 6 - 7.

11/2  Struggles for Livelihood Freedom

*Economist*, “Sweet Serpent of South-East Asia,” December 30th, 2003
http://www.economist.com/world/asia/displayStory.cfm?story_id=2313069


[Term paper is due]
WEEK 9: SOCIAL ECOLOGICAL COMPLEXITIES

11/5 Change and Adaptation


Pak Mun Dam case (no readings required).

11/7 Miniconference
11/9 Miniconference

Week 10: FINAL

11/12 Miniconference
11/14 Conclusion