

Department of Political Science
McGill University
Winter 2024

Political Science 369
Politics of Southeast Asia

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Office Hours: Tuesday 2:30pm-4:00pm

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to the politics of Southeast Asia. The structure of the course is thematic rather than country-specific. However, within each theme, I will focus on particular countries, thereby integrating both analysis of broad themes and specific countries. Weeks 2-8 of the course provide a historical and contemporary overview of the region. Here we examine patterns of regime change and continuity, focusing especially on colonialism, nationalism, democracy, authoritarianism, and human rights. We will cover all the major countries in the region, including Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Myanmar/Burma, Vietnam, and Cambodia. These weeks should provide students with a broad grasp of the central political dynamics in Southeast Asia. Beginning with Week 9, we will address the following issues: political economy, inequality, environmental politics, ethnic and religious politics, and international affairs.

This course will enable students to: (1) gain an empirical and analytical understanding of the political dynamics of the region; and (2) think comparatively within the region and across the developing world more generally.

Course Requirements:

1. Lectures: The lectures will provide the empirical foundations and analytical framework for the course. They will build on and supplement the readings. Attendance at all lectures is mandatory.
2. Readings: Students are expected to come to the lectures having done the readings. You will gain more from the lectures having completed the readings.
3. Conferences: Conferences are important because they provide a venue for discussion and debate of course materials, as well as of contemporary affairs in the region. There are 7 conferences for which attendance is mandatory.

~Your conference grade will be based on two variables: attendance and quality of participation. To get full points for attendance you must have attended all 7 conferences.

~Note that attendance is extremely important because it is one means of assessing how seriously a student engages with the course. There will be a significant penalty for missing conferences on a regular basis: missing more than half of the conferences (4) without valid justification will result in a "O" for the conference grade.

4. Midterm In-Class Exam: Monday, February 26. The exam will be based on identifications and geography. Potential identifications that will end up on the exam will be listed at the beginning of each lecture.
5. Analytical Paper (4-5 pages double-spaced): For this exercise, students will identify an important problem in current Southeast Asian politics. Students can pick any topic they are interested in. Possible topics include, but are not limited to: the Rohingya crisis, Duterte's war on drugs, the rise of Islamic radicalism in Indonesia, military power in Thailand, rising authoritarianism in Cambodia, the coup and its consequences in Myanmar, etc. Students must then analyze this problem by answering the following question: Is the cause of this current problem due to historical or more immediate factors? The point of this exercise is for students to learn about an important contemporary issue in the region and examine whether historical and/or recent factors help explain the problem. This is, above all, an exercise in *analytical explanation* of a substantive issue. A *detailed handout for this exercise will be provided in the third week of the course*. The due date is: Monday, March 25. Any papers handed in late will be penalized 10 points per day.
6. Final In-Class Exam: date to be decided by the university exam timetable. The exam will be based on identifications and essays.

Grade Distribution:

1. Attendance and quality participation at conferences	10%
2. Midterm Exam	30%
3. Analytical Paper	30%
4. Final Exam	30%

Statement on Academic Integrity:

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism, and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/integrity for more information).

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/).

Policy on Languages:

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. *Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l'un des objets est la maîtrise d'une langue)*

Copyright of lectures:

All slides, video recordings, lecture notes, etc. remain the instructor's intellectual property. As such, you may use these only for your own learning (and research, with proper referencing/citation) ends. You are not permitted to disseminate or share these materials; doing so may violate the instructor's intellectual property rights and could be cause for disciplinary action.

Policy on Laptops in Class:

Research has shown that the use of laptops and other mobile devices in university lecture halls leads to lower focus and retention of materials. This is because multitasking – such as surfing the internet – undermines concentration. Therefore, laptops and cell phones are not allowed in the lecture hall and in the conferences. Only students with a documented disability for whom typing on a laptop is essential will be given exception to this rule. Some articles to read about this:

<http://www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/the-case-for-banning-laptops-in-the-classroom>

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/im-banning-laptops-from-my-classroom-1468184264>

Course Evaluations:

End-of-course evaluations are one of the ways that McGill works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. You will be notified by e-mail when the evaluations are available on Mercury, the online course

evaluation system. Please note that a minimum number of responses must be received for results to be available to students.

Contact during the Semester:

The best way to get in touch with me is right after class or during office hours on Tuesday, 2:30pm-4:00pm. If you have quick queries, you may email me. However, if your query is lengthy or of a more substantive nature that cannot be addressed briefly via email, then my strong preference is for you to discuss this with me in person during office hours.

Disabilities:

If you have any learning disabilities that will affect your progress in this course, please contact me as soon as possible so that proper arrangements can be made.

Stress:

I understand that university life can be very stressful. If you find that you are unable to complete the work assigned for this course due to personal difficulties, it is better if you inform me or the teaching assistant as early as possible. There are also university resources to which I can direct students going through difficult circumstances.

N.B.

In the event of extraordinary or unforeseen circumstances, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

Film Screenings:

I will show several documentaries and films (in full or in part) during the course. The documentaries are intended to provide students with a broader perspective on the history, contemporary affairs, and personalities of the region. The following will be screened, in full or in part:

January 22: "The Year of Living Dangerously" [part] on the 1965 Indonesian crisis

January 29: "Philippine People Power Revolution" videoclip from YouTube

February 21: "The Killing Fields" [part] on the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia

February 28: "A Return to Peace" on efforts to restore peace in Ambon, Indonesia

March 27: "Grit" on environmental destruction in East Java, Indonesia

Other Resources:

Students are encouraged to use *MyCourses* to discuss issues in the course as well as contemporary events that are related to the course topics. Students should feel free to post links to news items on Southeast Asia that are relevant to the course.

To keep up with politics in the region, the following are good resources: *The Financial Times*, *The New York Times*, and *The Economist*. Some very good websites on Southeast Asia are: www.newmandala.org, www.eastasiaforum.org, www.thediplomat.com, www.channelnewsasia.com [web version of Singapore 24-hour broadcast news], www.atimes.com [Asia Times Online], and www.asiasentinel.com

Some useful journals that deal with contemporary Southeast Asian politics: *Asian Survey*, *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, *Pacific Review*, *Pacific Affairs*, *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, *Critical Asian Studies*, *Journal of East Asian Studies*, and the annual publication of Singapore's Institute of Southeast Asian Studies: *Southeast Asian Affairs*.

Reading Materials for the Course:

The three books listed below have been ordered at Paragraphe Bookstore on 2220 McGill College Avenue. All book chapters and journal articles that are not in the three assigned books will be made available on *MyCourses*.

Alice D. Ba and Mark Beeson, ed., *Contemporary Southeast Asia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2018, 3rd ed.)

Erik Martinez Kuhonta, *The Institutional Imperative: The Politics of Equitable Development in Southeast Asia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011)

Norman Owen, et al., *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia: A New History* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005)

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION TO SOUTHEAST ASIA

Monday, January 8: Introduction to the Class

Wednesday, January 10: Introduction to Southeast Asia

Norman Owen et al., *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia* (2005), 1-15.
Alice D. Ba and Mark Beeson, "The Continuing Evolution of Southeast Asia," in Ba and Beeson, eds., *Contemporary Southeast Asia* (2018), 1-11. Read until p.11.
Robert Cribb, "Southeast Asia: Historical Context," in Ba and Beeson, eds., *Contemporary Southeast Asia* (2018), 17-33.

WEEK 2: COLONIALISM AND NATIONALISM

Monday, January 15: Colonialism

Norman Owen et al., *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia* (2005), 52-71, 75-81, 201-221, 243-251.
John Furnivall, *Colonial Policy and Practice: A Comparative Study of Burma and Netherlands India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), 303-312.

Wednesday, January 17: Colonialism and Nationalism

Norman Owen et al., *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia* (2005), 252-267, 283-334, 350-360.
Erik Martinez Kuhonta, *The Institutional Imperative* (2011), 53-68 (Malaysia), 125-143 (Thailand), 201-207 (Philippines).

WEEK 3: DISORDER AND THE COLLAPSE OF POST-WAR DEMOCRACY

Monday, January 22: Overview; Indonesia

Mark Berger, "The End of Empire and the Cold War," in Mark Beeson, ed., *Contemporary Southeast Asia* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2nd ed., 2009), 29-45.
Norman Owen et al., *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia* (2005), 431-447.
Film in class: "The Year of Living Dangerously" [part]

Wednesday, January 24: Philippines, Thailand

Benedict R. Anderson, "Withdrawal Symptoms," in Anderson, *The Spectre of Comparisons* (London: Verso, 1998 [1977]), 139-173.
Erik Martinez Kuhonta, *The Institutional Imperative* (2011), 207-217.

WEEK 4: DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS . . . AND BACKSLIDING

**Conferences begin this week*

Monday, January 29: Overview; Philippines

Aries A. Arugay and Aim Sinpeng, "Varieties of Authoritarianism and the Limits of Democracy in Southeast Asia," in Ba and Beeson, eds., *Contemporary Southeast Asia* (2018), 91-110.

Thomas Pepinsky, "Southeast Asia: Voting Against Disorder," *Journal of Democracy* 28, 2 (April 2017): 120-131.

Mark R. Thompson, "Off the Endangered List: Philippine Democratization in Comparative Perspective," *Comparative Politics* 28, 2 (January 1996): 179-205.

Sheila S. Coronel, "The Vigilante President: How Duterte's Brutal Populism Conquered the Philippines," *Foreign Affairs* 98, 5 (September/October 2019): 36-43.

Film in class: Videoclip from YouTube on "Philippine People Power Revolution"

Wednesday, January 31: Thailand

Erik Martinez Kuhonta, "Is the Middle Class a Pillar of Democracy? Not in Thailand," *The Gazette* (21 January 2014).

Tyrell Haberkorn, "Under and beyond the Law: Monarchy, Violence, and History in Thailand," *Politics and Society* 49, 3 (2021): 311-336.

WEEK 5: DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS AND HYBRID REGIMES

Monday, February 5: Indonesia

Eve Warburton, "Deepening Polarization and Democratic Decline in Indonesia," in Thomas Carothers and Andrew O'Donohue, eds., *Political Polarization in South and Southeast Asia*, 25-39 (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2020).

Wednesday, February 7: Malaysia and Singapore

Norman Owen et al., *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia* (2005), 414-430.

Dan Slater, "Iron Cage in an Iron Fist: Authoritarian Institutions and the Personalization of Power in Malaysia," *Comparative Politics* 36, 1 (October 2003): 81-101.

Elvin Ong, "Complementary Institutions in Authoritarian Regimes: The Everyday Politics of Constituency Service in Singapore," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 15, 3 (2015): 361-390.

Walid Jumblatt Abdullah, "The Mahathir Effect in Malaysia's 2018 Election: The Role

of Credible Personalities in Regime Transitions,” *Democratization* (November 2018): 1-16.

WEEK 6: AUTHORITARIANISM

Monday, February 12: Burma/Myanmar

Norman Owen et al., *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia* (2005), 497-506.

Zoltan Barany, “Burma: The Generals Strike Back,” *Journal of Democracy* 32, 2 (April 2021): 22-36.

Hannah Beech, “What Happened to Myanmar’s Human Rights Icon?” *The New Yorker* (2 October 2017).

Roman David, Aung Kaung Myat, and Ian Holliday, “Liberalism and Illiberalism in Myanmar’s National League for Democracy,” *Party Politics* 0, 0 (2023): 1-12. [published online 14 October 2023]

Wednesday, February 14: Vietnam

Norman Owen et al., *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia* (2005), 335-349, 468-480.

WEEK 7: HUMAN RIGHTS AND TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE

Monday, February 19: Universal Human Rights versus Asian Values

Amartya Sen, “Human Rights and Asian Values,” *The New Republic* (14-21 July 1997).

Donald K. Emmerson, “Singapore and the ‘Asian Values’ Debate,” *Journal of Democracy* 6, 4 (1995): 95-105.

Fareed Zakaria, “Culture is Destiny: A Conversation with Lee Kuan Yew,” *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 1994).

Wednesday, February 21: Human Rights and International Justice: Cambodia, Timor Leste

Norman Owen et al., *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia* (2005), 361-375, 481-491.

Ben Kiernan, “The Cambodian Genocide, 1975-1979,” in Samuel Totten and William Parsons, eds., *Century of Genocide* (New York: Routledge, 2008) [abbreviated version].

Film in class: “The Killing Fields” [part]

WEEK 8: MIDTERM EXAM

****No Conferences this week***

Monday, February 26: Midterm Exam

Wednesday, February 28: Documentary Screening

Film in class: "A Return to Peace"

WEEK 9: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Monday, March 11: The Asian Economic Miracle – East and Southeast Asia

Norman Owen et al., *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia* (2005), 379-398.
Ruth McVey, "The Materialization of the Southeast Asian Entrepreneur," in McVey, ed., *Southeast Asian Capitalists* (Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1993), 7-33.
Greg Felker, "The Political Economy of Southeast Asia," in Ba and Beeson, eds., *Contemporary Southeast Asia* (2018), 70-90.

Wednesday, March 13: The Asian Economic Miracle – East and Southeast Asia

Andrew MacIntyre, "Business, Government and Development: Northeast and Southeast Asian Comparisons," in MacIntyre, ed., *Business and Government in Industrialising Asia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 1-28.

WEEK 10: THE POLITICS OF INEQUALITY

Monday, March 18: Inequality, States, and Political Parties

Erik Martinez Kuhonta, *The Institutional Imperative* (2011), 3-52 (Introduction, Theory); 80-100, 114-117 (Malaysia); 119-124, 152-174, 188-191 (Thailand); 239-247 (Conclusion).

Wednesday, March 20: Labor and Inequality

Stefan Rother, "Labor Migration in Southeast Asia: In Search of Regional Governance," in Ba and Beeson, eds., *Contemporary Southeast Asia* (2018), 181-197.

WEEK 11: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

***No Conferences this week**

***Analytical Paper due on March 25**

Monday, March 25: The Political Economy of the Environment

Adam Simpson, "The Environment in Southeast Asia: Injustice, Conflict and Activism," in Ba and Beeson, eds., *Contemporary Southeast Asia* (2018), 164-180.

Erik Martinez Kuhonta, *The Institutional Imperative* (2011), 177-181.

Wednesday, March 27: Case Study of the Lapindo Mud Flow Disaster in Indonesia

Heath McMichael, "The Lapindo Mud Flow Disaster: Environmental, Infrastructure and Economic Impact," *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies* 45, 1 (2009): 73-83.

Film in class: "Grit"

WEEK 12: ETHNICITY, RELIGION, and VIOLENCE

Monday, April 1: NO CLASS – Easter Monday

Wednesday, April 3: Ethnicity, Religion, and Violence

Claire Sutherland, "Nationalism and Ethnicity in Southeast Asia," in Ba and Beeson, eds., *Contemporary Southeast Asia* (2018), 34-48.

Eunsook Jung, "Islam and Politics in Contemporary Southeast Asia," in Ba and Beeson, eds., *Contemporary Southeast Asia* (2018), 131-145.

Jacques Bertrand and Alexandre Pelletier, "Violent Monks in Myanmar: Scapegoating and the Contest for Power," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 23, 3 (2017): 257-279.

WEEK 13: CONCLUSION

***No Conferences this week**

Monday, April 8: The Formation of ASEAN

Andrew T.H. Tan, "Security in Southeast Asia," in Ba and Beeson, eds., *Contemporary Southeast Asia* (2018), 215-228.

Amitav Acharya, *The Quest for Identity: International Relations of Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 2000), 78-104.

Wednesday, April 10: ASEAN and an Illiberal Peace

Erik Martinez Kuhonta, "Walking a Tightrope: Democracy versus Sovereignty in ASEAN's Illiberal Peace," *Pacific Review* 19, 3 (September 2006): 337-358.

Thursday, April 11: Concluding Remarks

Alice D. Ba and Mark Beeson, eds., "Looking Ahead," in Ba and Beeson, eds., *Contemporary Southeast Asia* (2018), 280-290.