

The Politics of Southeast Asia

PS 149E



This course will focus on the transformative process through which the nations of contemporary Southeast Asia have confronted political crises and instability and the various levels of success with which they have attempted to implement comprehensive programs of reform. This course will analyze several different areas of political activity, such as: state-led initiatives (political economy) regarding development and resource distribution; citizen and opposition movements both within and outside formal state institutions which seek to influence, alter, or overturn state action and policy; institution-building and the cultivation of social capital; and regional and transnational flows of capital and labor which act in alliance with or in opposition to national economic institutions. Specific topics will include a comparative analysis of state policy; the relationship between illicit economies (such as narcotics) and ethnic insurgency; the nascent political voice of religion and ethnicity as nationalist or opposition ideologies; the expansion and influence of local NGOs (legal aid, human rights, women's rights, etc.); political violence and alternative paths to the expression of discontent; and corruption. After a general overview of Southeast Asia as a regional political theater, we will turn our attention to a series of in-depth case studies.

There are no prerequisites for this course.



Office Hours and Contact Information

Instructor: Darren Zook 

Office hours: Weds 12-1:30, Thurs 1:30-3

Office location: 122 Stephens Hall

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Assignments and Grade Assessment

Your grade will be evaluated using four elements:

First midterm (25%) (**October 1: in-class**)

Second midterm (25%) (due **October 29**)

Final paper (40%) (due **November 30** by 4 pm)

Attendance and demeanor (10%)

Assigned Readings

The readings for the course will be posted on bCourses. Additional readings may be added from time to time (you will be notified). The schedule for the readings is listed in the syllabus below. You will need to do the readings during the week for which they are assigned (whether before or after the lecture is your choice).

A printed, bound version of the readings can also be purchased on request from Copy Central (on Bancroft Ave.).

Digital Policy

No laptops, tablets, smart phones, or any other electronic devices may be used during lecture for any reason. Violations may result in a severe grade penalty.

Missing Class or Leaving Early

Attendance is essential in order to do well in this class. If you need to miss a class for a legitimate reason, it is simply good etiquette to let me know (email is fine). The lecture slides are not made available to students (no exceptions), and it is entirely your responsibility to get the notes and information you missed due to your absence. If you have questions about the material you missed, you are welcome to come to office hours. I cannot, however, offer a summary version of the lecture during office hours. Similarly, if you need to leave class early for any reason, it is also good etiquette to let me know (email is fine, or you can tell me before class starts).

Please note: excessive absences may result in a substantial grade penalty, regardless of your performance on the assignments.

Syllabus



Week One: The partially empty first week

1. [No class]
2. Introducing Southeast Asia

Reading: Permanent Court of Arbitration, *The Republic of the Philippines v. The People's Republic of China* (12 July 2016)

Week Two: Introducing Southeast Asia

3. The role of ASEAN in Southeast Asian politics
4. Trafficking and other region-wide problems

Reading: Rebecca Strating, "Maritime Territorialization, UNCLOS and the Timor Sea," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 40/1 (2018): 101-125
Filomeno Aguilar Jr., "Towards Community Formation in Southeast Asia: History Education, ASEAN and the Nation-State," *Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 32/1 (2017): 137-169

Week Three: Malaysia

5. [Labor Day — no class]
6. Unification through division: Malaysia's peculiar formation

Reading: Darren C. Zook, "Making Space for Islam: Religion, Science, and Politics in Contemporary Malaysia," *Journal of Asian Studies* 69/4 (2010): pp. 1143-1166

Week Four: Malaysia

7. The politics of Islam in Malaysia: first among not-so-equals
8. Culture of democracy or democracy of culture?

Reading: Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, "The Hudud Controversy in Malaysia: Religious Probity or Political Expediency?" *Southeast Asian Affairs* (2015): pp. 205-219
Cynthia Gabriel, "Malaysia's Missing Billions," *Journal of Democracy* 29/1 (2018): pp. 69-75

Week Five: Singapore

9. The future of democracy in Malaysia
10. Singapore's idiosyncratic democracy

Reading: Shane Harris, "The Social Laboratory," *Foreign Policy* (July/August 2014), pp. 64-71
Carol Soon, "Managing Cyberspace: State Regulation versus Self-Regulation," *Southeast Asian Affairs* (2015), 321-334

Week Six: Singapore

11. The efficient democracy? Myth and reality in Singapore's model
12. Singapore opens up: the popular culture of democratization

Reading: Michael D. Barr, "Ordinary Singapore: The Decline of Singapore Exceptionalism," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 46/1 (2016): 1-17

Week Seven: Indonesia

13. *****October 1: In-class midterm exam*****

14. Becoming Indonesia: the long road through authoritarian rule

Reading: Mun'im Sirry, "Fatwas and their controversy: The case of the Council of Indonesian Ulama," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 44/1: 100-117
Dave McRae, "Indonesian Capital Punishment in Comparative Perspective," *Bijdragen tot Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde* 173 (2017): 1-22

Week Eight: Indonesia

15. Politics finds its rhythm: the political uses of art in Indonesia

16. The many and the one: Indonesia's struggle with its own identity

Reading: Rizkika Lhena Darwin, "The Power of Female Brokers: Local Elections in North Aceh," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 39/3 (2017): pp. 532-551

Week Nine: Indonesia/Philippines

17. The unexpected success of democracy in Indonesia

18. Political drama like no other: The Philippines

Reading: Mark R. Thompson, "Populism and the Revival of Reform: Competing Political Narratives in the Philippines," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 32/1 (2010), pp. 1-28
Julio C. Teehankee and Mark R. Thompson, "Electing a Strongman," *Journal of Democracy* 27/4 (2016): 125-134

Week Ten: Philippines

19. Keeping it in the family: political networks in the Philippines
20. The rebellion in the south: origins and prospects for peace

Reading: Lorraine Carlos Salazar, "Typhoon Yolanda: The Politics of Disaster Response and Management," *Southeast Asian Affairs* (2015), 277-301

Week Eleven: Myanmar/Burma

21. The long and difficult road to democracy
22. Ethnicity and identity in Myanmar/Burma

Reading: Ardeth Thawngmung, "The Myanmar Elections 2015: Why the National League for Democracy Won a Landslide Victory," *Critical Asian Studies* 48/1 (2016): 132-142
Melissa Carlson, "Painting as Cipher: Censorship of the Visual Arts in Post-1988 Myanmar," *Sojourn: journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 31/1 (2016): 116-172

Week Twelve: Myanmar/Burma

23. The aftermath of transition: crisis and compromise
24. The colors of Thai politics: competing interests in the public arena

Reading: Patrick Meehan, "Fortifying or Fragmenting the State? The Political Economy of the Opium/Heroin Trade in Shan State, Myanmar, 1988-2013," *Critical Asian Studies* (2015): 253-282
Zoltan Barany, "Where Myanmar Went Wrong: From Democratic Awakening to Ethnic Cleansing," *Foreign Affairs* 97 (May/June 2018): 141-154

Week Thirteen: Thailand

25. [Veterans Day — no class]

26. Revisiting Southeast Asia: How to make it all make sense

Reading: Chris Baker, “The 2014 Thai Coup and Some Roots of Authoritarianism,”
Journal of Contemporary Asia 46/3 (2016): 388-404
Sophorntavy Vorng, “Wandering Dhamma and transnational fellowship:
Addiction, aspiration and belonging among ethnic minorities on
the northern Thai border,” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 48/1
(2017): 113-134

Week Fourteen: Thanksgiving Break

27. [No lecture]

28. [No lecture]

Reading: No readings

Week Fifteen: Review

29. Review and consultations

30. Review and consultations

Reading: No readings