

Course Syllabus: 2400104 – Politics and Government of Thailand

Semester: First Semester, Academic Year 2025

Credits: 3(3-0-6)

Class Schedule: Fridays, 09:00–12:00

Classroom: M08, M Floor, Kasem Udyanin Building

Instructor: Dr. Stithorn Thananithichot

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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description

This course explores the development of Thai society, politics, and governance in the context of global transformation. The course focuses on the evolution of social, cultural, and political structures and the changing roles of key institutions in Thailand—particularly the monarchy, military, political parties, bureaucracy, and civil society. Students will examine how domestic and international forces interact in shaping Thailand's political order through a historical institutionalist lens.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Analyze the development of Thai political institutions using the framework of historical institutionalism.
2. Understand the interrelations among major political actors and institutions in Thailand.
3. Evaluate the impact of global and regional transformations on Thai governance.
4. Assess the institutional legacies of critical political junctures in shaping Thailand's contemporary politics.

Weekly Topics and Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic & Description	Instructor & Teaching/Learning Methods
1	08 Aug 2025	Introduction to the Course Explaining scope, framework, and evaluation criteria	Stithorn Thananithichot Lecture
2	15 Aug 2025	State Formation and Pre-1932 Institutional Order: Monarchy, Bureaucracy, and Modernization Explaining the consolidation of royal absolutism and centralized bureaucracy in the quest for modernization	Stithorn Thananithichot Interactive lectures and guided discussion
3	22 Aug 2025	The 1932 Revolution as a Critical Juncture: Constitutional Monarchy and Dual Institutions Explaining the foundational rupture that redefined Thailand's political institutions from monarchy to constitutionalism	Stithorn Thananithichot Interactive lectures and guided discussion
4	29 Aug 2025	Bureaucratic Polity (1947–1973): Cold War Politics, Technocracy, and Military Rule Understanding an era marked by military dominance, Cold War alignment, and technocratic governance	Guest lecturer Interactive lectures and guided discussion
5	05 Sep 2025	Post-1973 Democratic Movements and Authoritarian Reassertion Exploring the cycles of mass mobilization and elite backlash in Thailand's contested democratization	Stithorn Thananithichot Interactive lectures and guided discussion

Week	Date	Topic & Description	Instructor & Teaching/Learning Methods
6	12 Sep 2025	The 1997 Constitution: Institutional Innovation and Political Liberalization Understanding a landmark reform aimed at institutionalizing liberal democracy and accountable governance	Stithorn Thananithichot Interactive lectures and guided discussion
7	19 Sep 2025	The 2006 Coup and Legal-Institutional Retrenchment Understanding a military intervention that triggered judicial activism and reversed liberal institutional gains	Stithorn Thananithichot Interactive lectures and guided discussion
8	26 Sep 2025	Midterm Examination	
9	03 Oct 2025	The 2014 Coup and the 2017 Constitution: Controlled Democracy and Elite Reconfiguration Explaining the consolidation of elite control through constitutional engineering and authoritarian legalism	Stithorn Thananithichot Interactive lectures and guided discussion
10	10 Oct 2025	The Monarchy and the Informal Institutional Order Exploring how the monarchy functions as an informal institution shaping political norms, legitimacy, and elite power dynamics beyond formal constitutional roles	Stithorn Thananithichot - Case-based learning (CBL) and historical analysis - Group presentation and peer learning

Week	Date	Topic & Description	Instructor & Teaching/Learning Methods
11	17 Oct 2025	Political Parties in Thailand: Historical Development and Institutional Challenges Tracing the trajectory of party institutionalization and evaluate the obstacles to party system stability in Thailand	Stithorn Thananithichot - Case-based learning (CBL) and historical analysis - Group presentation and peer learning
12	24 Oct 2025	Electoral Systems, Party Fragmentation, and Democratic Accountability Assessing how electoral design affects democratic performance, fragmentation, and voter-party linkages in Thailand	Stithorn Thananithichot - Case-based learning (CBL) and historical analysis - Group presentation and peer learning
13	31 Oct 2025	Civil Society and Youth Movements as Institutional Challengers Examining how social movements—particularly youth-led protests—challenge dominant power structures, introduce alternative political imaginaries, and influence institutional change	Stithorn Thananithichot - Case-based learning (CBL) and historical analysis - Group presentation and peer learning
14	07 Nov 2025	Thai Political Institutions in Comparative-Historical Perspective Contextualizing Thailand's institutional development by comparing it with other Southeast Asian and hybrid regimes, drawing insights into democratization, authoritarian resilience, and institutional design	Stithorn Thananithichot - Case-based learning (CBL) and historical analysis - Group presentation and peer learning

Week	Date	Topic & Description	Instructor & Teaching/Learning Methods
15	14 Nov 2025	Final Review: Institutional Pathways and the Future of Thai Democracy Synthesizing course themes to evaluate Thailand's political trajectory, assess competing reform scenarios, and reflect on the role of institutions in shaping democratic futures	Stithorn Critical reflection exercises and policy evaluation

Teaching and Learning Methods

1. Interactive lectures and guided discussion
2. Case-based learning (CBL) and historical analysis
3. Group presentation and peer learning
4. Critical reflection exercises and policy evaluation

Evaluation Criteria

Assessment Component	Weight
Attendance and Participation	10%
Weekly Quizzes / Reflection Notes	35%
Midterm Examination	15%
Group Presentation (Case Study on Institutional Shift)	20%
Final Examination	20%
Total	100%

Grading Scale

Score Range	Grade
80 and	A

Score Range	Grade
76–79	B+
70–75	B
66–69	C+
60–65	C
56–59	D+
50–55	D
Below 50	F

Attendance Policy

In compliance with Chulalongkorn University’s academic regulations, students must attend at least 80% of total class hours to be eligible for the final examination. Notify the PGS Office immediately if any student is at risk of failing to meet this requirement.

Course Platform

All class materials, announcements, assignments, and feedback will be managed through **myCourseVille**:

 <https://www.mycourseville.com>

Course Readings and Materials