

GOV 347N Government and Politics of Southeast Asia

University of Texas at Austin

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 10:00 am - 11:00 am — MEZ 1.210

Spring 2023

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Office Hours: M 11:00 am to 12:00 pm | W 11:00 am to 1:00 pm

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the politics of Southeast Asia. We will cover the politics of individual countries in the region as well as how they inform our understanding of major themes in comparative politics including political economy, regime and regime transition, democracy and democratic backsliding, ethnic politics, and political violence.

The course begins with a short introduction to the region's geography, people, and history prior to independence. We will then survey the politics of individual countries. We will spend about two to three classes on a country starting with the mainland Southeast Asia—Thailand, Myanmar, Vietnam, and Cambodia—and then the maritime Southeast Asia—the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. In surveying each country, we will focus on contemporary politics, regime type, and recent major events and/or challenges shaping the country's trajectory. After the midterm exam, we will study the politics of Southeast Asia in comparative perspective. The course then wraps up with a brief examination of regional relations in Southeast Asia.

Learning Objectives

The objective of this course is to improve critical thinking and analytical writing skills through the study of Southeast Asia politics. By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Identify key figures, events and political parties/organizations that have shaped recent political developments of Southeast Asian countries,
2. Ask informed questions about history and politics of Southeast Asia and provide critical answers to these questions,
3. Analyze ways in which the politics of Southeast Asia support and/or challenge prevailing concepts and theories in comparative politics,
4. Demonstrate knowledge of region through written assignments and class discussions.

Course Requirements

Readings

We will read parts of a textbook, academic journal articles and short articles from *Foreign Affairs* and the likes. Reading assignments are important and you are expected to have done them before each class. The following textbook is required. A free electronic version can be accessed through the UT library. The title is hyperlinked to the library's site.

- D.R. SarDesai. *Southeast Asia: Past and Present*. Seventh Edition.

All other required readings are either hyperlinked to the library's site or are on Canvas.

Your course grade is composed of the following:

1. Map quiz (5%)

This is an in-class quiz scheduled for Friday, February 24, 2023.

2. Response papers (20%)

Students will write two short analytical papers critically engaging with non-textbook course readings— one from Part II and one from Part III. Students should treat this assignment as a way to generate their own ideas about the week/class' topic and sharpen your ability to read critically and synthesize important theories and debates. There is no need to conduct additional research for this assignment. The paper should be 1.5 to 2 double-spaced pages in length.

Students can choose which reading/day (from Part II and Part III) they want to complete this assignment. The papers should be turned in by the class meeting for which the reading is assigned. Late submission will NOT be accepted. If you are unable to complete this assignment for the reading(s) you initially selected due to sickness, emergency, etc., select another reading and submit the paper on time.

3. Discussion (5%)

Up until Week 9, class meetings will consist of lecture only. From Weeks 10 to 13, class meetings will consist of a mini lecture (10 to 20 minutes) followed by a discussion session (30 to 40 minutes). For these weeks, students will sign up to co-lead alongside a student peer. The discussion co-leaders will facilitate class discussion. Students should sign up for a session they would like to co-lead before spring break. If you want to change your day, please notify me 3 days prior to the class you initially signed up to co-lead. This component accounts for 5% of students' course grade. If you are not in attendance on the day you signed up to co-lead a discussion, you will receive zero for this component of your grade. The grade for leading a discussion CANNOT be made up. (You can complete a response paper and co-lead a discussion on the same day.)

4. Participation (10%)

During Weeks 10 to 13, students who are not discussion leaders will be evaluated for their contributions to the discussion. Students should come prepared with questions and comments about the readings, and their comments should be informed by case-based knowledge from the first half of the course. This component accounts for 10% of students' course

grade. Two lowest scores will be dropped. If you are not in attendance on a discussion day, you cannot participate in discussion; hence, you will receive zero for that specific session. Participation grade CANNOT be made up.

5. Midterm (25%)

This will be an in-class exam on Friday, March 3, 2023. It will consist of identifications and short response questions. Students may take a make up exam only in the case of sickness (requiring a doctor's note), family emergency (requiring a Dean's note), or religious observance (requiring prior approval from the instructor). There are no exceptions.

6. Final exam (35%)

This will be a take-home, comprehensive exam. It will consist of short response and essay questions. Students will submit their exam on Canvas.

Late submission of the exam will be accepted but you will lose 1/3 of a letter grade (3.3/100 points) for each 10-minute period that you have not turned it in after the due date and time. That means, if you are late by 2 hours (incurring 40/100 points deduction), D+ is the highest grade you get for the exam.

The following scale will be used to determine your overall grade in the course: A: >94%, A-: 90-93.9%, B+: 87-89.9%, B: 84-86.9%, B-: 80-83.9%, C+: 77-79.9%, C: 74-76.9%; C-: 70-73.9%; D+: 67-69.9%; D: 64-66.9%; D-: 60-63.9%; F: <60%.

Course Policies

Attendance

Attendance is not taken, but students are highly encouraged to attend class. It should be clear from course requirements specified above that class attendance is necessary to do well in this course.

Appeals

If you believe a grade you are given does not reflect your performance, you may dispute the grade in writing, explaining why you should receive a higher grade. This should be done within a week after the grade is announced and submitted after class or in office hours. I reserve the right to raise *or* lower your grade.

Email and Office Hours

For administrative questions and clarifications, the best way to contact me is via email. For substantive issues related to course materials, please attend my office hours. I aim to answer e-mails within 24 hours during the week. If you have not received a response in 24 hours, feel free to remind me.

I have regular office hours on Mondays and Wednesdays. They will be hybrid– you can stop by my office in Mezes or join on Zoom. If you are unable to attend at the regular time, email me so that we can find a time that works for you.

University Policies and Services

Academic Integrity and Honesty

All members of the university community are expected to exhibit honesty and competence in their academic work. According to the Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities, academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, unauthorized collaboration, falsifying academic records, and misrepresentation of facts.

If you have any questions about what constitutes scholastic dishonesty, you should consult with me and <https://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/>. Any student that violates this policy will fail this course and have the details of the violation reported to Student Judicial Services.

Support for Students With Disabilities

The university is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive learning environment consistent with university policy and federal and state law. Please let me know if you experience any barriers to learning so I can work with you to ensure you have equal opportunity to participate fully in this course. If you are a student with a disability, or think you may have a disability, and need accommodations please contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). Please refer to SSD's website for contact and more information: <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>. If you are already registered with SSD, please deliver your Accommodation Letter to me as early as possible in the semester so we can discuss your approved accommodations and needs in this course.

Counseling and Mental Health Center

If you or anyone you know is experiencing symptoms of stress, anxiety, depression, academic concerns, loneliness, difficulty sleeping, or any other concern impacting your wellbeing – you are strongly encouraged to connect with CMHC. The Counseling and Mental Health Center provides a wide variety of mental health services to all UT students including crisis services, counseling services with immediate support and well-being resources. Additionally, CARE Counselors are located within the academic schools and colleges. These counselors get to know the concerns that are unique to their college's students. For more information on CMHC, visit cmhc.utexas.edu or call 512-471-3515.

University Policy on Religious Holidays

A student who plans to miss classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform me as far in advance of the absence as possible so that arrangements can be made to complete an assignment within a reasonable period after the absence. We will work together to find an alternative time to complete the assignment.

A reasonable accommodation does not include substantial modification to academic standards, or adjustments of requirements essential to any program of instruction. Students who have questions or concerns about academic accommodations for religious observance or religious beliefs may contact the [Office for Inclusion and Equity](#).

Learning and Writing Support

Did you know that more than one-third of UT undergraduate students use the Sanger Learning Center each year to improve their academic performance? All students are welcome to take advantage of Sanger Center's classes and workshops, private learning specialist appointments, peer academic coaching, and tutoring for more than 70 courses in 15 different subject areas. For more information, please visit <https://ugs.utexas.edu/slc> or call 512-471-3614 (JES A332).

I also encourage you take your written assignments to the [University Writing Center](#) prior to submission.

Safety and Security

In the event of a fire or other emergency, it may be necessary to evacuate a building rapidly. Upon the activation of a fire alarm or the announcement of an emergency in a university building, all occupants of the building are required to evacuate and assemble outside. Once evacuated, no one may re-enter the building without instruction to do so from the Austin Fire Department, University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.

Students should familiarize themselves with all the exit doors of each room and building they occupy at the university. Students should also remember that the nearest exit routes may not be the same as the way they typically enter buildings.

Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructors in writing during the first week of class. Faculty members must then provide this information to the Fire Prevention Services office by fax (512.232.2759), with "Attn. Mr. Roosevelt Easley" written in the subject line.

Information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at <http://www.utexas.edu/emergency>.

Schedule

Week 1

01/09 (Monday) — Welcome

01/11 (Wednesday) — What is Southeast Asia?

- Emmerson, Donald K. "'Southeast Asia': what's in a name?." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 15, no. 1 (1984): 1-21.

01/13 (Friday) — What is Southeast Asia?

Part I: Southeast Asia Pre-Independence

Week 2

01/18 (Wednesday) — Cultural Heritage

- SarDesai Ch. 2 Early Kingdoms in Mainland Southeast Asia

01/20 (Friday) — Cultural Heritage

Week 3

01/23 (Monday) — Cultural Heritage

- SarDesai Ch. 3 Early Kingdoms of Sumatra and Java

01/25 (Wednesday) — Colonial Interlude

- SarDesai Ch. 7 The English and Dutch in the East Indies

01/27 (Friday) — Colonial Interlude

- SarDesai Ch. 9 Pride and Paramountcy: Anglo-Burmese Relations in the Nineteenth Century

Part II: The States of Southeast Asia

Week 4

01/30 (Monday) — Thailand

- SarDesai Ch. 11 Thailand Remains Independent
- SarDesai Ch. 16 Thailand's Constitutional Reform

02/01 (Wednesday) — Thailand

- Ricks, Jacob I. "Thailand's 2019 Vote: The General Election." *Pacific Affairs* 92, no. 3 (2019): 443–457.

02/03 (Friday) — Thailand

Week 5

02/06 (Monday) — Myanmar

- SarDesai Ch. 20 Myanmar: Toward Integration and Democracy, pp. 214-227.

02/08 (Wednesday) — Myanmar

- Thawnghmung, Ardeth. "The Politics of Indigeneity in Myanmar: Competing Narratives on Rohingya in Rakhine State." *Asian Ethnicity* 17, no. 4 (2016): 527–547.

02/10 (Friday) — Myanmar

Week 6

02/13 (Monday) — Vietnam

- SarDesai Ch. 26 Vietnam and Cambodia under Communism, pp. 331-339; 347-350.

02/15 (Wednesday) — Vietnam

- Pierre, Andrew J. "Vietnam's Contradictions." *Foreign Affairs* 79, no. 6 (2000): 69–86.

02/17 (Friday) — Cambodia

- Watch in class: S-21 The Khmer Rouge Killing Machine (First Run/Icarus Films 2003)

Week 7

02/20 (Monday) — Cambodia

- Morgenbesser, Lee. "Cambodia's Transition to Hegemonic Authoritarianism." *Journal of Democracy* 30, no. 1 (2019): 158–171.

02/22 (Wednesday) — Philippines

- SarDesai Ch. 13 The Filipino Urge for Freedom from Spanish and the US Rule

02/24 (Friday) — Philippines + **Map quiz**

- Iglesias, Sol. 2022. "Violence and Impunity: Democratic Backsliding in the Philippines and the 2022 Elections." *Pacific Affairs* 95, no. 3 (2022): 575–593.

Week 8

02/27 (Monday) — Indonesia

- SarDesai Ch. 22 Indonesia: Unity Amid Diversity

03/01 (Wednesday) — Indonesia

- Mietzner, Marcus. 2018. "Fighting Illiberalism with Illiberalism: Islamist Populism and Democratic Deconsolidation in Indonesia." *Pacific Affairs* 91, no. 2 (2018): 261–282.

03/03 (Friday) — **Mid-term**

Week 9

03/06 (Monday) — Malaysia

- SarDesai Ch. 24, pp. 285-301

03/08 (Wednesday) — Malaysia

- Weiss, Meredith. "Duelling Networks: Relational Clientelism in Electoral-Authoritarian Malaysia." *Democratization* 27, no. 1 (2020): 100–118.

03/10 (Friday) — Singapore

- SarDesai Ch. 24, pp. 301-310

SPRING BREAK

03/13 to 03/18

Part III: Southeast Asia in Comparative Perspective

Week 10

03/20 (Monday) — Prospects for democratization

- Simpeng, Aim and Aries Arugay. "The Middle Class and Democracy in Southeast Asia," In William Case (ed.). *The Routledge Handbook of Southeast Asian Democratization*. London: Routledge, 2015, pp. 102-116.

03/22 (Wednesday) — Prospects for democratization

- Morgenbesser, Lee and Thomas B. Pepinsky, "Elections as Causes of Democratization: Southeast Asia in Comparative Perspective". *Comparative Political Studies*, 52, no. 1 (2019): 3–35.

03/24 (Friday) — Prospects for democratization

- Emmerson, Donald. "Southeast Asia: Minding the Gap Between Democracy and Governance". *Journal of Democracy* 23, no. 2 (April 2012): 62-73.

Week 11

03/27 (Monday) — Authoritarian durability

03/29 (Wednesday) — Authoritarian durability

- Slater, Dan. "Strong-State Democratization in Malaysia and Singapore." *Journal of Democracy* 23, no. 2 (2012): 19-33.

03/31 (Friday) — Authoritarian durability

- Curato, Nicole, and Diego Fossati. "Authoritarian Innovations: Crafting Support for a Less Democratic Southeast Asia." *Democratization* 27, no. 6 (2020): 1006–1020.

Week 12

04/03 (Monday) — The state and political institutions

- Dulay, Dean. "[The Search for Spices and Souls: Catholic Missions as Colonial State in the Philippines](#)." *Comparative political studies* 55, no. 12 (2022): 2050–2085.

04/05 (Wednesday) — The state and political institutions

- Malesky, Edmund, Regina Abrami, and Yu Zheng. "[Institutions and Inequality in Single-Party Regimes: A Comparative Analysis of Vietnam and China](#)." *Comparative politics* 43, no. 4 (2011): 409–427.

04/07 (Friday) — The state and political institutions

Week 13

04/10 (Monday) — Nationalism and ethnic politics

- Liu, Amy H., and Joel Sawat Selway. "[Explaining Identity Formation in Asia](#)." *Asian politics & policy* 13, no. 1 (2021): 6–17.

04/12 (Wednesday) — Nationalism and ethnic politics

- Toha, Risa J. "[Political competition and ethnic riots in democratic transition: A lesson from Indonesia](#)." *British Journal of Political Science* 47, no. 3 (2017): 631–651.

04/14 (Friday) — Nationalism and ethnic politics

Part IV: Regional Relations in Southeast Asia**Week 14**

04/17 (Monday) — ASEAN

- SarDesai, Part Four Review.
- Watch in class: [What is ASEAN? CNBC Explains](#)

04/19 (Wednesday) — China and SEA

- Hiebert, Murray. "[China's belt and road finds Southeast Asia a tough slog](#)." *ISEAS Perspective* (2020).
- Watch in class: [How is China's New Silk Road is Transforming Vietnam and Laos?](#)

04/21 (Friday) — The United States and SEA

- Carter, Ash. [The Rebalance and Asia-Pacific Security: Building a Principled Security Network](#). *Foreign Affairs* 95, no. 6 (2016): 65–75.

Week 15

04/24 (Monday) — Wrap up & Review