

**Government 3443
Southeast Asian Politics
Spring 2023**

**Professor Thomas Pepinsky
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Class Time

Tuesday and Thursday, 2:45 – 4:00
Ives Hall 105

Office Hours

Monday, 1:00 – 3:00, or by appointment
Sign up at calendly.com/thomas-pepinsky

Teaching Assistant

Harry Dienes
hjd45@cornell.edu

Office Hours

Tuesday and Thursday, 4:15 – 5:15
Sign up at calendly.com/harrydienes

Sections

Wednesday, 12:25 – 1:15
Rockefeller Hall B16

Friday, 1:30 – 2:20
McGraw Hall 145

Overview

This course is an introduction to the politics of Southeast Asia, one of the world's most diverse and fascinating regions. Our focus is analytical: we will use the experiences of Southeast Asia to address some of the central questions of contemporary political science. Some of these questions include,

- Why do some brutal and highly corrupt political regimes survive for decades?
- How does ethnic diversity shape economic development?
- Can some political institutions make politicians more responsive to their citizens?
- What is democracy good for?
- Is nationalism real or “constructed”?
- What explains the success or failure of counterinsurgency warfare?
- How does U.S. foreign policy shape political development in the post-colonial world?
- Do international institutions matter?

While our primary focus is on contemporary politics, we will devote considerable attention to understanding how colonial experiences shape the politics that we see today. We will cover the entire region, but we will devote most of our attention to the region's six most populous countries—Burma, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam.

We begin with a short introduction to the region and its people. We will then survey the politics of individual countries, devoting two class sessions to each of the six largest countries and one session to Singapore. In the third part of the course, we will turn to a series of thematic

discussions that take us across borders: political culture, political economy, conflict and violence, ASEAN, and American interventionism.

Course Goals

By the end of the course, students should be familiar with the basic contours of modern Southeast Asian politics, as well as the historical factors that shape contemporary events. Students should be able to interpret current political developments in the region with reference to history and comparative experiences within the region. Finally, students should be familiar with several important theoretical debates in comparative politics, international relations, and development studies, and should be able to apply the experiences of Southeast Asia to these debates.

Requirements

Prerequisites: This course has no formal prerequisites. However, I strongly recommend that students have already taken GOVT 1313 (*Introduction to Comparative Politics*), ASIAN 2008 (*Introduction to Southeast Asia*), HIST 3960 (*Southeast Asian History from the Eighteenth Century*), or a related foundational course in political science or Asian studies. Students without such a background will find themselves at a distinct disadvantage and should think carefully about enrolling. The course also assumes basic knowledge of world history. Students who find themselves lost during lectures or class discussions should see me during office hours immediately (i.e., not right before the midterm).

Class Format: The class is a lecture meeting twice a week. Attendance is mandatory. Students should log in to each class already having done the readings for that class, and afterwards, review the readings in the context of the class discussion. Class attendance and readings are not substitutes. I will not post lecture notes online.

Assignments and Grading: Your final grade is composed of the following:

Response paper 1:	10%
Response paper 2:	10%
Reading check-ins:	10%
Section participation:	10%
Midterm:	25%
Research paper of 15-20 pages:	35%
TOTAL	100%

Your midterm will contain identification questions, short answers, and long essay questions. You will have a choice among several options for each category of question.

Students will be responsible for one response paper in the first part of the semester, and another in the second part of the semester. Each should be 3-4 pages long, and will respond to the

readings for a particular class period; I will provide a handout on the short paper format early in the semester. The last possible day to turn in the first response paper is March 28. The last possible day to turn in the second response paper is May 4.

“Reading check-ins” are short-answer questions which I will distribute via Canvas before each class throughout the semester. The point of these is to check that students have mastered basic concepts from the readings *before* class, with the goal of freeing up more time during class for discussion and highlighting common misunderstandings. They will be graded on a “satisfactory, unsatisfactory, no credit” basis. These are easy points.

The final paper is an analytical essay of 15-20 pages. I will provide a handout on the paper topic early in the semester. A 1-page abstract is due in class on April 13. The final paper is due on the day when your final exam is scheduled.

Readings: Our readings will come from a series of online articles/chapters and one book. The reading load is substantial: on average, you can expect two articles or book chapters per class.

Course Policies

Late Assignments: Please consult the syllabus for information about the due dates for your assignments. These dates are firm: extensions will only be given 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). Late papers will lose one full letter grade. Papers later than 24 hours will receive a grade of 0/100. There are no exceptions.

Grade Appeals: Any student who believes that a grade does not reflect his or her performance can always dispute his or her grade. All grade appeals should be made in writing. A student disputing a grade must write a brief memo explaining why he or she should have received a higher grade on that assignment. This must be done in a week after the grade is announced, and submitted after class or in office hours. I will respond in writing.

Cheating and Plagiarism: Each student in this course is expected to abide by the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student’s own work. Students are strictly forbidden from buying or selling course materials. Cheating and plagiarism will be treated according to Cornell University regulations, which I will strictly observe. The penalty for violating the Code of Academic Integrity is an F for the assignment.

Some resources on plagiarism and academic integrity at Cornell:

- Tutorial: <http://plagiarism.arts.cornell.edu/tutorial/index.cfm> for a tutorial on plagiarism.
- The Code of Academic Integrity: <http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/aic.cfm>.

For further information on how to cite materials properly, please consult Joseph Gibaldi, *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (New York: MLA).

In this course, we will be using Turnitin.com software. Your TA and I will submit electronic versions of your essays to Turnitin.com, which in turn produces an “originality report.” This report shows the writer and teacher the results of Turnitin.com’s comparison of the essay to content on the Web, to Turnitin.com’s database of student writing, and to some databases of common full-text journals.

By registering for the course, students agree that all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site. Please note: all writing assignments (including the final paper abstract and final paper drafts, should you choose to submit them) are held to the University’s Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct and to the department’s policies on plagiarism.

University Policies: I respect and uphold Cornell University policies and regulations pertaining to the observation of religious holidays; assistance available to those with documented learning needs; sexual harassment; and racial or ethnic discrimination.

- *Students with Disabilities:* In compliance with the Cornell University policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for student with disabilities. Students are encouraged to register with Student Disability Services to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations. Students seeking accommodations should submit to me an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services within the first two weeks of the semester.
- *Religious Observances:* Students may ask for reasonable and timely accommodations for sincerely held religious beliefs. Please review the syllabus closely to determine if your religion will present any scheduling conflicts with any of the assignments. You must inform me of any conflicts within the first two weeks of the semester.
- *Classroom Behavior:* Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students will treat one another with respect and courtesy. I will ask disruptive students to leave the class.

Other Policies: Students will turn off cell phones in class. The penalty for visible text messaging or audible cell phone rings is one percentage point per offense. If this remains a problem, I reserve the right to change the policy to one percentage point per offense for the entire class.

Office Hours: I encourage students to see me during office hours with any questions or comments. If you wish to speak with me during office hours, please sign up online at the address at the header of this syllabus. Your TAs will also hold office hours.

Texts

D.R. SarDesai. 2013. *Southeast Asia: Past & Present*. Seventh edition. Boulder: Westview Press. (hereafter “SarDesai”) Available for purchase at the Cornell bookstore. ISBN 978-0813348377.

All other readings are book chapters and articles, which I have placed on Canvas. You can access them all by clicking the “Modules” tab from our course homepage. You may read these articles and chapters online, or you may print them out. In the course outline below, you will find the reading assignments listed for a particular class meeting.

Course Outline

Important dates

March 28:	Last day to turn in the first response paper
March 30:	Midterm
April 13:	Research paper abstract due
May 4:	Last day to turn in the second response paper
TBD:	Final paper due

Introduction

January 24: Introduction and housekeeping

January 26: What is Southeast Asia?

- SarDesai, 5-20.
- Ruth McVey. 1995. “Continuity and Change in Southeast Asian Studies.” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 26(1): 1-9.

January 31: The Early States

- SarDesai, 21-58.
- James C. Scott. 2009. *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1-61.

Part 1: Individual Country Perspectives

Philippines

February 2: Land and Rebellion

- SarDesai, 133-146.
- Benedict J. Kerkvliet. 1977. *The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 249-269.

February 7: Oligarchy and Populism

- SarDesai, 186-207.
- Benedict Anderson. 1988. "Cacique Democracy in the Philippines: Origins and Dreams." *New Left Review* 169: 3-31.
- Nicole Curato. 2017. "Flirting with Authoritarian Fantasies? Rodrigo Duterte and the New Terms of Philippine Populism." *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 47(1): 142-153.

Malaysia

February 9: The Politics of Ethnicity

- SarDesai, 90-97, 173-176.
- Judith A. Nagata. 1974. "What is a Malay? Situational Selection of Ethnic Identity in a Plural Society." *American Ethnologist* 1(2): 331-350.
- Edmund Terence Gomez and Jomo K.S. 1999. *Malaysia's Political Economy: Politics, Patronage, and Profits*. Second edition. New York: Cambridge University Press, 10-27.

February 14: Authoritarian Institutions

- SarDesai, 285-301.
- Dan Slater. 2003. "Iron Cage in an Iron Fist: Authoritarian Institutions and the Personalization of Power in Malaysia." *Comparative Politics* 36(1): 81-101.
- Sophie Lemièrre. 2018. "The Downfall of Malaysia's Ruling Party." *Journal of Democracy* 29(4): 114-128.

Singapore

February 16: States and Development

- SarDesai, 301-310.
- Natasha Hamilton-Hart. 2000. "The Singapore State Revisited." *Pacific Review* 13(2): 195-216.
- Chua Beng Huat. 2010. "The Cultural Logic of a Capitalist Single-Party State, Singapore." *Postcolonial Studies* 13(4): 335-350.

Indonesia

February 21: Corruption and Development

- SarDesai, 79-89, 147-154, 256-265.
- Richard J. Robison. 1982. "The Transformation of the State in Indonesia." *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 14(1): 48-60.
- Ross H. McLeod. 2000. "Soeharto's Indonesia: A Better Class of Corruption." *Agenda* 7(2): 99-112.

February 23: Democratic Transitions and Consolidation

- SarDesai, 265-277.

- Marcus Mietzner. 2020. "Authoritarian Innovations in Indonesia: Electoral Narrowing, Identity Politics and Executive Illiberalism." *Democratization* 27(6), 1021-1036.

February 28: NO CLASS (SPRING BREAK)

Timor-Leste

March 2: State-Building and Democracy-Building

- Nancy Bermeo. 2022. "The Puzzle of Timor-Leste." in *Democracy in Hard Places*, ed. Scott Mainwaring and Tarek Masoud. New York: Oxford University Press, 160-187.

Burma

March 7: War and the State

- SarDesai, 98-110, 155-159, 214-220.
- Mary P. Callahan. 2003. *Making Enemies: War and State Building in Burma*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1-20, 204-228.

March 9: Order and Civil Peace

- SarDesai, 221-235.
- Kyaw Yin Hlaing. 2009. "Setting the Rules for Survival: Why the Burmese Military Regime Survives in an Age of Democratization," *Pacific Review* 22(3): 271-291.
- Nick Cheesman. 2017. "How in Myanmar 'National Races' Came to Surpass Citizenship and Exclude Rohingya." *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 47(3): 461-483.

Thailand

March 13: Electoral Rules and Policy Outcomes

- SarDesai, 118-124, 160-164, 236-248.
- Joel Sawat Selway. 2011. "Electoral Reform and Public Policy Outcomes in Thailand: The Politics of the 30-Baht Health Scheme." *World Politics* 63(1): 165-202.

March 16: MOVIE DAY (film TBD)

March 21: Loyal Subjects and Loyal Oppositions

- SarDesai, 248-255.
- Duncan McCargo. 2005. "Network Monarchy and Legitimacy Crises in Thailand." *Pacific Review* 18(4): 499-519.
- Kevin Hewison and Kengkij Kitirianglarp. 2010. "'Thai-Style Democracy': The Royalist Struggle for Thailand's Politics." in *Saying the Unsayable: Monarchy and Democracy in Thailand*, ed. Søren Ivarsson and Lotte Isager. Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 179-202.

Vietnam

March 23: Nationalism and Revolution

- SarDesai, 111-117, 165-172, 316-330.
- Tuong Vu. 2017. *Vietnam's Communist Revolution: The Power and Limits of Ideology*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1-30, 178-209.
- Keith W. Taylor. 2004. "How I Began to Teach about the Vietnam War." *Michigan Quarterly Review* 43(4): 637-647.

March 28: Growth and Inequality; Last Day for Response Papers

- SarDesai, 331-352.
- Edmund J. Malesky, Regina M. Abrami, and Yu Zheng. 2011. "Institutions and Inequality in Single-Party Regimes: A Comparative Analysis of Vietnam and China." *Comparative Politics* 43(4): 401-419.

March 30: Midterm

Part 2: Comparative Perspectives

Culture and Identity

April 11: Democracy and Asian Values

- Clark Neher. 1994. "Asian Style Democracy." *Asian Survey* 34(11): 949-961.
- Mark Thompson. 2001. "Whatever Happened to 'Asian Values'?" *Journal of Democracy* 12(4): 154-165.

April 13: Islam and Democracy; RESEARCH PAPER ABSTRACT DUE

- Thomas B. Pepinsky, R. William Liddle, and Saiful Mujani. 2012. "Testing Islam's Political Advantage: Evidence from Indonesia." *American Journal of Political Science* 56(3): 584-600.

Political Economy

April 18: Corruption

- David C. Kang. 2003. "Transaction Costs and Crony Capitalism in East Asia." *Comparative Politics* 35(4): 439-458.

April 20: Economic Development

- Anne Booth. 1999. "Initial Conditions and Miraculous Growth: Why is South East Asia Different From Taiwan and South Korea?" *World Development* 27(2): 301-321.

- Ian Coxhead, Thee Kian Wee, and Arief Anshory Yusuf. 2014. "Twenty-first-century challenges for Southeast Asian economies." in *Routledge Handbook of Southeast Asian Economics*, ed. Ian Coxhead. New York: Routledge, 408-422.

Conflict and Violence

April 25: Genocide and Mass Killing

- Ben Kiernan. 2001. "Myth, Nationalism, and Genocide." *Journal of Genocide Research* 3(2): 187-206.
- Geoffrey B. Robinson. 2018. *The Killing Season: A History of the Indonesian Massacres, 1965-66*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 118-176.

April 27: Insurgency and Counterinsurgency

- Matthew A. Kocher, Thomas B. Pepinsky, and Stathis Kalyvas. 2011. "Aerial Bombing and Counterinsurgency in the Vietnam War." *American Journal of Political Science* 55(1): 1-18.

International Relations

May 2: ASEAN

- Alice D. Ba. 2009. *(Re)Negotiating East and Southeast Asia: Region, Regionalism, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 17-41.
- Dylan Ming Hui Loh. 2016. "ASEAN's norm adherence and its unintended consequences in HADR and SAR operations." *Pacific Review* 29(4): 549-572.

May 4: Southeast Asia, the Indo-Pacific, and the Changing Global Order

- David Shambaugh. 2018. "U.S.-China Rivalry in Southeast Asia: Power Shift or Competitive Coexistence?" *International Security* 42(4): 85-127.
- Lindsey Ford. 2021. "The U.S. 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific' Concept." In *Rivalry and Response: Assessing Great Power Dynamics in Southeast Asia*, ed. Jonathan Stromseth. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 32-51.

Research Paper

May 9: Wrap-Up and Final Thoughts

TBD: FINAL PAPERS

- Electronic copies to pepinsky@cornell.edu and to your TA