

ASNS/POL 236
Concepts of the Political in Southeast Asia: An Introduction

Whitman College, Fall 2012
Tues/Wed/Thurs 10:00-10:50 am
Maxey 204

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Distribution: SS, AS, RAES, GS

Course Description and Objectives

This course examines the particular ways in which the political, the economic, and the cultural are entangled in Southeast Asian societies. Themes we will highlight include the politics of knowledge and translation, modes of cultural encounter and engagement with the foreign, and conceptions of power, gender, race, and indigeneity. We begin by querying ‘Southeast Asia’ as a concept. Under what conditions of possibility has the notion of Southeast Asia, as a region, emerged? What are the politics of knowledge production – specifically, knowledge in the fields of area studies, history, and the social sciences in the North Atlantic – that shape what is knowable about Southeast Asia? Given significant gaps in the pre-colonial historical record of the region, what can we learn about the nature of political power in Southeast Asia prior to European imperialism? How have ‘indigenous’ concepts of the political been redefined and contested through colonization, revolution, and the ascendance of various nationalisms? How have processes of globalization shaped the region’s postcolonial modernities and contemporary forms of political struggle?

This course is an introduction to the politics of and in Southeast Asia, broadly defined. Due to the dizzying linguistic, cultural, religious, ethnic, historical, and geographic diversity of the region, the scope of material we cover is necessarily constrained. We will not examine the historical trajectory of each Southeast Asian nation from classical to contemporary times. Nor will we comprehensively engage the social conditions of any one particular country. Rather, we will highlight concerns that resonate throughout the region, examining their specificities in the context of particular countries and sites. Our approach is empirical, historical, conceptual, and interdisciplinary. The course format will prioritize class discussion, in combination with occasional lectures, small group work, and both independent and collective research. Texts draw from the fields of history, political studies, anthropology, area studies, and cultural studies. We will feature the work of scholars who utilize feminist and postcolonial analyses, and who foreground race, gender, and political economy in their research methods. We will also incorporate regional news into class content. As is feasible, readings will be supplemented by multimedia texts such as film, video, and audio materials. **Note: Contemporary events may occasion revisions to the syllabus.**

By the conclusion of the course, students should have:

- a general empirical understanding of the geography, history, and geopolitics of the region;
- sufficient knowledge to engage in informed debate regarding at least one policy

- issue affecting the region;
- conceptual tools to analyze popular and scholarly comparisons of Southeast Asia to other regions;
- an analysis of gender and racial politics in particular areas of the region; and
- an understanding of the ways in which Southeast Asia and the North Atlantic have shaped each other's histories and identities.

In addition, students will further develop their skills in critical reading, analytic writing, oral presentation, independent research, and group project participation.

Course Requirements and Grading

Discussion Participation	20%
Discussion Leadership	20%
Group Research Project	20%
(2) Analytic Essays	40% (20% per essay)

*** To receive a passing grade, students must complete all course requirements.**

Discussion Participation (20%)

Class discussions will be led and facilitated by students. Given my high expectations for participation, and the value placed on participation as a percentage of your overall grade, **you should not register for the course unless you can fully commit to meeting the participation requirements.**

Students are expected to attend class having thoughtfully completed the reading, with the **assigned texts printed (if necessary) and in hand.** Students will be called upon to demonstrate active, critical engagement with the texts. This entails the ability to identify: 1) the author's central arguments; 2) how the author constructs her/his arguments, including the forms of evidence utilized, logic of the argumentation, and tone; 3) the audience(s) the author seeks to address; 4) why you find the arguments convincing or weak; and 5) aspects of the text you find unclear, or that raise questions for you.

Every student is expected to contribute meaningfully to the learning environment by participating in class. This does not mean dominating class discussion. Class participation will be evaluated based upon students' ability to:

- focus comments on particular textual passages, being sure to engage texts sympathetically before criticizing them.
- raise provocative questions that instigate and extend, rather than stop and close, class discussion.
- keep interventions brief and well-focused.
- clarify issues already under discussion.
- make space for others to enter the conversation.
- introduce unconsidered perspectives.
- demonstrate respect for the arguments and perspectives of others, even while challenging their positions.
- speak without fear of being wrong. Conversely, students should be respectful of the lack of

knowledge we all occasionally bring to class discussions.

*** Unless otherwise specified, please do not use laptops or electronic notebooks during class.**

ABSENCES: Students who anticipate absences excused by college policy must provide me with a list of dates they will be absent within the first week of class. Excused absences may include days of religious observance and participation in Whitman sponsored events such as athletics, debate, and class trips. The student is responsible for ensuring I receive proper documentation of an excused absence. All other absences, unless approved by the Dean of Student's Office, are unexcused. When absent, it is the student's responsibility to get notes, assignments, and announcements from a colleague or via Cleo.

Discussion Leadership (20%)

Class discussion will be led by a group of 2 students (depending on enrollment numbers). Each student will have (2) opportunities to lead class discussion. Discussion leaders are central to the success of the course and are expected to fulfill their roles with great care. Leaders should plan to meet during the weekend prior to their assigned class to map out a polished discussion plan. This plan should be comprised of thoughtfully structured questions, designed to move students logically through the arguments and implications of the text(s). A strong discussion plan does not contain inane, superficial questions with unequivocally 'right' or 'wrong' answers. A strong discussion plan contains questions that instigate sustained conversation, introduce multiple perspectives, and lead to more, profound questions. **Creating a strong discussion plan is an art that takes time, imagination, and a desire to engage students in vibrant debate.**

*** Discussion leaders should plan to lead discussion for 30 minutes.**

Group Research Project (20%)

Students will be organized into groups of 5-6 people to conduct research on a contemporary policy issue or social movement in Southeast Asia. A handout detailing guidelines and possible topics will follow. The policy issue or social movement may be specific to a particular country, or transnational. Each group will give a 35-40 minute presentation of its research findings during the last two weeks of class. The project will consist of two components, each worth 50% of your Group Research Project grade:

- 1) **A written summary of findings**, which each student will produce individually. Your summary of findings will take the form of a 1400-1600 word essay focused on a precisely-defined aspect of the policy problem or social movement examined by your group.
- 2) **An oral presentation of findings**, created using computer presentation software such as Prezi, Keynote, or Powerpoint. The presentation should include all group members' voices and input equally; be rich in multi-media content (images; film, video, and audio clips, etc.); and be deliverable in no more than 35-40 minutes of class time.

Two Analytic Essays (40% total, 20% each)

Both essays will be 1500-1800 words in length and will require students to synthesize and

analytically engage course materials. Essay One will cover issues from the first half of the course; Essay Two will address issues from the second half. Students will have the option to choose among several possible pre-determined essay topics. Handouts with detailed instructions will follow.

Analytic Essays will be evaluated based upon the following criteria:

- Clarity and sophistication of your thesis.
- Effective use of evidence from course materials, news reports, and other approved texts to support your thesis.
- Engagement with counter-arguments that could be mobilized to undermine your thesis. That is, you should be able to advance your argument while remaining aware of alternative perspectives.
- Logic of organization, strength of mechanics, and elegance of style.
- Appropriate use of a standard academic citation format.

*** Late papers will not be accepted.**

Grading

A's are earned by clearly superior work. Papers and presentations offer lucid, elegantly elaborated arguments that assiduously cite from the best quality sources. The prose is mechanically flawless, and provides a clear and substantive introduction and conclusion. The analysis demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the subject matter and is both nuanced and innovative, going well beyond summarizing the readings and class discussions.

B's are earned by good papers and presentations that illustrate an adequate understanding of the subject matter. B work demonstrates competence in crafting a coherent argument and generally avoids awkward and unclear writing, as well as grammatical, spelling, punctuation and format errors. B+ papers are better than most and have the potential to be excellent. Work in the B range demonstrates an acceptable level of engagement with the course material and an ability to work with this material in productive ways.

C's are earned by papers and presentations that are flawed in argumentation and/or in writing. The argument may be undefined, poorly articulated or poorly supported. It generally does not offer more than a minimal summary of course material and reflects no intellectual curiosity. The essay or presentation may be especially difficult to follow, and afflicted by generally poor or sloppy writing.

D's and F's are a clear indication that the paper or presentation is unacceptable and well below your capabilities.

DISABILITY POLICY: At the beginning of the semester, students requiring academic accommodation for a disability should notify the Director of Academic Resources and discuss with me any necessary course accommodations.

Required Texts

All readings and supplementary texts will be uploaded to Cleo. Since students are not required to pay the expense of purchasing multiple texts, **it is an absolute requirement that texts are printed and brought to class** on the assigned discussion dates.

Should you wish to purchase the following books, they will be available at the Bookstore in a few weeks:

- Andaya, Barbara. *The Flaming Womb: Repositioning Women in Early Modern Southeast Asia*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006)
- Owen, Norman, ed., *Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia: A New History* (Honolulu: U. of Hawaii Press, 2005).
- Scott, James. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).
- Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt. *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (Princeton University Press, 2005).

Schedule of Assignments

Week 1.

8/28 What is a concept of the political in Southeast Asia?

Introductions

Class activity: the multiple mappings of Southeast Asia

- **Discussion Leadership sign-ups**

8/29 The Politics of Area Studies & the Emergence of Southeast Asia

- Said, Edward. "From *Orientalism*," in Williams, Patrick and Laura Chrisman, eds. *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994) 132-148.
- Emerson, Donald K. "'Southeast Asia': What's in a Name?," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Mar., 1984), 1-21.
- Owen, Norman. Introduction: Places and Peoples, *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia: A New History* (Honolulu: U. of Hawaii Press, 2005), 1-15.
- **Discussion Leadership sign-ups**

8/30 The Politics of Southeast Asian Studies

- Dutton, George. "Southeast Asian Studies in the United States and Southeast Asia: Missing Links," in Sears, L. ed., *Knowing Southeast Asian Subjects*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007) 139-166.
- Henchy, Judith. "Disciplining Knowledge: Representing Resources for Southeast Asian Studies in the Libraries of the U.S. Academy," in Sears, L. ed., *Knowing Southeast Asian Subjects*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007) 172-199.
- **Discussion Leadership sign-ups**

Week 2.

9/4 The Politics of Southeast Asian Studies, continued

- Sears, Laurie. "Postcolonial Identities, Feminist Criticism, and Southeast Asian Studies,"

in *Knowing Southeast Asian Subjects*. 35-63.

- Heryanto, Ariel. “Can there be Southeast Asians in Southeast Asian Studies?” in *Knowing Southeast Asian Subjects*. 75-102.
- DISCUSSION LEADERS (+3 EXTRA CREDIT POINTS): **NANDINI RATH, ELI LEWIS**

9/5 Social Orders: ‘Early’ Southeast Asia

- Hall, Kenneth. “Economic History of Early Southeast Asia,” in Tarling, N., ed., 1999, *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia, Vol. 1, Part I*, 183-226
- DISCUSSION LEADERS (+3 EXTRA CREDIT POINTS): **DANA FONG, PHUONG LE**

9/6 Social Orders: ‘Early’ Southeast Asia, continued

- Hall, Kenneth. “Economic History of Early Southeast Asia,” 226-272
- DISCUSSION LEADERS (+3 EXTRA CREDIT POINTS): **JULIA BLADIN, SERENA RUNYAN**

Week 3.

9/11 Social Orders: ‘Early Modern’ Southeast Asia

- Reid, Anthony. “Introduction: The Lands Below the Winds” and
- “IV: Social Organization,” in *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce 1450-1680, Vol. I: The Lands Below the Winds* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), 1-10, 120-172
- DISCUSSION LEADERS: **HENRY GALES, OSTA DAVIS**

9/12 Social Orders: ‘Early Modern’ Southeast Asia, continued

- Reid, Anthony. “The Age of Commerce, 1400-1650” in *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce 1450-1680, Vol. II: Expansion and Crisis* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), 1-61.
- **Distribution of Group Research Project Requirements & group assignments**

9/13 Gendering ‘Early Modern’ Southeast Asia

- Andaya, Barbara. Introduction and
- Chapter 1: “Women and ‘Southeast Asia,’ in *The Flaming Womb: Repositioning Women in Early Modern Southeast Asia*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2006), 1-41.
- DISCUSSION LEADERS: **JULIA BLADIN, JULIE PETERSON**

Week 4.

9/18 **Library Research Tutorial – Class meets at Penrose Library**

9/19 Gendering ‘Early Modern’ Southeast Asia, continued

- Andaya, Barbara. Chapter 2: “Early Modernity, Sources, and Women’s History” and
- in *The Flaming Womb*, 42-78.

- DISCUSSION LEADERS: **JOSEPHINE HOYNE**

9/20 Gendering 'Early Modern' Southeast Asia, continued

- Andaya, Barbara. Chapter 3: "Women and Religious Change," 78-103.
- DISCUSSION LEADERS: **MELANIE MEDINA, DANA FONG**

Week 5.

9/25 Gendering 'Early Modern' Southeast Asia, continued

- Andaya, Barbara. Chapter 5: "States, Subjects, and Households," 134-164.
- DISCUSSION LEADERS: **ALEX PORTER, PHUONG LE**

9/26 Gendering 'Early Modern' Southeast Asia, continued

- Andaya, Barbara. Chapter 6: "Women, Courts, and Class," 165-196.
- DISCUSSION LEADERS: **JOSEPHINE HOYNE, OSTA DAVIS**

9/27 Library session - Finalize Group Research Topics

- Class meets at Penrose Library CTL, 3rd floor.
- Groups will finalize individual research areas and distribution of labor.
- **Bring your laptops!**

10/1 **Upload to CLEo by 12 noon:**

1. One document summarizing each group member's preliminary research questions.
2. Preliminary, annotated bibliographies for each group member.

Week 6.

10/2 Modernities/Imperialisms

- Owen, Norman. "Ch. 3: The Struggle for Political Authority" & "Ch. 4: Dynasties & Colonies, Boundaries & Frontiers" in *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia*, 52-81.
- DISCUSSION LEADER: **RILEY MEBUS**

10/3 Modernities/Imperialisms, continued.

- Owen, Norman. "Ch. 5: Myanmar Becomes British Burma," 83-92;
- "Ch. 7: Vietnam, 1700-1885: Disunity, Unity, and French Conquest," 106-116;
- "Ch. 8: Cambodia 1796-1884: Politics in a Tributary Kingdom," 117-122, in *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia*.
- DISCUSSION LEADER: **SERENA RUNYAN**

10/4 Modernities/Imperialisms, continued.

- Owen, Norman. "Ch. 9: Realignments: The Making of the Netherlands East Indies,"
- "Ch. 10: The Malay *Negeri* of the Peninsula and Borneo, 1775-1900," and
- "Ch. 11: The Spanish Philippines," in *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia*, 123-156
- **Analytic Essay One Guidelines distributed**

Week 7.

10/9 **No class – October Break**

10/10 Geo-Bodies and the Cartography of Encounter

- Owen, Norman. “Ch. 6: Siam: From Ayutthaya to Bangkok,” 93-105, in *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia*.
- Winichakul, Thongchai. Preface, “Introduction: The Presence of Nationhood” and
- “Chapter 1: Indigenous Space and Ancient Maps,” in in *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), ix-36

10/11 Geo-Bodies and the Cartography of Encounter, continued

- Winichakul, Thongchai. “Ch. 2: The Coming of a New Geography,” 37-61 in *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997).
- DISCUSSION LEADERS: **CRAIG BARSTOW, JAKE HARWOOD**

Week 8.

10/16 Geo-Bodies and the Cartography of Encounter, continued

- Winichakul, Thongchai. “Ch. 3: Boundary,” 62-80;
- “Ch. 4: Sovereignty,” 81-94 in *Siam Mapped*.

10/17 Geo-Bodies and the Cartography of Encounter, continued

- Winichakul, Thongchai. “Ch. 5: Margin,” and
- “Ch. 6: Mapping: A New Technology of Space” in *Siam Mapped*, 95-127.
- DISCUSSION LEADER: **ANNABELLE MARCOVICI, ELI LEWIS**

10/18 Colonial Governmentality

- Owen, Norman. Chapter 12: Globalization and Economic Change,
- Chapter 13: Modes of Production, Old and New, in *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia*, 161-200
- DISCUSSION LEADERS: **PHUONG LE**

*** Analytic Essay One due to CLEo on Monday 10/22 at noon**

Week 9.

10/23 Colonial Governmentality, continued

- Owen, Norman. Chapter 14: Consolidation of Colonial Power and Centralization of State Authority, and
- Chapter 15: Living in a Time of Transition, in *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia*, 201-242
- DISCUSSION LEADERS: **ALEX PORTER, CRAIG BARSTOW**

10/24 Colonial Governmentality, continued

- Owen, Norman. Chapter 16: Perceptions of Race, Gender, and Class in the Colonial Era,
- Chapter 17: Channels of Change, and
- Chapter 18: Depression and War, in *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia*, 243-278

- DISCUSSION LEADERS: **JULIE PETERSON, NANDINI RATHI**

10/25 Revolution, Decolonization, and the Pitfalls of National Consciousness

- Owen, Norman. Chapter 19: The Philippines: 1896-1972: From Revolution to Martial Law,
- Chapter 20: Becoming Indonesia, 1900-1959, in *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia*, 283-311
- DISCUSSION LEADERS: **JOEL SENEAL**

Week 10.

10/30 Revolution, Decolonization, and the Pitfalls of National Consciousness

- Owen, Norman. Chapter 23: Vietnam, 1885-1975: Colonialism, Communism, and Wars,
- Chapter 24: Siam Becomes Thailand, 1910-1973,
- Chapter 25: Cambodia, 1884-1975, and
- Chapter 26: Laos to 1975, in *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia*, 335-378
- DISCUSSION LEADERS: **MELANIE MEDINA**

10/31 Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance

- Scott, James. Preface and Chapter 1: Small Arms Fire in the Class War, in *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), xv-27
- DISCUSSION LEADERS: **ANNABELLE MARCOVICI, JAKE HARWOOD**

11/1 Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance, continued

- Ch. 2: Normal Exploitation, Normal Resistance, in *Weapons of the Weak*, 28-45

Week 11.

11/6 Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance, continued

- Scott, James. Scott, James. Ch. 3: The Landscape of Resistance, in *Weapons of the Weak*, 48-85
- DISCUSSION LEADERS: **RILEY MEBUS, JOEL SENEAL**

11/7 Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance, continued

- Chapter 4: Sedaka, 1967-1979, in *Weapons of the Weak*, 86-110
- DISCUSSION LEADER: **TAYLOR ASCHENBRENNER**

11/8 Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance, continued

- Chapter 4: Sedaka, 1967-1979, in *Weapons of the Weak*, 110-137
- DISCUSSION LEADER: **TAYLOR ASCHENBRENNER**

Week 12.

11/13 Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance, continued

- Scott, James. Chapter 5: History According to Winners & Losers, in *Weapons of the Weak*, 138-178

11/14 Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance, continued

- Scott, James. Chapter 6: Stretching the Truth: Ideology at Work, in *Weapons of the Weak*, 184-212

11/15 Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance, continued

- Scott, James. Chapter 6: Stretching the Truth: Ideology at Work, in *Weapons of the Weak*, 212-240
- **Share with your group members a preliminary outline of your individual presentation (last 20-25 minutes of class)**

Week 13. No Class – Thanksgiving Break

Week 14.

11/27 Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance, continued

- Scott, James. Chapter 7: Beyond the War of Words: Cautious Resistance and Calculated Conformity, in *Weapons of the Weak*, 241-273
- **Final Map Quiz**

11/28 Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance, continued

- Scott, James. Chapter 7: Beyond the War of Words: Cautious Resistance and Calculated Conformity, in *Weapons of the Weak*, 274-303
- **Lecture: ASEAN & Contemporary Challenges Facing the Region**

11/29 **Group 1 presents. Climate Change: Marcovici, Harwood, Davis, Phuong.**

Week 15.

12/4 **Group 2 presents. Environmental Movement: Lewis, Senecal, Runyon, Rath, Peterson.**

12/5 **Group 3 presents. Human Trafficking: Fong, Bladin, Barstow, Porter.**

12/6 **Group 4 presents. Women's Movement: Hoyne, Aschenbrenner, Medina, Mebus.**

Exam Week.

*** Analytic Essay Two due to CLEo on Thurs. 12/13 at noon**