PS 158: Southeast Asian Politics
Tuesday-Thursday 5:00-6:50 pm
Royce 190
Fall 2003

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Office hours: Mondays 2:30-4:00

This course is designed to introduce advanced undergraduates to the complex and contradictory world of Southeast Asian politics. It is also designed to acquaint students with some of the basic tools and theories that political scientists use to understand the developing world. The course will emphasize the links between North America and Southeast Asia: from the problems of terrorism to the scourge of the heroin trade, the futures of these two regions have become inextricably linked.

The course has two parts. The first is a country-by-country survey of five of Southeast Asia's eleven states: Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines, Burma, and Singapore. The second section of the course draws on the tools of comparative analysis to address some of the major issues that confront the region: the challenge of democratization; achieving economic growth; addressing inequality and women’s rights; stemming the flow of illegal drugs; reversing deforestation; and coping with piracy, terrorism, and threats to the region’s security.

The classes will mix lectures with discussions of the readings. The readings have been carefully chosen, are (for the most part) easily digested, and will form an essential part of class discussions. This means that all readings should be completed before coming to class. Lectures will, in general, not reiterate material that is already in the readings; instead they will be used to explain and apply theories that can help make sense of the readings, and emphasize "the big picture."

The book we will use is the new, 5th edition of *Southeast Asia: Past and Present* by UCLA Historian D. R. SarDesai. Please note you must have the fifth edition of this book – issued in 2003 – which is substantially updated from the 1997 fourth edition. It is available at the bookstore at Ackerman. The other readings will be available on electronic reserve. There is no course reader. I did this to save you money; but I expect you to read these articles just as carefully as you would if you had purchased them in a reader.
To access the electronic reserve, you can use your BOL account, or any workstation in the Powell Library. It’s at: [http://ereserves.library.ucla.edu](http://ereserves.library.ucla.edu). You can download the readings or read them online if you prefer.

There will be a map quiz, a take-home mid-term and a take-home final exam. The final grade will be calculated the following way:

- map quiz: 10%
- midterm: 35%
- final exam: 50%
- class participation: 5%

There will also be opportunities to earn extra credit.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

**September 25 - Introduction to the Course**

**September 30 - The Nations and States of Southeast Asia.** Many people use the terms "state" and "nation" interchangeably. But in political science they have distinct -- and precise -- meanings. In this lecture I define these terms, and present one of the central ideas of the course: that there is a conflict in Southeast Asia between "statehood" and "nationhood" -- in other words, between the legal jurisdictions of the region's eleven governments (statehood), and the ethnic, linguistic, and racial unity (nationhood) of the people in each of the states. The conflict between Southeast Asia's "nations" and Southeast Asia's "states" lies at the heart of many of the region's political troubles.

I will also present in the lecture an overview of the colonial era, focusing on how the boundaries of Southeast Asia's states were fixed by the Western colonial powers, during the course of 450 years of rule. The SarDesai readings will fill in some critical details. Chapter 1 is an excellent overview of the region's history, and Chapter 12 will introduce you to the rise of "nationalism" in Southeast Asia. The chapters have many details that I will not cover in the lecture, but which you will need to know.

a. SarDesai, Chapters 1 and 12

**October 2 - MAP QUIZ, plus Southeast Asia and the Cold War.** The first twenty minutes of class will be used for the map quiz. After that we will begin to talk about the region’s history during World War II and the Cold War. This will take us up to the point that subsequent lectures, on the individual countries themselves, will begin. No readings are assigned for this
class, to give you time to prepare for the map quiz.

a. No assigned reading; prepare instead for the Map Quiz.

October 7 - Indonesia (I): 1945-1965. This is the first of two classes devoted to the study of Southeast Asia's largest -- and arguably, most important -- state. In the first part of class I will lecture on Indonesia's predicament in the 1940's, 1950's, and early 1960's, when the government was led by President Sukarno. Not only did Sukarno face the problems of building a "nation" in the territory formerly governed by the Dutch; he also confronted the forces of the Cold War. We will then see an excellent documentary, "Shadow Play," which documents Indonesia's "year of living dangerously" (1965), and tells the story of Indonesian politics under Suharto through 1998. The film is designed to supplement the readings and give you a better "feel" for Indonesia and its complex history and peoples.

For an excellent guide to Indonesia-related web sites, check out: http://coombs.anu.edu.au/WWWVLPages/IndonPages/WWWVL-Indonesia.html. It's a portal for dozens of great web sites – you can take a virtual tour of Balinese temples, check out declassified CIA documents about the US attempts to overthrow Sukarno, and learn more about the history, culture, and politics of the country.

a. SarDesai, pages 171-175; plus all of chapter 22.

October 9 - Indonesia (II): 1965-2003. Today I will lecture on the rise and fall of Suharto, the son of a minor village official who came to rule Indonesia from 1965 to 1998. Until he was overthrown, many considered Suharto a great political leader; others viewed him as one of the 20th century's most notorious murderers. How did he come to power and bring such stability -- and brutality and corruption -- to Indonesia?

I will also discuss the chaotic period of the last five years – the “post-Suharto” era. Please read the report from the International Crisis Group, a private think-tank. Also: wonder what it was like to live in Jakarta during the 1998 riots, when all hell broke loose? Jeff Pulice's three dispatches will give you bizarre tour of Jakarta in turmoil.


October 14 - Vietnam I: Decades of War, 1945-1975. Today’s class will be part lecture, part film. An astonishing amount of the Vietnam saga was captured on film; we begin our section on Vietnam with The Roots of War, a superb documentary that takes us through French colonial rule, World War II, Vietnam's war against the French, and the early years of U.S. military
involvement. Bring your own popcorn. The second half of class will be a lecture that provides an overview of the Vietnam War.

Incidentally, an excellent web site about the Vietnam War, with images, documents, and all kinds of other things, is: http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/shhw/shwvhome.html.

a. SarDesai, chapter 17 (skim), plus pages 347-368

**October 16** - *Vietnam II: After the American War, 1975-2003.* After losing millions of people in a war to defend its communist system, in the last two decades Vietnam has -- ironically -- moved towards a capitalist economy and tolerated greater political openness. How did these changes come about? What are the prospects for further democratic change in Vietnam? Read the article by Pierre, and the chapter by SarDesai, which should give you an update on Vietnam’s politics. And – just as interesting – check out the Stein article (from *Fortune* magazine) about how Vietnam has become a major supplier of the world’s coffee – and the problems this has caused.

Also, a superb guide to Vietnam-related websites – including virtual tours, maps, historical documents, etc., is: http://coombs.anu.edu.au/WWWVLPages/VietPages/WWWVL-Vietnam.html.


**October 21** – *The Philippines.* The Philippines is the Southeast Asian country most closely tied to the U.S.: it was a U.S. colony from 1898 to 1946, and the U.S. maintained military bases there until the early 1990s. Since the September 11 attacks, these ties have been rekindled: U.S. troops are now in the southern Philippines, helping the government fight Abu Sayyaf, an insurgent army that may or may not have ties to Al-Qaeda.

The SarDesai chapter gives a fine, succinct overview of 20th century Philippine politics. Carl Landé, a leading scholar of the Philippines, discusses the removal from office of President Joseph Estrada in January 2001 – bringing us more or less up-to-date.

For access to everything web-wise on the Philippines, visit: http://www.iiias.nl/wwwvl/southeas/philippi.html.

a. SarDesai, chapters 13 (skim) and 19.

October 23 – Burma. Burma is one of Southeast Asia's most troubled -- and most intriguing -- countries. For the last half century, Burma has been a political disaster. Why has it failed so miserably?

The chapter in SarDesai will give you the background. The Indian journalist Amitav Ghosh has written a fascinating and highly-readable account of a journey through Burma today. Tortured Voices will allow you to hear the voices of Burmese peoples directly, through accounts of their treatment in government “interrogation” centers. Also included, as ‘recommended’ reading, is the classic article by George Orwell, written in 1936, when he was a colonial officer in Burma.

I strongly recommend a visit to the web site of the “Burma Project,” at http://www.soros.org/burma. It has all kinds of maps, documents, reports, songs, and data.


c. ABSDF (1998), Tortured Voices: Personal Accounts of Burma’s Interrogation Centers, excerpts.

October 28 - Singapore. Our final stop on the whirlwind tour is Singapore -- a remarkably clean and prosperous city-state that has led to a great deal of puzzlement and head-scratching among political scientists. Singapore sits alongside some of the poorest and most corrupt countries in the world; yet it is has become richer than many European states, and it has one of the world's least corrupt governments. How did it achieve this remarkable success? Can Singapore's record of growth be explained by "Confucian values" and its "soft authoritarian" form of government? Does Singapore's success hold lessons for the region's other states?

We will have both a lecture and a film (“Mini Dragons: Singapore”) to address the puzzle of Singapore. Start by reading the chapter on Singapore in SarDesai; then take a look at the articles by Chee Soon Juan, who is associated with the Singapore opposition; and Simon Elegant, a journalist for Time magazine. If you have time, a visit to the official government Singapore web site, www.gov.sg/, can be interesting.


October 30: Laos, “Moving Mountains” I realize you won't want to do much reading for class
while preparing for your midterm. So in class we will see an excellent documentary about the
Yiu Mien, a group of Laotian hill peoples who assisted the CIA during the Vietnam War, and
were later settled in the U.S.

For those of you interested in a related topic – the consequences of Cambodia's "killing fields" –
I recommend a visit to the photo archive assembled by the Cambodian Genocide Projects at Yale
University, where you can see photographs taken by the Khmer Rouge of many of their victims,
shortly before they were executed; it’s at www.yale.edu/cgp.

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THE MIDTERM WILL BE HANDED OUT AT THE END OF CLASS ON OCTOBER
30; IT WILL BE DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS ON TUESDAY NOVEMBER 4.
PAPERS TURNED IN AFTER 5:00 PM WILL HAVE FIVE POINTS DEDUCTED.
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November 4 – What Causes Democracy? To start the second half of the course, we will take a
closer look at the problems of democracy. What do we mean by “democracy,” and what do we
know about what ‘causes’ democracy?

We have a series of articles on ‘democracy’ today: one by Seymour Martin Lipset, one of the
great democracy scholars; another by Singapore's former Prime Minister Lee Kwan Yew, who
sees democracy as inappropriate for Asian cultures; and a short essay by Burmese opposition
leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who sees democracy in a more favorable light.

You might also want to check out the Freedom House website, www.freedomhouse.org.
Although it’s a politically conservative organization, Freedom House is also a respected research
institution with tons of useful information about global trends in democracy.

      American Sociological Review 59 (February).
   b. Zakaria, Fareed (1994) "Culture is Destiny: A Conversation with Lee Kuan Yew,
      Foreign Affairs 73 (2, March/April), 109-126.
      Democracy 6 (2, April), 11-19.

November 6 – Economic Growth. Today’s lecture will consider Southeast Asia's "political
economy" -- how these governments have fostered, or inhibited, economic growth. The region
includes countries that have grown quickly and become rich (Singapore, Malaysia), and others
that are as poor or poorer than they were 40 years ago (Burma, Cambodia, Laos). What accounts
for this divergence? I will devote special attention to the role of Southeast Asia's ethnic Chinese
business networks, which have played a central role in the economic success of the region's
wealthier states; and to the problem of corruption.

The reading for today is varied. **Kristof and WuDunn** argue that “sweatshops” can be a good thing for developing states; see if you agree with them. The article by **D'Souza** highlights the special role of Southeast Asia's "overseas Chinese" in the region's economic growth. **Dini Djalal**'s report on corruption in Southeast Asia discusses how, and why, corruption varies so much across the region; and the article by **Talbot** discusses one of the region’s newest industries: the plastic surgery/sex-change industry (this last article is optional reading; I included it for your pleasure).


**November 11: Veteran’s Day**

**November 13 – Equality, Race, and Gender.** Economics is not just about growth; it is also about equality. Today we will look at how different groups in the region have fared – including ethnic minorities and women. Women in pre-modern Southeast Asia generally had higher status than in other pre-modern societies; sadly, in many areas this has changed dramatically.

I guarantee you will not find today’s reading dull. The marvelous chapter by **Reid** discusses the region’s long tradition of equality in gender relations; I should warn you that some of the material is quite explicit. The **Suskind** article explains what happened when an isolated tribe in the Philippines was brought into the modern world. Finally, the *Social Science and Medicine* article describes the appalling trade in women and girls, and its consequences, especially for the spread of HIV.


c. “Shan women and girls and the sex industry in Southeast Asia,” *Social Science and Medicine*. 

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November 18 - The Drug Trade. One of Southeast Asia's most economically successful exports -- renown for its high quality and broad distribution networks -- is heroin. Today's lecture will consider the history, manufacture, politics, and economics of the drug trade. To help you get oriented read the Opium Throughout History chronology; the explanation of Heroin in the Brain; the how-to guide, Transforming Opium Poppies into Heroin; the article by Bernstein and Kean, which explains the close links between the Burmese government and the heroin business; and a recent analysis by Brzezinski of the latest developments in the global heroin trade.


November 20 - The Politics and Economics of Deforestation. Most people consider economic growth a good thing; but sometimes market forces can spin out of control -- as in both the case of heroin, and the case of deforestation. Southeast Asia is the world's leading exporter of hardwood logs; it also suffers from the fastest deforestation rates in the tropics. The lecture today will explore the political and economic roots of these problems, focusing on Indonesia, East Malaysia, and the Philippines -- the three countries that have logged their forests most aggressively. The article by Stan Sesser provides a vivid account of deforestation in the East Malaysian state of Sarawak, and its impact on the nomadic Penan; I’m afraid that most of what he wrote in 1991 is still true today. Bring any questions you have to class.

An excellent web site on the problems of tropical deforestation is offered by the Worldwide Forests/Biodiversity Campaign: www.forests.org/world.htm.

the region, including the dispute over the Spratly Islands, tensions with China, and the growing
issue of piracy. It will also discuss the efforts of the Southeast Asian countries to build
cooperative institutions – most importantly, ASEAN.

The article by Gallagher is an excellent overview of the Spratly dispute, and the dangers of
military confrontation between the ASEAN states and China; and the piece by Hitt offers a vivid
description of the problem of piracy in SE Asia today.


   Magazine*, August 20.

**November 27: Thanksgiving**

**December 2 – Domestic Conflicts, Security, and Terrorism.** Many of the conflicts in Southeast
Asia occur within nations, not between them. The lecture today will focus on the region’s civil
wars and hotspots, including Aceh, West Papua, East Timor, Burma’s eastern border, and
Mindanao. We will also look closely at the evidence that Islamic groups in the region are tied to
Al-Qaeda and represent a threat to U.S. interests.

Rather than have you read short pieces about every conflict, I’ve assigned a more in-depth
background paper on one of the key terrorist groups, the Jemaah Islamiyah; and an overview of
terrorism in the region. But if you’re interested in the conflict in the southern Philippines, there
are some excellent links at the following site:

http://ca.fullcoverage.yahoo.com/fc/Canada/Southern_Philippine_Conflict/

   Islamiyah Terrorist Network Operates*.

   Summer.

**December 4 – Summary and Looking Ahead.** There are no assigned readings for the class, since
you will need to study for the final exam. In class we will discuss the region’s prospects in the
years ahead, and what the U.S. role should be. I will address any remaining questions you have,
tie up loose ends, and hand out the final exam.

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THE FINAL EXAM WILL BE HANDED OUT IN CLASS ON DECEMBER 4
AND IS DUE ON MONDAY DECEMBER 8 AT 2:00 PM,
IN MY OFFICE (3375 Bunche Hall)