PS 158: Southeast Asian Politics

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 also emphasize the links between North America and Southeast Asia: from the issue 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 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 problems that confront the region: the challenge of democratization; achieving economic growth; stemming the flow of illegal drugs; reversing deforestation; and coping with piracy, terrorism, and threats to the region’s security.