

Culture and Politics in Southeast Asia

IDS 4930/ANT4930

Fall Semester 2024

University of Florida

International Studies Program

Department of Anthropology

Course Information:

Instructor: Timothy Karis, PhD
Course time/location: Tuesday, Period 7 (1:55-2:45PM) in MAT116,
Thursday, Periods 7-8 (1:55-3:50PM) in LIT221
Office location: Pugh Hall 232
Office hours: Tuesday 11:45AM-1:15 PM (drop-in hours),
Wednesday 2:45-4:15 PM (by Calendly appointment)
Thursday 12:00-1:00 PM (by Calendly appointment)
<https://calendly.com/dr-karis-office-hours/dr-karis-fall-2024-office-hours>
Additional meetings can be arranged by emailing tkaris@ufl.edu.

Course Description:

This course offers an introduction to the diverse nation-states, people, and governments of contemporary Southeast Asia, with a particular emphasis of the intersections between culture and politics in the region. The countries of Southeast Asia (Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, Cambodia, Singapore, Myanmar, Laos, East Timor, and Brunei) emerged from the era of imperialism with newly minted borders, a variety of political systems, and tensions between different segments of the population over the definition and future of the nation. Today, even as Southeast Asia has enjoyed unprecedented economic growth and development, tensions related to culture and politics remain, and we will explore this theme through the topics of postcolonial nation-building, ethnic conflict, nationalism and cultural pluralism, indigenous rights, gender roles, religious practices, education and language, and how the forces of globalization and state visions of modernization impact local cultures and communities.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the semester, students will achieve an understanding of:

- The close and often tense relationships between culture and politics in the region
- The cultural debates that accompany projects of post-colonial nation building
- The inequalities faced by minority cultural/ethnic groups in Asian states
- How the forces of globalization both undermine and serve to reinforce cultural identities
- How the cultures of immigrant groups interface with cultures and politics in destinations

Course Texts:

1. Winichakul, Thongchai. (1997). *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geobody of a Nation*. University of Hawaii Press.
2. Elinoff, Eli. (2021). *Citizen Designs: City-Making and Democracy in Northeastern Thailand*. University of Hawaii Press.
3. Fadiman, Anne. (1997). *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures*. New York: Noonday Press.

Student Responsibilities:

Students are expected to complete all readings and assignments and to attend all class sessions, barring an emergency. Accumulating more than three unexcused absences will significantly impact your participation score. Please arrive on time and well prepared. The class will include discussion, lectures, and film screenings. Your active participation figures in your final grade, so please put forth your best effort to contribute to class discussions. Please always maintain respect for your classmates even when discussing sometimes controversial subjects. Please refrain from using your phone for any activities unrelated to our class, including reading and sending text messages. This syllabus is a living document responsive to student interests, current events, and the pace of class, and therefore subject to change. You should regularly check the class Canvas site for readings, announcements, and information about assignments and class activities.

Academic Honesty:

Please do not engage in plagiarism or any other behaviors that would violate the University of Florida Academic Honesty Policy. You can find a copy of the University of Florida Academic Honesty Policy using the link that follows. It is the student's responsibility to read, understand, and abide by the policy: <https://archive.catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/1617//advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx>

Student Evaluation:

Your grade will be based on two take-home exams, two 4-5 page essays, and a map quiz. Individual assignment prompts will be distributed in class and posted to Canvas. You will have at least 14 days to complete each of the assignments after being posted to Canvas, and you can expect to have your work graded and returned in 14 days as well. The course grading breakdown is as follows:

Take-home exam 1 (Due 9/26)	20%
Take-home exam 2 (Due 12/10)	20%
Essay 1 (4-5 pages; Due 10/17)	20%
Essay 2 (4-5 pages; Due 11/14)	20%
Map quiz	5%
Class participation	15%
Total	100%

Grading Scale:

A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D+	67-69
D	64-66
D-	60-63
F	<60

Writing Requirements:

When composing your essays, you are free to cite your sources according to either the APA or MLA formatting requirements – just be sure to remain consistent. The best essays will reference key course readings and ideas while demonstrating original thinking in answering the question(s). Your essays will be evaluated using the following grading rubric:

1. (40 points) - The extent to which the response demonstrates an understanding of key concepts and thoughtfully and thoroughly answers the questions.
2. (40 points) - The depth of the analysis, including reference to specific citations and examples and attention to the connections between cases.
3. (20 points) - The overall quality of the work, including evidence of effort, logic and reasoning, and conformity to the formatting guidelines.

Please remember that the UF Writing Studio also offers excellent guidance for students looking to improve their writing skills. The studio's online tutors, instructional tutorials, and other resources can be found at: [writing.ufl.edu/writing studio](http://writing.ufl.edu/writing%20studio).

Accommodations:

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluations:

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner can be found at the following web address: <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>.

Course Schedule:

Week 1 - (8/22): Introducing Southeast Asia

Readings:

1. Osborne, Milton (2004). "What is Southeast Asia?" in *Southeast Asia: An Introductory History*, pp. 1-17.
2. Anthony Reid (1988). "Introduction: The Lands Below the Winds" in *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce 1450-1680*, pp. 1-12.

Week 2 - (8/27-8/29): Histories of Southeast Asia: Empires and Mandalas

Readings:

1. Osborne, Milton (2004). "The 'Classical' Background to Modern Southeast Asian History" and "Courts, Kings, and Peasants" in *Southeast Asia: An Introductory History*, pp. 17-52.

Week 3 - (9/3-9/5): Histories of Southeast Asia: European Colonialism

Readings:

1. Osborne, Milton (2004). "The European Advance and Challenge" in *Southeast Asia: An Introductory History*, pp. 61-80.
2. Goodwin, Jeff. (2000). "Colonialism and revolution in Southeast Asia: a comparative analysis." *Revolution: Critical Concepts in Political Science* 4 (excerpt ~15 pp)

Week 4 - (9/10-9/12): Histories of Southeast Asia: The View from the Margins

Readings:

1. Scott, James. (2009). "Hills, Valleys, and States: An Introduction to Zomia" in *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Southeast Asia* (excerpt ~40 pp.).

Week 5 - (9/17-9/19): Postcolonial Histories of Ethnic Minorities in Southeast Asia

Readings:

1. Brosius, J. P. (2010). "The Forest and the Nation: Negotiating Citizenship in Sarawak, East Malaysia" In *Cultural Citizenship in Island Southeast Asia: Nation and Belonging in the Hinterlands* (pp. 76-133).

Week 6 – (9/24-9/26): Nation-Building in Southeast Asia

Readings:

1. *Siam Mapped*, pp.1-88

Week 7 - (10/1-10/3): Nation-Building in Southeast Asia, cont.

Readings:

1. *Siam Mapped*, pp. 89-173

Week 8 - (10/8-10/10): Religion in Southeast Asia

Readings:

1. Houben, V. "Southeast Asia and Islam" in *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, pp. 149-170.
2. Buddhist Environmentalism reading TBA

Week 9 - (10/15-10/17): Social Identities and Social Divisions

Readings:

1. Soares, D. (2011). "Conflict and Violence in Post-Independence East Timor" in *The Peace in Between*, pp. 1-16
2. Balasubramaniam, V. (2007). "A Divided Nation: Malay Dominance, Bumiputera Material Advancement and National Identity in Malaysia" in *National Identities*, pp. 34-48

Week 10 - (10/22-10/24): Urbanization and Citizenship

Readings:

1. *Citizen Designs*, prologue, chapters 1-4

Week 11 - (10/29 – 10/31): Urbanization and Citizenship, cont.

Readings:

1. *Citizen Designs*, chapters 5-10, epilogue

Week 12 - (11/5– 11/7): Current Events: Domination from the North

Readings:

1. Heng, K. (2019). "Chinese Investment Strains Cambodian Society" in *Nikkei Asian Review*, pp. 1-5
2. Bühler, T. (2020). "Effects of Chinese Investments in Sihanoukville on the Local Community" in *Journal of Asia Pacific Studies*, pp. 799-813.
3. Lu, J. (2020). "Grounding Chinese Investment: Encounters between Chinese Capital and Local Land Politics in Laos" in *Globalizations*, pp. 1-14.

Week 13 - (11/12-11/14): Current Events: Politics and Culture in Myanmar

Readings:

1. Charney, M. (2021). "Myanmar Coup: How the Military Has Held Onto Power for 60 years" in *The Conversation*, 8 pp.
2. Prasse-Freeman, E. and Kabya, K. (2021). "Revolutionary Responses to the Myanmar Coup" in *Anthropology Today*, 2 pp.

Week 14 - (11/19-11/21): Southeast Asia and American Foreign Policy

Readings:

1. *The Spirit Catches You*, pp. 1-92

Week 15 - (11/26-11/28): No class – Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 16 – (12/3): Southeast Asia and American Foreign Policy, cont.

Readings:

1. *The Spirit Catches You*, finish book

Resources for Students:

Health and Wellness

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit U Matter, We Care website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the Student Health Care Center website.

University Police Department: Visit UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.