

Southeast Asian Politics
POS 6933
Fall 2022

Dr. Benjamin Smith
002/234 Anderson
bbsmith@ufl.edu
Office Hours: Thursday 1-230pm

This seminar will introduce you to the parameters of the field of Southeast Asian politics, which is essentially the comparative politics of the 11 states of peninsular and mainland Southeast Asia. In the last twenty years, the field has gone from one of relatively little focus in American political science, and one dominated mostly by scholars hesitant to engage in explicitly comparative perspectives, to an important contributor to broader insights in the subfield writ large. In the thirty years before that (~1970-2000), it went from a core source of broad comparative insight to a much more insular, particular-focused community of scholars most of whom studied a single country. The core books in the course reflect this new importance for the region.

Course Objectives

There are three required books:

- Benedict Anderson (1991). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (second edition). London: Verso.
- Jacques Bertrand, *Political Change in Southeast Asia* and
- Erik Kuhonta, Dan Slater, and Tuong Vu, *Southeast Asia in Political Science*

While there is not a required text to familiarize you with modern Southeast Asian history, you should consider it a professional obligation to read one. Some good options include:

- Mark Beeson, ed. *Contemporary Southeast Asia*
- Norman Owen, ed. *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia*.

The seminar itself will focus thematically on some core issues common to an otherwise disparate collection of colonial legacies, state and nation building, religious traditions, ethnic demographics, and regime types. It will therefore not survey individual countries in detail. My goal for the seminar is to give you a broad exposure to some of the most important contemporary and past scholarship on the region, to familiarize you with some key arguments for and against “area studies” in political science, and to equip you for future research based on one or more Southeast Asian states.

Course Assignments

Because this seminar is effectively the core graduate course on the region, I have opted to construct the assignments to reflect what I think are useful professional writing experiences as a young scholar of Southeast Asian politics.

Response papers: 3, worth 10% each for 30% total. I will circulate a guide to writing these response papers, but in brief they should go beyond a summary of each reading for that week (although that is required). They should instead engage the group of readings from your own analytic and intellectual perspective. *The first one is due before class September 26 and the others any time before our last meeting.* BUT: each one must be submitted before the class meeting in which we discuss the readings you write on.

One scholarly book review: 1,200-1,500 words, 15%. You should peruse some of the book reviews in recent issues of *Perspectives on Politics* for a sense of how these are written and I will talk about these in class as well. I will circulate a list of books and, with my approval, you may review books not on that list. *Due on or before October 31.*

A research design: 6,000-7,000 words, 35%. This is a fully developed research proposal, analogous to a dissertation prospectus or a lengthy grant application. Those of you who have taken Conduct with me will find this a familiar assignment. For everyone else, I will speak in detail and will provide written guidance. BUT: you won't actually be writing a research paper. You will instead be writing a proposal, like the kind your dissertation committee and/or funding agencies would receive, to convince both advisers and funders that you have a viable project, engaging an important and feasible research question, and that you have a solid plan to answer that question through research on Southeast Asian politics. *Due December 14.* Your tentative topic and question are due September 19 and I would like to meet with each of you that week to discuss.

A Southeast Asia-specific OR Comparative Area Studies position paper, 750 words, 5%. This is your assignment for the final day of class (see below).

Class participation: 15%. This will include a) your attendance at all class meetings barring illness, b) your *active* participation in those meetings, and c) your leadership of discussion in 3 class meetings. For the latter point, you will spend no more than 10 minutes briefly summarizing the readings for which you are responsible, introducing what you take to be key issues and/or empirical or theoretical problems with them, and finally a few questions to help steer our discussions.

1. August 29: Course Introduction.

- Ruth McVey, "Change and Continuity in Southeast Asian Studies," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 26, 1: 1-9.
- Donald Emerson, "'Southeast Asia': What's in a Name?" *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 15(1): 1-21

2. September 12: Southeast Asia and Area Studies

- Sojourn Symposium on Benedict Anderson, *A Life Beyond Boundaries*. *Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 31, 2 (2016), 576-621.
- KSV chapter 1
- Robert Bates, "Area Studies and the Discipline: A Useful Controversy?" *PS: Political Science and Politics* (June 1997).
- Collier, David, "Letter from the President: Data, Field Work and Extracting New Ideas at Close Range," *APSA-CP Newsletter* (Winter 1999).

- Ariel Ahram, "The Theory and Method of Comparative Area Studies," *Qualitative Research* 11, 1 (2011): 69-90.

3. September 19: An Overview

- Bertrand, all.

4. September 26: State Building

- James Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, chapters 1-2.
- Dan Slater, "Can Leviathan Be Democratic? Competitive Elections, Robust Mass Politics, and State Infrastructural Power," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 43 (2008) 272-272.
- Dan Slater, *Ordering Power*, chapters 1-2.
- KSV, Chapter 2.
- Julio Teehankee, "Weak State, Strong Presidents: Situating the Duterte Presidency in Philippine Political Time," *Journal of Developing Societies* 32:3 (2016), 293-321

5. October 3: Nation-Building

- Benedict Anderson (1991). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (second edition). London: Verso. Read especially chapters 1, 2, and 7.
- John T. Sidel (2012). "The Fate of Nationalism in the New States: Southeast Asia in Comparative Historical Perspective." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 54 (1), pp. 114-144.

6. October 10: Regime Dynamics and Change

- KSV, Chapters 3-4.
- Lee Jones, "Explaining Myanmar's Transition: The Periphery Is Central," *Democratization*, 21: 5 (2014), 780-802.
- Dan Slater. 2003. "Iron Cage in an Iron Fist: Authoritarian Institutions and the Personalization of Power in Malaysia." *Comparative Politics* 36(1): 81-101.
- Alex Chang et al., "Southeast Asia: Sources of Regime Support," *Journal of Democracy* 24: 2 (2013), 150-164.
- John T. Sidel (2008). "Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy Revisited: Colonial State and Chinese Immigrant in the Making of Modern Southeast Asia." *Comparative Politics*, 40 (2), pp. 127-147.

7. October 17: Political Economy and Development

- Ross H. McLeod. 2000. "Soeharto's Indonesia: A Better Class of Corruption." *Agenda* 7(2): 99-112.
- Gary Hawes; Hong Liu, "Explaining the Dynamics of the Southeast Asian Political Economy: State, Society, and the Search for Economic Growth," *World Politics* 45, no. 4 (July 1993): 629-660.
- John Wong (1997). "Why Has Myanmar not Developed like East Asia?" *ASEAN Economic Bulletin* 13 (3), pp. 344-358.
KSV, Chapters 10-12.
- Natasha Hamilton-Hart. 2000. "The Singapore State Revisited." *Pacific Review* 13, 2: 195-216.

- 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.
- Tuong Vu. 2007. "State Formation and the Origins of Developmental States in South Korea and Indonesia." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 41(4): 27-56.

8. October 24: A Pause for Stock-Taking.

- There are no assigned readings this week. I want to do two things today. First, we'll spend the first part of class with updates on your respective writing projects. This is an opportunity for you to workshop your ideas, argument, research strategies, and to solicit feedback and ideas at the mid-semester stage. Second, I'd like to spend the second part of the class talking about how, from your perspective at this stage, Southeast Asia studies speaks to, and is informed by, insights from a) other regions and b) broad comparative politics scholarship.

9. October 31: Ethnicity, Identity, and Conflict

- KSV, Chapter 9
- Edward Aspinall, "Democratization and Ethnic Politics in Indonesia: Nine Theses," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 11 (2011): 289-319.
- David Brown, "From Peripheral Communities to Ethnic Nations: Separatism in Southeast Asia," *Pacific Affairs*, 61, 1 (1988): 51-77.
- Shane Joshua Barter, "Resources, Religion, Rebellion: the sources and lessons of Acehese separatism," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 19, 1 (2008), 39-61.
- John T. Sidel (2012). "The Fate of Nationalism in the New States: Southeast Asia in Comparative Historical Perspective." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 54 (1), pp. 114-144.
- Nick Cheesman. 2017. "How in Myanmar 'National Races' Came to Surpass Citizenship and Exclude Rohingya." *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 47(3): 461-483.

10. November 7: Religion and Politics

- 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.
- Vincent Houben, "Southeast Asia and Islam," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 588 (2003), 149-170.
- Charles Keyes, "Buddhism and National Integration in Thailand," *Journal of Asian Studies* 30:3 (1971), pp. 551-67.
- Mina Roces, "The Militant Nun as Political Activist and Feminist in Martial Law Philippines," *Portal* 1:1 (2004).

11. November 14: Social Forces and Contentious Politics

- Benedict J. Kerkvliet. 1977. *The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 249-269.
- Vincent Boudreau, *Resisting Dictatorship: Repression and Protest in Southeast Asia*, chapters 1-2.

- Dan Slater, “Revolutions, Crackdowns, and Quiescence: Communal Elites and Democratic Mobilization in Southeast Asia,” *American Journal of Sociology* 115, 1: 203-54.
- Michael Adas, “From Avoidance to Confrontation: Peasant Protest in Precolonial and Colonial Southeast Asia,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23:2 (1981), pp. 217-47.

12. November 21: No class meeting. This week is free for time devoted to finishing research designs.

13. November 28: Thinking Outward.

- Today’s meeting explicitly puts Southeast Asia in comparative perspective. Not as an imperative, but as starting point for a spirited discussion. Readings are fairly light, and with that in mind I’d like you all to draft a short position paper (750 words or so) making the case for scholarship that employs Southeast Asian cases (however defined) broadly, or for a more regionally delimited “Southeast Asian Studies.”
- Ahram, Kolner, Sil, *Comparative Area Studies*, chapters 1, 5, 10.

14. December 5: Research Design presentations.

Research Designs Due December 14 by 5pm to Canvas.

UF Syllabus information (not specific to this seminar):

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 is available at <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/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. [Click here to read the Conduct Code](#). If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are

prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Campus Resources: 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; [Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).

GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the [GatorWell website](#) or call 352-273-4450.

In response to COVID-19, the following recommendations are in place to maintain your learning environment, to enhance the safety of our in-classroom

interactions, and to further the health and safety of ourselves, our neighbors, and our loved ones.

- If you are not vaccinated, get vaccinated. Vaccines are readily available and have been demonstrated to be safe and effective against the COVID-19 virus. Visit one.ufl.edu for screening / testing and vaccination opportunities.
- If you are sick, stay home. Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 to be evaluated.
- Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work.

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.

Student Complaints On-Campus: [Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information.](#)

On-Line Students Complaints: [View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process.](#)