

INTL 4366 73367 Southeast Asian Politics

Spring 2026

T/Th 2:55 - 4:15 pm

Location: Park 250

Dr. Jangai Jap

Office: IA Building Rm. 329

Office Hours: M/F 2:00 - 3:30 pm, or by appointment

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Course Overview

Southeast Asia—located south of China and east of the Indian subcontinent—is home to over 675 million people, representing roughly 8.5% of the world’s population. This course introduces undergraduate students to the politics of Southeast Asian countries and examines how regional political dynamics illuminate major themes in comparative politics, including regime transitions, democracy and electoral politics, political institutions, identity politics, and mass violence.

The course begins with a brief overview of the region’s geography, populations, pre-independence history, and regional trends. We then survey the politics of individual countries, beginning with mainland Southeast Asia and then moving to the maritime region. For each country, we will focus on contemporary politics, regime types, and recent events and challenges shaping its political trajectory. We will also engage with theoretical and empirical studies of democratization, electoral competition, identity-based mobilization, genocide, and the intersection of religion and politics in the region.

Learning Objectives

The objective of this course is to improve critical thinking, analytical writing, and research skills through the study of Southeast Asia politics. At the conclusion of this course,

- Students will have a basic understanding of the politics of individual countries in the region as well as how they inform our understanding of major themes in comparative politics, including political economy
- Students will be able to professionally write and discuss Southeast Asia’s region’s geography, people, and history prior to independence.
- Students will understand state-of-the-art academic articles on contemporary politics, regime type, and recent major events and/or challenges shaping each country’s trajectory.
- Students will be exposed to regional relations, including the ASEAN. Based on this understanding, students will be able to offer predictions of political and economic issues affecting the region in the future.

Course Requirements

Readings

Students are expected to read approximately 60 to 80 pages per week. The readings should be completed prior to coming to class. Students are strongly encouraged to print out the assigned readings, take notes by hand, and bring them to class.

Readings consist of journal articles and book chapters. Several chapters will be assigned from the following books, which students are encouraged to purchase:

- Osborne, Milton. *Southeast Asia: An Introductory History*, 2020.
- Ferguson, Jane. *Repossessing Shanland: Myanmar, Thailand, and a Nation-State Deferred*, 2021.

Your final course grade will be determined as follows:

1. Participation - 20%
2. Map Quiz – 5%
3. Reading Quizzes - 5%
4. Country Report - 5%
5. Discussion Co-leader - 5%
6. Exam - 30%
7. Final Paper 30%

Participation – 20%

There are two participation components: online discussion on eLC and discussion in-class. Each accounts for 10% of the overall course grade.

- A. *Discussion on eLC*: To facilitate active reading, students are expected to submit two questions based on the reading before each class. These questions can be about the reading itself (e.g., a confusing concept) or inspired by the reading (e.g., a tension between two class readings). Be sure to provide a brief context for each question. Students are also expected to respond to a peer's post.

Complete this assignment by 10 pm ET the day before the class meeting. Late submissions are accepted with penalty, but submissions at/after class time (1:15 pm ET) will not be accepted. Your submission points will be earned on the following scale:

- Meaningful engagement and thoughtful reflection = 5/5
- Somewhat superficial engagement or mostly descriptive = 4/5
- Late submission with otherwise strong content = 3/5
- Late submission with weaker content = 2/5
- No submission, off-topic, or submitted at/after class time = 0

The first reading response, based on the readings for January 15, is due on January 14. This assignment cannot be made up, but you will have three passes. Use them wisely.

- B. *Discussion in class*: Students are expected to come prepared with comments on the readings and to actively contribute to discussion. Participation includes more than

answering the instructor’s questions—it also includes asking thoughtful questions and engaging with peers. Students should use questions/comments submitted on eLC as a starting point for in-class discussion.

Students will be graded on the quality of their participation in each class meeting. After each class meeting, students will assign themselves a participation score, which the instructor will review and adjust as needed. Participation points will be earned on the following scale:

- Absent = 0
- In class, but not engaged (e.g., falling asleep) = 2/5
- Engaged but no contribution = 3/5
- Make an okay contribution = 4/5
- Make quality contributions = 5/5

Since meaningful participation requires being present, absence will affect your participation grade. That said, simply attending does not count as participation.

Note that there is no separate grade for attendance. Any absence (due to sickness, traveling with the debate team, family emergency, etc.) automatically counts as non-participation (i.e., no contribution to class discussion).

Participation grades cannot be made up. Each student is allotted three participation “passes,” which may be used for absences or for days when participation is not possible. These passes automatically drop your lowest three participation scores, including zeros due to absences. If you attend all class sessions, your lowest three participation grades will be dropped automatically. If you are absent for three or fewer class sessions, those zeros will be dropped automatically; no notes or documentation are required. If you are absent for four or more class sessions, you must email me with documentation (e.g., doctor’s note, dean’s note) so that I can determine which absences are excused.

Participation evaluation will begin on January 15.

Map Quiz – 5% [M]

This in-class quiz is scheduled for January 22, 2025. By that date, students should be familiar with the region’s basic geography. Students will be given a blank map and a word bank. The word bank is posted on eLC.

Reading Quizzes – 5% [M]

There will be eight in-class quizzes throughout the semester. The first will be a syllabus quiz, scheduled for January 15. The remaining seven will be unannounced reading quizzes, which are intended to encourage students to keep up with the readings. Each student will have two “passes.” This means the lowest two grades will be dropped automatically. You do not need to provide notes or documentation for these passes.

Country Report – 5%

Once during the semester, students will give a short presentation (5 to 10 minutes) on one of the following topics, followed by a Q&A: struggle for independence, elections and electoral politics, state of democracy or prospects for democratization, political economy, and ethnic politics. You may present on a topic of your choice but you must obtain instructor's permission. The presentation should be accompanied by presentation slides and a short paper (3-4 pages double spaced).

- Submit your slides and short paper by noon on the day of the class meeting you signed up for.
- If you need to change your slot, contact the student you'd like to exchange with and inform me once you've reached a mutual agreement. Missing class on the day of your presentation will result in a zero for this assignment.

Discussion Co-Leader - 5%

Each student will co-lead a class discussion on a special topic related to their country of interest. Co-leading a discussion consists of: (1) delivering a 10-minute presentation on the assigned journal article for that session, followed by a brief Q&A; and (2) leading a discussion that uses the article as a springboard for broader analysis.

The presentation should demonstrate critical engagement with the article and include the following components:

- A concise overview of the article's literature review
- A clear summary of the article's main argument
- An explanation of how the argument is evaluated (e.g., evidence, methodology, case selection)
- Points of critical engagement (e.g., strengths, limitations, unanswered questions)

Presentations are expected to be well-organized and thoughtful, showing familiarity with the article and its broader scholarly context.

- Submit your presentation slides by noon on the presentation day.
- If you need to change your slot, contact the student you'd like to exchange with and inform me once you've reached a mutual agreement. Missing class on the day of your presentation will result in a zero for this assignment.

Exam – 30% [M]

The in-class exam on April 14, 2026 is open-book/open-notes. Students may consult their notes and printed readings but may not use any electronic devices. The exam includes two components: key terms and an essay question. This is a written exam with no multiple-choice section. A blue or green book is required.

Final Paper – 30%

Students are expected to write an analytical paper that is 10-15 pages in length (excluding bibliography). The paper should identify an empirical puzzle in Southeast Asian politics, an evaluation of the extent to which existing literature helps resolve the puzzle (aka literature review), and a compelling argument that resolves the puzzle.

- **First Draft of Paper (5%)**
Draft of approximately half of paper written with outline of remaining parts. The introduction and literature review sections should be completed by then. This assignment is due a week before your peer-review day.
- **Peer-review (5%)**
Each student will be assigned a classmate's draft to review. A 1–2 page peer review report is due in class on the day the draft is scheduled to be discussed. All students—not just the assigned reviewer—are expected to read the draft and actively participate in the peer review discussion.
- **Final Draft (20%)**

The following scale will be used to determine your overall grade in the course: A: >94%, A-: 90-93.9%, B+: 87-89.9%, B: 84-86.9%, B-: 80-83.9%, C+: 77-79.9%, C: 74-76.9%; C-: 70-73.9%; D+: 67-69.9%; D: 64-66.9%; D-: 60-63.9%; F: <60%.

There is **no** extra credit in this course. However, if your final grade is borderline (e.g., 89.6%), I will round it up if you have consistently demonstrated full effort—this includes active class participation and timely submission of all assignments. You do not need to email me to get a grade bump. If you've done all you can, it will be reflected in your final grade.

Course Policies & Statements

Attendance

There is no separate grade for attendance. However, it should be clear from course requirements specified above that class attendance is expected and necessary to do well in this course.

Emails and office hours

For administrative questions and clarifications, the best way to contact me is via email. I aim to answer emails within 24 hours during the week. If you have not received a response in 24 hours, email me again. For substantive issues related to course materials, stop by during my drop-in office hours. If you are unable to stop by at the regular time, email me so that we can find a time that works for you.

Assignment Due Date Extension

Students are expected to submit assignments on time. However, I understand that unforeseen circumstances may arise. If you anticipate needing an extension, you must contact me at least 48 hours before the assignment deadline. Extensions will be granted on a case-by-case basis and are not guaranteed. Note that this policy applies only to assignments related to the Final Paper.

Last-minute requests (within 24 hours of the deadline) will only be considered in cases of serious emergencies and must be supported with documentation. Please note that poor time management or overlapping deadlines in other classes are not valid reasons for an extension.

Late Assignments

Late submissions will be accepted *only within 48 hours* of the deadline. However, your grade will be penalized by one-third of a letter grade for every 6 hours the assignment is late. For example:

- An A paper submitted 3 hours late will be graded as A-.
- A B paper submitted 8 hours late will be graded as C+.

After 48 hours, the assignment will receive a zero, unless prior arrangements have been made due to documented emergencies. This policy applies only to assignments related to the Final Paper.

Make-up procedures

Students may make up the course requirements indicated by [M] in the cases of sickness (requiring a doctor's note) or family emergency (requiring a Dean's note). If you cannot be in attendance for the map quiz, presentations, or exam due to religious observance, notify the instructor at least one week in advance to arrange an alternative. There are no exceptions.

Appeals

If you believe a grade you are given does not reflect your performance, you may dispute the grade in writing, explaining why you should receive a higher grade. This should be done within a week after the grade is announced and submitted after class or in office hours. I reserve the right to raise or lower your grade.

UGA Honor Code

You have agreed to the UGA Student Honor Code: "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." A Culture of Honesty, the University's policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at www.uga.edu/ovpi.

Cheating, plagiarism, and all forms of academic dishonesty are expressly forbidden in this class, and by the university's Academic Honesty Policy. Plagiarism includes reprinting the words of others without both the use of quotation marks and citation.

Generative AI Tools

To ensure you develop and master the foundational knowledge and skills in this course, the use of generative AI (GAI) tools is prohibited when completing written assignments for this course. This includes all stages of your work process, even the preliminary ones. This prohibition extends to AI writing tools like Grammarly and Wordtune, as well as GAI tools like ChatGPT. If you are uncertain about using a particular tool to support your work, please consult with me before using it.

Prohibition on Recording Lectures

In the absence of written authorization from the UGA Disability Resource Center, students may not make a visual or audio recording of any aspect of this course. For information on securing an accommodation to record lectures, see:

<https://accessibility.uga.edu/faculty-guidelines-for-record-lecture/>

Accommodation for Disabilities

If you plan to request accommodations for a disability, please register with the Disability Resource Center. They can be reached by visiting Clark Howell Hall, calling 706-542-8719 (voice) or 706-542-8778 (TTY), or by visiting <http://drc.uga.edu>.

UGA Well-being Resources

UGA Well-being Resources promote student success by cultivating a culture that supports a more active, healthy, and engaged student community.

Anyone needing assistance is encouraged to contact Student Care & Outreach (SCO) in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-8479 or visit sco.uga.edu. Student Care & Outreach helps students navigate difficult circumstances by connecting them with the most appropriate resources or services. They also administer the Embark@UGA program which supports students experiencing, or who have experienced, homelessness, foster care, or housing insecurity.

UGA provides both clinical and non-clinical options to support student well-being and mental health, any time, any place. Whether on campus, or studying from home or abroad, UGA Well-being Resources are here to help.

- Well-being Resources: well-being.uga.edu
- Student Care and Outreach: sco.uga.edu
- University Health Center: healthcenter.uga.edu
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services: caps.uga.edu or CAPS 24/7 crisis support at 706-542-2273
- Health Promotion/ Fontaine Center: healthpromotion.uga.edu
- Disability Resource Center and Testing Services: drc.uga.edu

Additional information, including free digital well-being resources, can be accessed through the UGA app or by visiting <https://well-being.uga.edu>.

Disclaimer

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Class Schedule

Week 1	January 13	Welcome! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Course syllabus ● What is comparative politics?
	January 15	What is Southeast Asia? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Osborne. Chapter 1 [14 pages] ● Scott, James C. <i>The art of not being governed: An anarchist history of upland Southeast Asia</i>. Yale University Press, 2009. <u>Chapter 1: 1-26</u>. [26 pages] ● Ferguson, Jane. <i>Repossessing Shanland</i>. “Passport to Ancient Shanland” <u>Chapter 1: 28-40</u>. [12 pages]
Week 2	January 20	Cultural Heritage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Osborne. <u>Chapters 2 and 3</u> [33 pages] ● Aung-Thwin, Michael, and Maitrii Aung-Thwin. <i>A history of Myanmar since ancient times: Traditions and transformations</i>. Reaktion Books, 2013: Chapter 4 [30 pages]
	January 22	Colonial Interlude <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Osborne. <u>Chapter 5</u> [17 pages] ● Ferguson, Jane. <i>Repossessing Shanland</i>. “Passport to Ancient Shanland” <u>Chapter 1: 40 - 49</u>. [9 pages] <p>*** Map Quiz</p>
Week 3	January 27	Nationalism and the Struggle for Independence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Osborne. <u>Chapters 9 - 10</u> [36 pages] ● Ferguson, Jane. <i>Repossessing Shanland</i>. “Passport to Ancient Shanland” <u>Chapter 1: 49-61</u>. [12pages]
	January 29	Colonial Legacies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dulay, D., & Ko, J. (2025). Narrating the Nation: Colonial Memory and Citizen Attitudes in East and Southeast Asia. <i>Comparative Political Studies</i>.
Week 4	February 3	State of Democracy and Democratization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading TBD

- February 5 **Economic Development**
- Booth, Anne. "Initial conditions and miraculous growth: why is South East Asia different from Taiwan and South Korea?." *World development* 27, no. 2 (1999): 301-321.
 - Krugman, Paul. "The myth of Asia's miracle." *Foreign affairs*(1994): 62-78.
- Week 5** February 10 **Myanmar**
- Ferguson, Jane. *Repossessing Shanland*. "Passport to Ancient Shanland" Chapter 2 [22 pages]
- February 12 **Myanmar - Identity Politics and Citizenship**
- Ferguson, Jane. *Repossessing Shanland*. "Passport to Ancient Shanland" Chapter 3 [32 pages]
 - Wade, Francis. *Myanmar's enemy within: Buddhist violence and the making of a Muslim'other'*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019. Chapter TBD
- Week 6** February 17 **Thailand**
- Hewison, Kevin and Kengkij Kitirianglarp. "Thai-Style Democracy': The Royalist Struggle for Thailand's Politics." In *Saying the Unsayable: Monarchy and Democracy in Thailand*, ed. Søren Ivarsson and Lotte Isager. Copenhagen: NIAS Press. [20 pages]
 - Selway, Joel Sawat. "Electoral reform and public policy outcomes in Thailand: the politics of the 30-baht health scheme." *World Politics* 63, no. 1 (2011): 165-202.
- February 19 **Thailand - Identity Politics and Citizenship**
- Cheva-Isarakul, Janepicha. "Contextualising statelessness: Contingent citizenship and the politics of (non) Recognition in Thailand." *TRaNS: Trans-Regional and-National Studies of Southeast Asia* 12, no. 1 (2024): 45-59. [14 pages]
- Week 7** February 24 **Vietnam**
- Vu, Tuong and Thuy Nguyen. "Doi Moi" but Not "Doi Mau": Vietnam's Red Crony Capitalism in Historical Perspective. In Nhu Troung and Tuong Vu (Eds.), *The Dragon's Underbelly: Dynamics and Dilemmas in Vietnam's Economy and Politics*. ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2023. [28 pages]

- Truong, Mai, and Paul Schuler. 2021. "The Salience of the Northern and Southern Identity in Vietnam." *Asian Politics and Policy* 13(1): 18-36. [18 pages]

February 26 **Vietnam - Institutions**

- Malesky, Edmund, Regina Abrami, and Yu Zheng. "Institutions and inequality in single-party regimes: A comparative analysis of Vietnam and China." *Comparative Politics* 43, no. 4 (2011): 409-427. [18 pages]

Week 8 March 3 **Cambodia**

- Chandler, David Porter. *The tragedy of Cambodian history: Politics, war, and revolution since 1945*. Yale University Press, 1991: Introduction and Chapter 7. [50 pages]

March 5 **Cambodia - Democratization**

- Samet, Oren. "When you come at the king: Opposition coalitions and nearly stunning elections." *American Journal of Political Science* (2024).

Week 9 March 17 **Philippines**

- Kerkvliet, B. J. (1977). The Huk Rebellion: a study of peasant revolt in the Philippines. In *The Huk rebellion : a study of peasant revolt in the Philippines*. University of California Press. Chapters 1 and 7

March 19 **Philippines - Electoral Politics**

- Reading TBD

Week 10 March 24 **Indonesia**

- Robinson, Geoffrey. *The killing season: A history of the Indonesian massacres, 1965-66*. Princeton University Press, 2018: Chapters 5 and 6. [58 pages]

March 26 **Indonesia - Electoral Politics**

- Kuipers, Nicholas, Risa Toha, and Nathanael Gratias Sumaktoyo. "Third Time's the Charm: The Youth Vote and Prabowo's Victory in the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election." *Pacific Affairs* 97, no. 3 (2024): 563-585. [23]

Week 11	March 31	Malaysia
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weiss, Meredith L., Ibrahim Suffian, and Ted Lee. "Malaysia's democratic deficit: why youth may not be the answer." <i>Democratization</i> (2025): 1-22.
	April 2	Malaysia - Ethnic Politics
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Siow, Jeremy. "Bilingual Education Reduces Ethnic Outgroup Discrimination." (2024).
Week 12	April 7	Singapore
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Watch: Secrets, Betrayals: How Singapore's Split from Malaysia was Engineered Separation: Declassified. CNA Insider [46 minutes]</i> • Oliver, Steven, and Kai Ostwald. "Explaining elections in Singapore: Dominant party resilience and valence politics." <i>Journal of East Asian Studies</i> 18, no. 2 (2018): 129-156. [27 pages]
	April 9	ASEAN and Regional Relations
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ba, Alice D. <i>(Re) Negotiating East and Southeast Asia: Region, Regionalism, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations</i>. Stanford University Press, 2020: Introduction and Chapter 2.
Week 13	April 14	Exam
	April 16	Peer-review Workshop
Week 14	April 21	Peer-review Workshop
	April 23	Peer-review Workshop

Submit the final paper by Friday, May 1 at noon.