Objectives
This course is an introduction to the politics of Southeast Asia. Our focus is analytical: we will use the history and trajectory of Southeast Asia to address some of the central questions of contemporary world politics.

- How do colonialism, economic development, ethnic identity, and religious belief shape contemporary world politics?
- Why do some states democratize while others are ruled by tyrants and autocrats?
- What is the legacy of political violence, including genocide, in newly democratic states?
- What does the rise of China mean for the states of Southeast Asia?
- How do global human rights and “Asian values” shape contemporary politics?

While our focus is on contemporary politics, we will devote considerable time to understanding how historical experiences shape the world that we see today. We will cover the entire region, but we will devote most of our attention to Indonesia, the Philippines, Burma, Malaysia, and Thailand. We begin with a short introduction to the region and its people. We will then survey the politics of individual countries, devoting two class sessions to each of the five countries. After the midterm, we will turn to a series of thematic discussions that span borders.

Course Requirements
Students are expected to attend all classes and keep up with the reading assignments. Grades will be based on a presentation, participation, response papers, one midterm exam, and one final exam.

10% Presentation
15% Participation
15% Response Papers
25% Midterm Exam
35% Final Exam

Presentation (1 x 10% = 10%): Each student will be assigned to a two-person group, which will be responsible for a 10-15 minute presentation on current events in Southeast Asia. A grade rubric is at the end of the syllabus. Students will choose presentation dates on the second day of class. Students using PowerPoint or other presentation software must email their presentation to the instructor at least 2 hours prior to class or bring the file to class on a flash drive.
Participation (15%): The course will be run as a combination lecture and discussion. This format requires students to attend regularly, read diligently, and participate actively in class discussions including through the student response system.

Response Papers (3 x 5% = 15%): Student will write three short (1-2 pages, double-spaced, 1 inch margins) analytical response papers (RP) over the course of the semester. I will provide the paper prompts before the papers are due on 2/3, 3/21, 4/1 and an optional makeup on 4/20. All papers are due in class except for the one 4/1, which is due 48 hours after class via email. A grade rubric is at the end of the syllabus.

Exams (Midterm = 25%, Final = 35%): Exams will be based on a series of essays, held in class. There will be a review of material prior to both exams.

Student Response System: This class will be using a student response system to allow students to actively participate in classes through surveys and quizzes, followed by real time results. All students will need to purchase a handheld clicker device.

Late Work: Late submission of assignments will penalize your grade by incurring an automatic full-grade deduction per day beginning with the assignment deadline.


Special Needs: If you have any special needs or circumstances, such as a learning disability or health concern, please do not hesitate to speak with me and we can discuss suitable accommodations and assistance.

Academic Misconduct: Plagiarism and cheating are serious offences and will be punished in accordance with BU’s Academic Conduct Code: http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/

Electronic Communications in Class: Please do not use laptop computers, cell phones, or any other electronic devices during the seminar. These are serious distractions to your learning.

Required Texts & Hardware


ResponseCard RF from Turning Technologies. Available at the BU Barnes & Noble store
Date and Readings

January 20  Introduction

January 25  The Spectre of Comparisons
• SarDesai, ch. 1

January 27  Early State Formation in Southeast Asia
• SarDesai, ch. 2, 3, 4, 5.

February 1  The East Indies
• SarDesai, ch. 7, 14, 22 (read until “The Suharto Era”)

February 3  Indonesia [RP1]
• SarDesai, ch. 22 (remainder)

February 8  The American Philippines
• SarDesai, pp. ch. 13,

February 10  The Philippines
• SarDesai, ch. 19

February 15  No Class – President’s Day

February 16  Siam - BU Monday
• SarDesai, ch. 11, 16

February 17  Thailand
• SarDesai, ch. 21

**February 22**  
**British Malaya**  
• SarDesai, ch. 8, 18  

**February 24**  
**Malaysia**  
• SarDesai, ch. 24.  

**February 29**  
**Midterm Exam Review**

**March 2**  
**Midterm Exam**

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**Spring Break!**  
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**March 14**  
**Myanmar**  
• SarDesai, ch. 9, 15.  

**March 16**  
**Burma in Transition**  
• SarDesai, ch. 20.  

**March 21**  
**Democratic Theory and Southeast Asia [RP2]**  
March 23  Democracy, Decentralization and Development

March 28  Political Order and Political Violence

March 30  Film: *The Act of Killing* [RP3 due by 4/1 at 5pm]

April 4  Islam and Feminism
• Rinaldo, ch. 1, 2, 3

April 6  Islam and Feminism (guest lecture by Rachel Rinaldo)
• Rinaldo, ch. 4, 5, 6

April 11  China and ASEAN
• SarDesai, Part Four Review.
April 13  China and the South China Sea

April 18  No Class – Patriot’s Day

April 20  Debating Oligarchy
• Jeffrey A. Winters, 2013. “Oligarchy and Democracy in Indonesia.” Indonesia No. 96, 11-33.

April 25  Asian Values and Institutions [RPX]

April 27  Final Exam Review

May 4  Final Exam
Grading Rubric – Response Papers

5  Answers the prompt in a coherent manner. Makes creative links between the reading, authors and concepts. Goes beyond the assigned content to draw fresh insights and analysis. Demonstrates mastery of the material and engages in independent thinking. Avoids making claims unsupported by evidence and/or reasonable judgment, or making fallacious claims including equivocation. Writing is exceptionally lucid.

4.5  Answers the prompt in a coherent way. Makes links between the cases, concepts or authors. Demonstrates a solid understanding of the material and goes beyond simple regurgitation, even if all claims are not convincingly established. Avoids being vague, making claims unsupported by evidence and/or reasonable judgment. Writing is clear and concise.

4  Answers the prompt in a coherent way although lacks creativity and depth. Demonstrates more than cursory understanding of the material. Tends toward vagueness but does not make claims unsupported by evidence and/or reasonable judgment. Writing is good.

3.5  Answers the prompt. Provides examples of cases, concepts or authors but fails to effectively connect evidence to the prompt. Makes claims unsupported by evidence and/or reasonable judgment. Writing itself is acceptable but needs improvement.

3  Unclear answer to the prompt. Fails to lay out the answer with evidence from the cases concepts, and/or fails effectively connect evidence to the argument. Tends toward vagueness, makes claims unsupported by evidence and/or reasonable judgment. Writing itself is poor.

2.5 -  States an unclear claim. Fails to lay out the argument with evidence from the texts and fails to demonstrate knowledge of the material itself. Vague, makes claims unsupported by evidence and/or reasonable judgment. Writing itself is unacceptable or incoherent.

Grading Rubric – Presentations

1 pt.  Clear and concise
1 pt.  Relevant to course material
1 pt.  Accurate
1 pt.  Uses scholarly sources
1 pt.  Engaging
5 pt.  Total