

PSCI 4340: Government and Politics of Southeast Asia
University of Central Arkansas
Spring 2026

Instructor: Prof. Hyo-Won Shin (she/her/hers)

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Lecture:

- Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 12-12:50 PM Irby Hall 212

Office Hours:

- Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 2:00 – 3:00 PM Irby Hall 217H
- Sign up: <https://calendly.com/hyoshin/officehours>

Course Description

Government and Politics of Southeast Asia is an upper-level undergraduate seminar that provides an overview of the politics and economics of Southeast Asian countries. It aims to familiarize students with theories explaining why these countries exhibit different levels of economic development and distinct political systems, as well as the consequences of such variation. The diversity within and across Southeast Asian countries allows us to employ the comparative method to better understand how political processes operate and how they generate particular social and economic outcomes. By studying the political systems, histories, and social and economic patterns of Southeast Asia, students will gain broader insight into how governments, political actors, and societies function around the world.

The class will explore four key political-economic outcomes also known as *dependent variables*: 1) the *state*, whether orderly or collapsed; 2) the *regime*, whether democratic or autocratic; 3) *identity*, whether homogenous or heterogenous; and 4) *development*, whether rich or poor. In addition to defining these dependent variables and considering how they can be observed and measured cross-nationally, we will discuss and evaluate competing explanations for each. The factors that help explain variation in these dependent variables – such prior levels of development, cultural norms, and institutional characteristics – are referred to as *independent variables*. These, too, will be defined, observed, and measured.

Together, we will develop a set of tools that can be used to infer the relationships between any of the four key dependent variables and a range of independent variables. At times we will introduce basic statistical concepts, but no prior knowledge or experience with statistical methods is required or expected. Our focus will be on building *analytic skills* for evaluating empirical patterns, skills that will be applied to understanding the political realities of Southeast Asia.

Course Goals

This course has **three** main objectives. The **first** is to familiarize students with the countries of Southeast Asia, including their recent histories, political systems, levels of economic development, and defining characteristics. The **second** objective is to develop skills for making informed comparisons both across Southeast Asian countries and between those countries and others elsewhere in the world. In particular, students should be able to describe the political and economic institutions in Southeast Asia and distinguish these institutions from those found in other regions. Lastly, the **third** objective is to deepen

students' critical thinking skills by strengthening their understanding and use of social scientific methods for making causal inferences.

Course Requirements and Assignments

In this course, the maximum points you can receive is 1000 points. Students will be evaluated on the following components:

- **Mid-term and Final Exams** (200 points each; 400 points total)

There will be a **midterm test** and a **final exam**. The midterm test will be taken in Week 8 and final exam will be held during the final's week. Each will be given in-class and will consist of multiple-choice questions and one short essay question based on the readings and lectures. To do well, students should do all the readings and make sure they understand them. Furthermore, students should also attend and be attentive in lectures.

The first exam will cover material from the *first half* of the course and the second exam on the *second half* of the course (although material from the first half will be implicitly important). Prior to both exams, I will upload a study guide on Blackboard, and we will have an in-class review session, where I will answer questions prepared by the students.

- **Research Project** (300 points)

Students will be writing a research project where they will research and analyze a topic of their choosing in one or two of the countries covered in the course. For example, students can choose to research and analyze the military coups in Thailand and Myanmar; political power of hereditary rulers in Thailand and Malaysia; the different approach taken by various Southeast Asian countries in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic; or environmental issues and policies of Vietnam and Indonesia. Once students have chosen a topic, which will be discussed on a one-on-one meeting with the instructor, students will develop a clear thesis statement on their topic. The student will then engage in further research through finding, accessing, and reading scholarly and primary (e.g., legitimate news) sources on their topic, and then analysis to support their thesis statement.

The student will be expected to turn in small assignments related to the paper throughout the semester. The final paper will then be due a week prior to the final exam on Blackboard (4/22 at 11:59PM). The final paper should include the following:

- o 15-20 page; typed and double spaced
- o Clear thesis or argument in the introduction
- o Brief literature review
- o Theory section
- o Empirics: data, IV/DV conceptualization and measurement
- o Results
- o Conclusion
- o Bibliography (any format is fine as long as it is consistent, and work is cited where necessary)

- **Class Participation** (100 points; 200 points total)

Students are expected to attend lectures having done the assigned readings and prepared to discuss them. Regular attendance is required but does not constitute full participation. To receive full participation points, students should actively engage in small-group discussions and be responsive to questions asked during lecture and section. Students are encouraged to ask clarifying questions of the instructor and of each other.

Students who feel uncomfortable speaking up in large groups are encouraged to participate more actively in small-group discussions to compensate for being less active in big-group discussions during lecture.

Class participation will be evaluated twice in the semester; once during Week 8 and another at Week 16. This is to make sure that the instructor accurately evaluates the students' participation in class and a way for students to check whether they need to maintain or improve their class participation.

Grade	Evaluation
"A" Contributor	• Full attendance (exception of one self-care day). • Student's contribution in class discussion (small and/or large group discussions) reflects exceptional preparation as evidenced by frequent use of textual/material evidence. • <i>If this person were absent in class, the quality of the discussions would be diminished markedly.</i>
"B" Contributor	• High attendance. • Student's contribution in class discussion reflects preparation as evidenced by some use of textual/material evidence. • <i>If this person were absent in class, the quality of the discussions would be diminished.</i>
"C" Contributor	• Some attendance. • Student's contribution in class discussion reflects some preparation as evidenced by little use of textual/material evidence. • <i>If this person were absent in class, the quality of the discussions would be diminished somewhat.</i>
"D-F" Contributor	• Little or no attendance. • Student's contribution in class discussion reflects no preparation as evidenced by no use of textual/material evidence.

- **Southeast Asia Map Quiz** (100 points)

On Week 5, we will have a map quiz on Southeast Asian countries. This quiz will be in-class and students will be given a blank map of Southeast Asia to label.

- **Extra Credit: Assessment Exam** (20 points)

During the final exam period, students will be given an extra assessment exam, which comprises of 25 questions. These questions will include randomly selected questions from the mid-term (15 questions) and final exams (10 questions). Students who get 80 percent or more questions correct, they will receive an extra credit of 20 points.

Assessment	Total Number	Points Per Assessment	Total Points
Mid-term and final exams	2	200	400
Research project	1	300	300
Class participation	2	100	200
Southeast Asia map quiz	1	100	100
TOTAL POINTS			1000

To get an A in the class, you will need at least 900 points (90 percent of 1000 points). You will need at least 800 points (80 percent of 1000 points) to get a B, 700 points (70 percent of 1000 points) for a C, 600 points (60 percent of 1000 points) for a D, and anything below for an F.

Course Materials

There is one required textbook for the course:

Robert Dayley. 2024. *Southeast Asia in the New International Era*. 9th Edition. Boulder, New York: Routledge.

All other readings will be made available on Blackboard. The instructor will provide guidance on how to read an academic article, but should the student need more assistance in tackling these readings, please ask. They are very challenging.

Grade scale

90-100%	A
80-89.99%	B
70-79.99%	C
60-69.99%	D
<60%	F

Late Policy

Students are expected to complete all assignments by the dates and times specified on the syllabus. Assignments turned in within 24 hours of the due date will lose 10 percent of the entire grade. Any assignments turned in after that will receive zero (0) points.

If a student anticipates being unable to complete an assignment on time, the student should contact the instructor *in advance of the assignment due date*.

Academic Integrity

The work that you submit in this class must be your own. Unless an assignment is explicitly designed to be collaborative, you are expected to work independently of other students. When you make use of external sources, you are required to cite them. When in doubt about whether a citation is necessary or not, provide a citation.

The University of Central Arkansas affirms its commitment to academic integrity and expects all members of the university community to accept shared responsibility for maintaining academic integrity. Students in this course are subject to the provisions of the university's Academic Integrity Policy, approved by the Board of Trustees as Board Policy No. 709 on February 10, 2010, and published in the *Student Handbook*. Penalties for academic misconduct in this course may include a failing grade on an assignment, a failing grade in the course, or any other course-related sanction the instructor determines to be appropriate. Continued enrollment in this course affirms a student's acceptance of this university policy.

Recommended Study Habits

All of the class assignments will draw on the material covered in the lectures. Therefore, it is important to attend class lectures and to interact with the material during lecture through careful note-taking and good question-asking. In the event that you are unable to attend a class meeting, it is highly recommended that you obtain notes from a classmate. (Hint: make sure you have the contact information for a classmate!) If

there is material that you are struggling with, it is highly recommended that you meet with the instructor in order to seek clarification.

Diversity Policy

It is the instructor's intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that diversity within the classroom be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. The instructor will strive to present materials and activities in ways that respect and affirm such differences. The instructor expects the same from the students: while discomfort is an important part of the learning process, no one should feel unsafe in the classroom. The instructor will not create or allow space for offensive language or behavior related to differences in gender, race, age, national origin, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, immigration status, intellectual and physical disability, sexual orientation, income, faith, socio-economic class, family status, primary language, military experience, and political identification.

Classroom Behavior

There are several ways in which students can help make the classroom conducive to learning. First, students should treat one another with respect during classroom discussion. We will discuss contentious issues in this class, and if you find yourself disagreeing with a claim made by someone else, you should work on expressing that disagreement in a constructive and impersonal fashion. Second, students using laptop computers should be using them for class-related purposes. Other uses are distracting to your fellow students and hinder overall learning in the classroom.

Preferred Pronouns

Please call me either **Professor/Dr. Shin**. My preferred pronouns are she/her/hers. In class, I will call you by the name that you use when introducing yourself to me. Over email, I will use the name that appears in your email address. If you prefer I use a different name, please let me know and I will be happy to accommodate.

I will try to default to the they/them pronouns when referring to students, but if you have other preferred pronouns, please let me know and I will try my best to accommodate.

Family Care & Self Care Policy

If a student needs to miss a class or assignment due to family care or childcare arrangements, please contact me and let me know as soon as you can. If you have a consistent or recurring issue, meet with me individually to discuss potential or necessary solutions.

Each student is allowed *one* "self-care" pass per semester. These cannot be used on exams. They can be used to exempt you from class attendance and may turn in the weekly assignment a week late (please let me know that you are using your pass for this week's journal entry assignment if you choose to turn it in). You do not need to tell me the reason for using your self-care pass, but I am here to talk and help you find resources if you need me to be. To use your self-care pass, please email directly at hshin@uca.edu.

Students with Disabilities

The University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you need an accommodation under this Act due to a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Resources and Services (OARS), 501-450-3613.

Building Emergency Plan

An Emergency Procedures Summary (EPS) for the building in which this class is held will be discussed during the first week of this course. EPS and Building Emergency Plan (BEP) documents for most

buildings on campus are available at <https://uca.edu/go/bep-library>. Every student should be familiar with emergency procedures for any campus building in which he/she spends time for classes or other purposes.

Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972

In furtherance of its core values— academic vitality, integrity, and diversity—UCA is dedicated to promoting a campus community free from discrimination. Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 requires all educational institutions to address gender-based discrimination on campus, and UCA implements these Federal requirements through a fair, consistent, and appropriate process of investigation and adjudication. Please see UCA’s Title IX website (<https://uca.edu/titleix/>) for the university’s policy, relevant forms, training opportunities, and related information.

Sexual Harassment Policy

Sexual harassment, including, but not limited to, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, unauthorized distribution of sexual images or recordings, or any crime that is based upon sexual acts defined at the adoption of this policy or later enacted by the State of Arkansas, by any faculty member, staff member, student, or a third party who is a participant in a university-sponsored program, event, or activity under substantial control of the University is a violation of University policy and will not be tolerated at the University of Central Arkansas. Further, the University of Central Arkansas is committed to providing ongoing sexual harassment primary prevention, awareness, and risk reduction programs and training for the entire UCA community. Sexual harassment of employees is prohibited under Section 703 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and sexual harassment of students may constitute discrimination under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. This policy seeks to comply with requirements mandated by the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013. The university considers sexual harassment a very serious issue and shall subject the offender to dismissal and or other sanctions following the university’s investigation and substantiation of the complaint and compliance with due process requirements.

Academic Policies

Academic Advisors

UCA places a very high priority on student advising and considers it an integral part of your academic success. UCA's team of academic advisors (Advising) are available to assist you during your stay at UCA. Prior to future semester course registration, all degree-seeking undergraduate students must declare a major after completing 27 credit hours. Students must also declare at least one minor field, subject to modifications noted for specific programs. Students will be assigned academic advisors specific to their declared major and minor fields of study. Students can find the name of their academic advisors in myUCA Self-Service and are encouraged to maintain contact with their advisors throughout their university experience.

It is the sole responsibility of the student to be familiar with and comply with all graduation requirements of the university listed in the applicable academic bulletin. Students must be familiar with and carefully monitor their academic progress toward the desired degree or certificate. To facilitate this, students are encouraged to use DegreeWorks which is available in myUCA Self-Service.

Attendance

A student's official program is regarded as his or her obligation to the institution, full performance of which requires regular and punctual class attendance and active participation. A student is responsible for coming to class prepared, completing any missed

work if the student is absent, and knowing the dates and places of required course examinations. Attendance and tardiness are primarily a student-teacher-class relationship, but the university has a concern for the fulfillment of such obligations by the student. Absences that indicate negligence about class attendance may lead to cancellation of registration and a withdrawal grade (W) in the course. In flagrant cases, the student may be suspended from the university. Individual instructors may assign a withdrawal grade (W) for non-attendance to any student but must do so by the deadline date for a student to officially withdraw specified in the academic calendar for the semester. Make-up examinations and assignments are required only for valid absences as determined by the faculty member. Students who miss an examination or assignment without a valid excuse may receive a failing grade for that exam or assignment. Faculty and students should work together to mitigate the impact of absences of those students who miss class while officially representing the university.

Course Evaluations

Student evaluations of a course and its professor are a crucial element in helping faculty achieve excellence in the classroom and the institution in demonstrating that students are gaining knowledge. Students may evaluate courses they are taking starting on the Monday of the thirteenth week of instruction [April 7th] through the end of finals week by logging in to myUCA and clicking on the Evals button on the top right.

Course Schedule

The following is our course schedule. Please note that this schedule is subject to change by the instructor in accordance with students' needs or course progression. All materials listed are required of all students. Those students interested in further background on any particular topic are encouraged to ask the instructor for additional readings and resources.

IMPORTANT DATES		
Assignment	Due Date	Note
Southeast Asia map quiz	2/9 (Monday)	In-class
Paper topic discussion	2/13 (Friday)	In-class
Thesis statement & bibliography	3/1 (Sunday) 11:59PM	Due on Blackboard under the "Research paper" tab.
Research paper draft peer-review	4/5 (Sunday)	Return to author via email
Student paper presentations	4/17 (Friday), 4/20 (Monday)	In-class
Research paper due	4/22 (Wednesday) 11:59PM	Due on Blackboard under the "Research paper" tab.
Mid-Term Exam	3/4 (Wednesday) 12PM	In-class, closed-book exam.
Final Exam	4/29 (Wednesday) 11AM	In-class, closed-book exam.

Week 0: Introduction to Southeast Asian Politics in Comparative Perspective

Friday, 1/9– Introduction to PSCI 4340

- Hyo-Won Shin. 2026. "Syllabus for PSCI 4340: Government and Politics of Southeast Asia."

Week 1: Introduction to Southeast Asian Politics in Comparative Perspective

Monday, 1/12 & Wednesday, 1/14 – Introduction to Government and Politics of Southeast Asia

- Donald Emerson. 1984. "What's in the Name 'Southeast Asia'?" *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 15: 1-21.

Friday, 1/16 – Myanmar

- Dayley. Chapter 3: Myanmar (Burma).

Week 2: State-Making – State Formation and Colonialism [Myanmar]

Martin Luther King Jr. Day (1/19)

Wednesday 1/21 & Friday 1/23 – State Formation and Colonialism

- James C. Scott. 2009. *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. New Haven: Yale University Press, chapter 1, 1-39.
- Mary Callahan. 2002. "State Formation in the Shadow of the Raj: Violence, Warfare and Politics in Colonial Burma." *Southeast Asian Studies* 39(4): 513-36.

Week 3: State-Making – Formation of Nation-States [Thailand]

Monday, 1/26 – Thailand

- Dayley. Chapter 2: Thailand.

Wednesday, 1/28 & Friday, 1/30 – The Formation of Nation-States

- Benedict Anderson. 1991. *Imagined Communities*. Second Edition. London: Verso, chapters 1, 7, and 10: 1-7, 113-40, and 163-185.
- Thongchai Winichakul. 2008. "Toppling Democracy." *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 38(1): 11-37.

Week 4: State-Making – Colonial Legacies [The Philippines]

Monday, 2/2 – The Philippines

- Dayley. Chapter 7: The Philippines.

Wednesday, 2/4 & Friday, 2/6 – Remnants of Colonial Rule

- Dan Slater. 2010. *Ordering Power*. Cambridge University Press, chapters 1 and 3: 3-32, and 55-72.
- Paul D. Hutchcroft. 2002. "Colonial Masters, National Politicos, and Provincial Lords." *Journal of Asian Studies* 59(2): 277-306.

Week 5: Democratization – Democratic Transitions in Southeast Asia [Indonesia]

Monday, 2/9 – Indonesia

- Dayley. Chapter 8: Indonesia.
- *Southeast Asia Map Quiz*

Wednesday, 2/11 & Friday 2/13 – Democratization in Southeast Asia

- Garry Rodan. 2012. "Competing Ideologies of Political Representation in Southeast Asia," *Third World Quarterly* 33(2): 311–332
- Douglas Webber. 2006. "A consolidated patrimonial democracy? Democratization in post-Suharto Indonesia." *Democratization* 3: 396-420.
- *Paper topic discussion (Friday)*

Week 6: Democratization – Electoral Institutions [Singapore]

Monday, 2/16 – Singapore

- Dayley. Chapter 11: Singapore.

Wednesday, 2/18 & Friday 2/20 – Electoral Systems in Action

- Kai Ostwald. 2013. "How to Win a Lost Election: Malapportionment and Malaysia's 2013 General Election." *The Round Table* 102(6): 521-32.
- Netina Tan. 2013. "Manipulating Electoral Laws in Singapore." *Electoral Studies* 32: 632-43.

Week 7: Democratization – Authoritarianism [Cambodia]

Monday, 2/23 – Cambodia

- Dayley. Chapter 5: Cambodia.

Wednesday, 2/25 & Friday 2/27 – Authoritarian Rule in Southeast Asia

- Kimly Ngoun. 2020. "Adaptive Authoritarian Resilience: Cambodian Strongman's Quest for Legitimacy." *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 52(1): 23-44.
- Lee Morgenbesser. 2019. "Cambodia's Transition to Hegemonic Authoritarianism." *Journal of Democracy* 30(1): 158-71.
- Malesky, Edmund, Paul Schuler, and Anh Tran. 2012. "The Adverse Effects of Sunshine: Evidence from a Field Experiment on Legislative Transparency in an Authoritarian Assembly." *American Political Science Review* 106.4: 762-786.
- *Thesis statement and working bibliography due electronically (3/1 Sunday)*

Week 8: Mid-term Week

Monday, 3/2 – Catch up and wrap up of first half of semester

Wednesday, 3/4 – Mid-term Exam

Friday, 3/6 – No Class (Dr. Shin away at Conference)

Week 9: Identity – Nationalism [Laos]

Monday, 3/9 – Laos

- Dayley. Chapter 6: Laos.

Wednesday, 3/11 & Friday 3/13 – Nationalism and Identity

- Anthony Reid. 2010. *Imperial Alchemy: Nationalism and Political Identity in Southeast Asia*. NY: Cambridge University Press, chapters 1 and 2: 1-24; 25-48.
- Benedict Anderson. 1999. "Indonesian Nationalism Today and in the Future." *Indonesia* 67: 1-11.
- Merlyna Lim. 2017. "Freedom to Hate: Social Media, Algorithmic Enclaves, and the Rise of Tribal Nationalism in Indonesia," *Critical Asian Studies* 49.3: 411-27.

Week 10: Identity – Ethnicity [Malaysia]

Monday, 3/16– Malaysia

- Dayley. Chapter 10: Malaysia.

Wednesday, 3/18 & Friday, 3/20 – Ethnic Politics in Southeast Asia

- Thomas B. Pepinsky. 2009. "The 2008 Elections in Malaysia: The End of Ethnic Politics?" *Journal of East Asian Studies* 9(1): 87-120.
- Kikue Hamayotsu. 2013. "Toward a More Democratic Regime and Society? The Politics of Faith and Ethnicity in a Transitional Multi-Ethnic Malaysia," *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 32(2): 61-88.

Week 11: Spring Break (3/23 – 3/27)

Week 12: Identity – Religion [Brunei]

Monday, 3/30 – Brunei

- Dayley. Chapter 12: Brunei.

Wednesday, 4/1 & Friday, 4/3 – Religion in Southeast Asian 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.
- Aurel Croissant. 2022. "Brunei Darussalam: Malay Islamic Monarchy and Rentier State." *Comparative Politics of Southeast Asia*: 21-38.
- *Peer-editing of research paper drafts (4/5 Sunday).*

Week 13: Economic Development – Economic Development in Southeast Asia [Vietnam]

Monday, 4/6 – Vietnam

- Dayley. Chapter 4: Vietnam.

Wednesday, 4/8 & Friday, 4/10 – Economic Development in Southeast Asia

- Paul Krugman. 2014. "The Myth of Asia's Miracle." *Foreign Affairs* 73(6): 62-78.
- Anne Booth. 2014. "Contemporary Capitalism and the Rise of the 'Tigers'," in Norman G. Owen (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Southeast Asian History* (New York: Routledge), 177-187.
- Edmund Malesky, Regina Abrami, and Yu Zheng. 2011. "Institutions and Inequality in Single Party Regimes: A Comparative Analysis of Vietnam and China." *Comparative Politics* 43(4): 401-419.

Week 14: Economic Development – The Asian Financial Crisis

Monday, 4/13 – Timor-Leste

- Dayley. Chapter 9: Timor-Leste.

Wednesday, 4/15 – The Asian Financial Crisis

- Richard Doner and Ben Schneider. 2016. “The Middle-Income Trap: More Politics than Economics.” *World Politics* 68(4): 608-644.
- Thomas B. Pepinsky. 2008. “Capital Mobility and Coalitional Politics: Authoritarian Regimes and Economic Adjustment in Southeast Asia,” *World Politics* 60.3: 438-74.

Friday, 4/17 – Student paper presentations

Week 15: Conclusion

Monday, 4/20 – Student paper presentations

Wednesday, 4/22 – Final exam review

- *Final Paper Due on Blackboard at 11:59PM*

Friday, 4/23 – Study Day (No Class)

Week 16: Final Exam

Wednesday, 4/29 @ 11AM-1PM