

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN  
Department of History  
Spring 1988

History 457

SOUTHEAST ASIA TO 1800

Smail

Southeast Asia is close to Europe in land area and population but, as the debacle of the Vietnam War showed, most Americans know very little about the area. This course assumes no previous knowledge of the area. It is an introduction to Southeast Asian history from its beginnings about 2000 years ago up to about 1800. During this period sparse populations of tropical rice-growing villagers speaking a great variety of languages were gradually consolidated into larger blocs -- the traditional kingdoms, peoples and civilizations that then, in the 19th and 20th centuries, entered the modern industrial era (the subject of History 458). The same general process occurred in Northern Europe over almost exactly the same 2000 years from the time Julius Caesar's legions marched into Gaul, but with one striking difference. The larger blocs that gradually formed in Europe (France, Poland, etc) shared a single world religion and were variants of a single civilization. Their counterparts in Southeast Asia drew on all the great religions: Hinduism over much of the region in the first thousand years; Buddhism in what are now Burma, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos; Chinese Confucianism/Buddhism in Vietnam; Islam in Indonesia and Malaysia; Roman Catholicism in the Philippines.

The unique diversity of Southeast Asian civilizations, their unfamiliarity, and the long stretch of time covered should make it clear that this course is not a detailed step-by-step narrative. It sketches broad themes and introduces cultural traditions that are still very much alive today, as we learned expensively in Vietnam.

Lectures and Discussions

Normally lectures M & W, discussions F. The fourth class hour will meet in the Brathaus. Students must attend at least six times during the semester, in weeks of their choice, bringing as a ticket of admission a notecard with a carefully considered question.

Grading

- 6th and 11th week exams (25% each)
- final exam, based on an advance list of questions (40%)
- map exercises, quizzes (see separate sheets) and discussion (10%)

Reading

Assigned reading is about 1500 pages. All required readings except Cady (at Kinko's) are on Reserve in the Helen C. White Library. Assigned readings should be done before the beginning of the week for which they are assigned.

Office Hours (Spring Semester)

Humanities Building #5219

Wednesday - 11:00 - 12:00

Friday - 2:00 - 3:00

By Agreement

I. BEGINNINGS

1. Week of Jan. 18 (no class Mon., Jan. 18)  
Introduction; Geography; The pattern chart  
No reading assignment
2. Week of Jan. 25  
Agriculture; Prehistory  
Robbins Burling, Hill Farms & Paddy Fields 40-63  
Clifford Geertz, Agricultural Involution 12-37  
Map Exercise 1 due Fri.
3. Week of Feb. 1  
Going Civic; Hinduism & Buddhism; Early trading states  
John Cady, Southeast Asia 21-83  
"Hinduism" in A.M. Zehavi, Handbook of the world's religions in Mem  
Lib Reference Room, BL 80.2 Z 43 pp. 160-70  
"Buddhism" in Zehavi, pp. 119-34  
Map Exercise 2 due Fri.

II. CLASSICAL AGE

4. Week of Feb. 8  
Angkor  
Cady, 84-110  
Bernard Groslier & Jacques Arthaud, Angkor, art and civilization  
Map Exercise 3 due Fri.
5. Week of Feb. 15  
Pagan  
Cady, 111-130  
Maurice Collis, She was a queen (short novel of 13th c. Pagan)  
Quiz #1 in class Fri.
6. Week of Feb. 22  
The Chinese borderlands; Nam Viet, Dai Viet  
In Search of Southeast Asia Chap 8  
"Confucianism" in Ismail alFaruqi & David  
Sopher, Historical atlas of the religions of the world, in Mem  
Lib Reference Room, BL 80.2 F28 pp. 109-26
7. Week of Feb. 29  
Java: art and culture in general  
Clair Hold, Art in Indonesia chaps 2, 3, 5 and pages 267-71  
Vicki Baum, Tale of Bali (novel)  
7 Week exam in class Fri.

8. Week of Mar. 7  
Redistributive economies; Radio station states  
R. Heine-Geldern, Conceptions of state and kingship in Southeast Asia  
Claire Holt (ed), Culture & Politics in Indonesia 1-19 (Benedict Anderson, "The idea of power in Japanese culture"  
Clifford Geertz, Interpretation of cultures, 368-84, 389-404

SPRING BREAK - March 12-20

III. MAINLAND: 13TH TO 18TH CENTURIES

9. Week of Mar. 21  
13th-century revolution; The appearance of the Tai-speakers  
Cady, chap 7; pages 188-99; chap 12; chap 13; pages 303-313
10. Week of Mar. 28 (no class on Fri. Apr. 1)  
Political shakedown on the mainland; Cores & Zones; The Confucianization of Vietnam  
"Theravada Buddhism" in alFaruqi 161-84  
Nguyen Du, Tale of Kieu, 3-29 and browse in the poem

Quiz #2 on Fri.

11. Week of Apr. 4  
Nam Tien; Mainland society  
Michael Cotter, "The Vietnamese southward movement"  
In Search of Southeast Asia, chap. 15  
Anthony Reid, "Trade and state power in 16th & 17th century Southeast Asia"  
Reid, "The structure of cities in Southeast Asia, 15th to 17th centuries"

11 week exam in class Fri.

IV. ISLANDS: 13TH TO 18TH CENTURIES

12. Week of Apr. 11  
The great age in Island Southeast Asia  
Cady, Chap 8; 172-88; chap 10; 303-312
13. Week of Apr. 18  
Islam; Pepper trade & pepper port  
"Islam" in Zehavi, 135-59  
Geertz, Religion of Java, 11-37, 86-111, 121-30, 177-184, 215-24, 227-60
14. Week of Apr. 25  
Islam overlaid on Java; Dutch rule overlaid on Java  
In Search of Southeast Asia, chap 10; pages 146-50 (to mid-page)
15. Week of May 2  
The last core; New Age  
Cady, chap 11  
John Phelan, The hispanization of the Philippines, 3-89  
William Schurtz, Manila Galleon, 15-78