

Syllabus for Ph.D Programme in Centre for Indo-Pacific Studies (Southeast Asian and Southwest Pacific Studies)

Course Teacher: Professor Shankari Sundararaman

Course Title: Colonialism, Nationalism and Neo-Colonialism in Southeast Asia (Optional Course)

Course Number: SA 611 N

Course Duration: One Semester (Monsoon Semester)/ Credits 4

Lectures: 4 hours per week

Evaluation Method: Sessional Work (Comprising book review and term paper) and Semester Examinations (Mid-semester and End-Semester). Sessional Work 40%/ End Semester exam 60%

Introduction: This course will focus on imparting a comprehensive understanding of the region of Southeast Asia as it has evolved from the historical perspective. Southeast Asia, the term itself was a product of the Second World War, but the region has been witnessing the interaction with the western colonial powers since 1511 when the Portuguese entered Melaka in 1511. However, systematic consolidation begins in the region from the late 18th and early 19th century pushing the mercantile practices further, eventually leading to political consolidation. The paper will assess the roles and policies of various colonial powers and their implications on the regional evolution – both of individual states and the formation of the region. In the beginning the course will look at the manner in which the Southeast Asian empires were shaped such as the Sri Vijaya empire; Majapahit and Mataram empires; Angkor and the Khmer empires; Funan, Chenla and Champa empires.

Objectives:

The objectives of this course are to understand how the region of modern Southeast Asia evolved from being a group of empires to nation states in the post colonial order. The course outlines the various empires that dominated this vast region and the different colonial interactions that began from the 16th century onwards. Particular reference is made to the consolidation of the colonial presence in the 18th and 19th centuries, as a product of mercantilism and the conflict between colonial powers themselves to carve out distinct territories to advance their economic interests. The nationalism that engulfed the late 19th and early 20th century Asia, was visible across Southeast Asia ushering in a rapid transformation of politically distinct units. Decolonisation led to the formation of political identities and state formation, in some cases the national identity was yet to fully evolve while the state emerged earlier. By the end of the second world war the region was under the grip of the cold war, which saw neocolonial aspects come to the forefront in the form of the first and second Indochina wars. The continued presence of Portugal in East Timor till 1975 and the occupation of East Timor by Indonesia add further areas of study.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Understand the historical evolution of Southeast Asia as a group of empires that evolved through the colonial period into a region of nation states.
2. Assess the historical and cultural distinctions among the Southeast Asian states under different colonial powers and its impact on their current state identities.

3. To analyse how the historical transformation of the region occurred to modern nation states.
4. Understand the mercantile practices of the colonial powers that led to various forms of consolidation: e.g. federated and unfederated states of Malaya.
5. Assess how economics drove the colonization of Burma.
6. Comprehend how American colonial practices differed from the European experience.
7. Understand how Thailand evolved as a buffer because of the diplomacy of its rulers.
8. Comprehend the ideational factors that shaped nationalism in Asia, with implications for Southeast Asia.
9. Understand how to read and interpret sources.
10. Learn how to present and write papers that have clarity of ideas and are well structured to facilitate research writing.

Modules:

Part I: Early Southeast Asian History prior to the Colonial Period.

This first part of the course is covered through three or four lectures on the early history of Southeast Asia. The kingdoms of Sri Vijaya, Mataram, Majapahit, Angkor, Funan, Chenla, Champa form the core geographic limits of the area that is today known as “Southeast Asia”. These early empires/kingdoms were regions whose powers rose and fell over the period of several years till the advent of the colonial powers to the region beginning from 1511. This period is often characterized by the *mandala* concepts leading to an understanding of the region. This period was also characterized by the exchange of trade and cultural influences from the Indian subcontinent wherein the focus of the interactions has left an indelible mark on the region even today. These cultural interactions and the levels of their relevance in the context of understanding the region today will be a critical part of this unit’s assessment. Scholars will be introduced to the literature by J. S. Furnivall on the region and understanding the dynamics of this region as a plural society. On India’s linkages with Southeast Asia, the works of historian Neelakanta Sashtri is very relevant and will be looked at.

Part II: Early Colonial Powers in Southeast Asia in 16th and 17th Century.

This section looks at the earliest of the colonial powers to enter Southeast Asia, the Portuguese who came to the region in 1511. They held the region of Malacca for nearly 130 years basically focusing on trade. The regional kingdoms were strong enough to resist the Portuguese from further consolidating and simultaneously the Spanish began to expand from the region of the Philippines. The rivalry between the Dutch and the English in Southeast Asia in the 16th century was primarily through the VOC and the East India Company. The early efforts of the French to establish their trade in the region and its failure. This module will also look at the early French forays into the Indochina region, which is the area comprising of the modern states of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, where the French interests began with proselytization and then changed to incorporate mercantile and trade practices.

Part III: Colonial Expansion in the 18th and 19th Century:

This period covers the expansion and consolidation of the colonial regimes in Southeast Asia. There is also the influence of ideational factors and impact of western education on the colonies which start from this period onwards and supported by the expansion in communications and transport. The core developments particularly the Straits Settlement Agreement between the British and the Dutch is indicative of the changing nature of relations between the European powers during this period which is visible in the colonies. The 1824 agreement forms the crux of the division of Southeast Asia when Dutch expansion and consolidation occurs south of the Malacca straits and the British expansion is north of the Malacca straits. It covers the consolidation of the Dutch in Java and East Indies, British in Malaya and Burma, French in Indochina and the shift from Spanish to American rule in Philippines. In the context of

Malaysia the Perak Wars and the systematic expansion of the British into Malaysia will be studied in detail with a core understanding of the Federated and Unfederated Malay states, as well as the directly controlled Straits settlement territories of Singapore, Penang and Malacca. The section also looks at the effective diplomatic maneuvering by the Thai kings to ensure that the Kingdom of Siam remains free from colonial rule. The core of this section will also analyze the French expansion into the regions of Indochina with a systematic consolidation of the region. The remnants of the Khmer empire were given to the French as a protectorate willingly by the Khmer king, a matter that prevented its complete annihilation by the Siam and Vietnamese empires.

Part IV: Understanding the Concept of Nationalism; National Movements and Formation of Modern Southeast Asia;

This part of the course focuses on the nationalist movements in the region of Southeast Asia which led to the emergence of the nation-states in the region of Southeast Asia. The focus is on the manner in which the movements in individual countries assessed the loss of their traditional structures as a result of the colonial period, particularly in the loss of their traditional heritage and the education that remained part of the traditional society. The section will cover in-depth understanding of the nationalist movements in Burma; Indonesia; Malaysia; the Philippines and Vietnam in detail. India's own independence movement and its impact on the region of Southeast Asia will be assessed as this was a major factor that contributed to the emergence of nationalism in the region too.

While ideas and factors from the colonial powers influenced the countries to move ahead on several areas there was also loss as a result of economic exploitation and break up of the societal order that remained prior to colonialism. The formation of nationalist organizations of differing ideological spectrums across the region and its influence upon neighbouring countries is a critical part of the study. The formation of groups like the Dobama Asiayone, the Thakin movement and the AFPFL in Burma; the Kartini Schools, the Sarekat Islam, the Dar-ul-Islam movement, the PKI, PNI etc in Indonesia and their formations and influence on the nationalist struggle will be studied in details. How these organizations used the education system and managed to mobilize support is also a factor. In Burma and Indonesia, the role of their respective militaries in the war for independence and the legacies of that role that continue even till date.

Part V: Neocolonialism and Vietnamese Nationalism and East Timor's Decolonisation experiences.

From 1945 onwards the evolution of the sub-region of Southeast Asia began to take greater shape especially with the emergence of independent states as a factor of decolonization. This period, heralded as the phase of modern history will also include a detailed study of the cold war period and how the region was shaped as a result of the cold war. The first country in the region to achieve independence was the Philippines in 1946, following which the presence of two US military bases continued in the country till 1992. From 1945 till 1954, the issues relating to the first Indochina war in which France tried to reestablish its control over Vietnam, will be assessed till the Geneva Agreement of 1954 leading to the division of Vietnam. The second Indochina war between the US and Vietnam and its implications on the region will also be analyzed upto Vietnam's reunification in 1975. The case of East Timor which was annexed by Indonesia when Portugal granted independence in 1975 and later in 1999 Indonesia granted a referendum in which East Timor voted for separation from the Indonesian state, will also be covered.

Select Readings:

Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, Volume II 1450-1680: Expansion and Crisis*, Yale University Press, 1995.

Benedict R.O'G. Anderson, *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia, and the World*. London; New York: Verso, 1998.

Clive J. Christie, *A modern history of Southeast Asia: decolonization, nationalism and separatism*. London: New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 1996.

D.G.E. Hall, *A History of Southeast Asia*, Macmillan Asian History Series, 1981.

D.R Sardesai, *Southeast Asia Past and Present*, Taylor and Francis, 2012

George McTurnan Kahin, *Nationalism and revolution in Indonesia*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Southeast Asia Program Publications, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 2003.

Jacques Bertrand, *Nationalism and Democracy in Southeast Asia: Secessionist Mobilization to Conflict Resolution*, Cambridge University Press, 2021.

Nicholas Tarling, *Nationalism in Southeast Asia: if the people are with us*. London; New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004.

Nicholas Tarling, *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia Volume I: From Early Times to C 1800*, Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Nicholas Tarling, *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia Volume II: The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Nicholas Tarling, *Imperialism in Southeast Asia: "a fleeting, passing phase"*. London; New York: Routledge, 2001.

Norman G. Owen, *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia: A New History*, Singapore University Press, 2005.

Nu Ahn Tran, *Disunion: Anticommunist Nationalism and the Making of the Republic of Vietnam* (Studies of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute Columbia University), November 2022 (preordered)

Several Journal Articles are added to the reading list regularly and shared with the students of the course.