AY2020-21 Semester 2
HH4013 The “Big Man” and Political Legitimation in Southeast Asia

Course Instructor: Associate Professor Goh Geok Yian
Pre-requisites: HH1001 What is History? or HH1008 The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia
Contact Hours: 52 seminar hours

Course Aims

The “Big Man” and Political Legitimation in Southeast Asia gives you a comprehensive understanding of political authority and moral legitimacy of power in Southeast Asia from the prehistoric times until the present day. In this course, we study the concepts and theories of political leadership and institution, the key scholars who proposed these models, the main fields of study, multiple approaches, and the case studies in Southeast Asia. This advanced level course is structured as a reading course in which you will engage closely with the weekly texts at a detailed level. Having taken the course, you can identify the different models of political leadership, the key scholars who discuss these models of political authority, the sources they used, how they used their sources, what arguments they made, and evaluate and critique their theses. In addition to issues regarding moral and political legitimacy, you will examine the impact of historical processes such as colonialism, imperialism, and modernization on the conceptualization and manifestation of political authority in Southeast Asian societies. By participating in the critical reading and examination of the theoretical models, the scholars’ arguments and their works, you will learn the craft of designing research questions, and constructing hypotheses which they can attempt to test, and producing strong arguments for their research papers.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)

By the end of this course, you as a student will be able to:

1. Define and critique key concepts covered in the course, such as moral authority, charismatic authority, legitimacy, achieved versus ascribed power, etc.
2. Describe and compare theoretical models of political leadership and institutions from the premodern period to the present.
3. Discuss the impact of historical processes such as colonialism, imperialism, modernization, and the postcolonial on the way political elites, political interest groups, intellectuals, and other segments of the societies.
4. Draw comparison of the different experiences of Southeast Asian nations, societies, communities and other groups and individuals etc.
5. Critically assess the political leadership of case studies of “strong men” in Southeast Asia.
6. Formulate an argument on the nature, form, and physical expression of political leadership and moral authority based on comparison of case studies.

Course Content

This course examines major themes related to political authority and moral legitimacy of power in Southeast Asia from ancient times to the present day. The “Big Man” refers to the figure of political and moral authority in the region; “Big Man” is both an ascribed status, and an achieved status. Through this course, you will study the historical contexts in which modern political figures asserted their influence and power. By examining early political institutions and models, you investigate the original concepts behind models of moral authority and leadership. Some political leaders today continue to allude to these earlier models to legitimize their rights to rule, namely among the military regimes of Myanmar, the royal family and political regime of Thailand, etc.
Colonialism had a major impact on political institutions and structures in colonized states, and even in Thailand, which was not formally colonized, the Thai monarchy undertook programs of centralization, “modernization”, and “reforms” which can be likened to a form of internal colonization.

This course examines a few of the major influential theoretical models of statecraft, kingship, and political institutions in Southeast Asia from the premodern through modern eras.

Some of the key topics covered in the course include and are not limited to:

1. Themes such as traditional versus modern ideals of political authority, continuity versus change, indigenous versus exogenous ideas of leadership etc.
2. Models of political leadership, ranging from Buddhist to Hindu kingship and other variants
3. Gender and political authority
4. Moral authority
5. Legitimacy
6. Premodern political leadership and government
7. Colonialism
8. Millenarianism
9. Post-WWII models of political leadership and figures of authority

Assessment (includes both continuous and summative assessment)

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Team/Individual</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Precis</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Individual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Individual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation in class discussions</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Individual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Individual</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Annotated bibliography and paper outline (10%)</td>
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<td>b. Research paper (20%)</td>
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Descriptions of assessments:

Precis (30%)
You are required to submit three (3) preces (800-1000 words each) during the semester. Each précis must not be merely a summary of the week reading; it must show the your attempt to relate the reading to each week’s topic. You will submit the précis on the day of the meeting in class. The preces must not be on the readings you choose to present.

Presentations (30%)
You are required to give a total of two (2) 20-minute presentations over the course of a semester (12 weeks excluding the first five seminars which will be lecture-cum-discussion sessions led by the instructor). You have to prepare PowerPoint slides for their presentations. You will lead the discussions on the topics you elect to present.
Participation in class discussions (10%)
You are expected to participate in class discussions and any activities conducted within the classroom.

Research paper (30%)
You are required to submit a final research paper of 4,500-5,000 words, exclusive of citations and bibliography. The topic of this paper must be related to one or several themes examined in this course. You have to select one or two themes and frame your research question(s) based on the theme(s) you have selected.

Formative feedback
You will receive formative feedback through written responses to your papers and presentations. You will also receive verbal feedback through in-class discussion or one-on-one meetings, as necessary.

I will consider the following points when giving comments to you:
1. Provide constructive and positive feedback whenever possible.
2. Return my feedback to you as soon as I can.
3. I will be specific in making suggestions regarding how each of you can improve on your work.
4. Focus on your advancement toward your goal.
5. With respect to presentations and in-class discussions, I will encourage you to express your views freely.

Learning and Teaching approach

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<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>How does this approach support you in achieving the learning outcomes?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Opening brief</td>
<td>The instructor will give a weekly opening brief introducing and providing the context for understanding each week’s theme.</td>
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<td>Individual presentations</td>
<td>Students in the class would select topics they want to present. The presentations provide opportunities for the students to practice public speaking and allow you to hone their presentation skills in a supportive environment. Each presenter will respond to questions and comments from the instructor and the class; you would have to think quickly and respond to the questions posed to you.</td>
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<td>In-class free-style discussions</td>
<td>You will be encouraged to comment, critique, and make queries on the group presentations. This approach allows you to develop confidence in public speaking and also alert you to the importance of peer feedback.</td>
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Reading and References
Texts subject to changes.

Others:


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**Course Policies and Student Responsibilities**

**1. General**

You are expected to complete all assigned pre-class readings and activities, attend all seminar classes punctually and take all scheduled assignments and tests by due dates. You are expected to take responsibility to follow up with course notes, assignments and course related announcements for seminar sessions they have missed. You are expected to participate in all seminar discussions and activities.

**2. Absenteeism**

Absence from class without a valid reason can affect your overall course grade. Valid reasons include falling sick supported by a medical certificate and participation in NTU’s approved activities supported by an excuse letter from the relevant bodies.

If you miss a seminar, you must inform the course instructor via email prior to the start of the class.

**3. Late Work and Extensions**

Any assessable material that is late will lose marks at the rate of 10% (of the maximum grade) per day. Missing a presentation or not scheduling a presentation will result in a zero grade that component.
Extensions will only be granted in very special cases and only then when requested at least one week in advance of a deadline.

**Academic Integrity**

Good academic work depends on honesty and ethical behaviour. The quality of your work as a student relies on adhering to the principles of academic integrity and to the NTU Honour Code, a set of values shared by the whole university community. Truth, Trust and Justice are at the core of NTU’s shared values.

As a student, it is important that you recognize your responsibilities in understanding and applying the principles of academic integrity in all the work you do at NTU. Not knowing what is involved in maintaining academic integrity does not excuse academic dishonesty. You need to actively equip yourself with strategies to avoid all forms of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, academic fraud, collusion and cheating. If you are uncertain of the definitions of any of these terms, you should go to the academic integrity website for more information. Consult your instructor(s) if you need any clarification about the requirements of academic integrity in the course.

**Course Instructors**

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<tr>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Office Location</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
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<tr>
<td>Goh Geok Yian</td>
<td>SHHK-05-09</td>
<td>65138163</td>
<td><a href="mailto:gygoh@ntu.edu.sg">gygoh@ntu.edu.sg</a></td>
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**Planned Weekly Schedule**

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<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings/ Activities</th>
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| 3 | The Buddhist Cakravartin: World Conqueror and World Renouncer | **Reading for everyone:**
| 4 | Stranger-kings and Outsiders | **All to read:**

**Supplementary reading:**
| 5 | Queens and female authority figures in Southeast Asia | **All to read the assigned chapters for either Andaya’s or Jacobsen’s works:**

| 6 | Premodern Southeast Asian Political Legitimacy and Moral Authority: Burma, Cambodia and Thailand | **Students to select from the list of readings to present:**


| 7 | Premodern Southeast Asian Political Legitimacy and Moral Authority: Indonesia | Students to select from the list of readings to present:  
|---|---|---|
| 8 | Colonial government and its impact: structure and institutions | Students to select from the list of readings to present:  
Rafael, Vicente. (ed.) *Figures of Criminality in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Colonial Vietnam.* Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1999.  
Ricklefs, M.C. *War, Culture, and Economy in Java, 1677-1726: Asian and European* |
| 9 | **Millenarian movements, resistance, and indigenous and traditional heroes** | Students to select from the list of readings to present:  
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<td>Students to select from the list of readings to present:</td>
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| 12 | Case study 3 Postcolonial state with a history of anti-colonial struggle and a desire to rejuvenate its former glory: Indonesia. | Students to select from the list of readings to present:


| 13 | Case study 4 Postcolonial state built on its purported lack of ancient past: Singapore. | Students to select from the list of readings to present:
