

ASIAN 403: Southeast Asian Literature
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Spring Semester, 2024
Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:30-3:45 pm
Ingraham 120



[L to R: Books Actually (Singapore), Kulap Saipradit (Thailand), Ma Thida (Burma), Taring Padi (Indonesia)]

Instructor: Tyrell Haberkorn

Email: tyrell.haberkorn@wisc.edu [If I do not respond within 48 hours, then feel free to re-send your email.]

Office: Van Hise 1210

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 4-6 pm; Some Friday afternoons. Appointments necessary. Use the link on the Canvas homepage to make appointments via Google calendar.

Instructional Mode: In-person combination lecture/seminar

Credits: 3

How Credit Hours are Earned: Credit hours in this course are earned by the traditional Carnegie definition. Each credit hour is earned via one hour of classroom seminar and a minimum of two hours of

out of class student work each week over approximately 15 weeks, or a total of three hours of classroom seminar and at least six hours of out of classroom work.

Course Description

Taking the 1965 coup in Indonesia and the Khmer Rouge genocide in Cambodia in 1975 as chronological points of departure and concluding with the recent expansion of space for queer and LGBTIQ voices in literature, this course is an introduction to the contemporary literature of Southeast Asia. This course begins from the starting premise that rather than standing apart from politics, society and the economy, literature and other forms of cultural production are both reflective of and deeply intertwined with both the daily life of citizens and the governance of the polity. What does life feel like in the countryside and the city? What different futures have authors imagined and dreamt up? How do individuals and communities cope with mass terror and the exile and displacement that often follow? Together, we will examine these and other questions in short stories, novels, poetry, memoir, graphic novels, as well as the unexpected and innovative visual and internet forms that literature increasingly takes. Through paying close attention to the topics taken up by writers and the transformation of publishing in response to both censorship and financial constraints, the course examines the development of contemporary writing as well as the contexts in which it is produced and gathers meaning. We will pay particularly close attention to translation, including its modes and methods. The course includes both careful, focused readings of literature from individual countries as well as comparative themes which traverse the region. These themes will vary from year-to-year, but for Spring 2024 they will be state violence and repression, queerness, and exile and displacement.

Course Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to think comparatively about a range of literary forms and their relationship(s) to society, politics and history across post-independence Southeast Asia. This means you should be able to do the following:

1. Demonstrate a critical understanding of the place(s) and role(s) of writing and literature in society and politics in Southeast Asia.
2. Use different materials, including fiction, poetry, memoir and essays, and also cultural political production beyond text, such as film and visual art, to think within and across examples.
3. Develop research and writing skills that reflect critical and comparative (across time, across space) thinking.

Course Materials:

This syllabus is your key guide to our work together this semester. Read it and refer to it often.

The readings for this course are divided into required provocations and suggested provocations. All required provocations are available on Canvas. They can be found in the relevant Module for each week on the Canvas homepage, as either PDFs or links; links to the pre-class Discussion Board (see below for details), any Powerpoint slides used in each class, and the link to the lecture capture for the Monday class are also located within the Module. The suggested provocations can be found online or

through the UW Library or UBorrow. If you are looking for readings on a topic related to class, please let me know – I may be able to help.

Expectations and Assignments:

For undergraduates

1. Attendance and Participation: Our shared collaboration this semester depends on your sustained engagement and participation.
 - *Lectures:* Lectures are held on Mondays and are in person, and will also be recorded and uploaded to Canvas. Beginning in Week 2, if you attend in person, then you will receive ½ of an extra point added to your final grade for each class you attend. In other words, if you attend every lecture, you will receive 5.5. additional points added to your final grade.
 - *Collaborative Discussions:* Collaborative discussions are held on Wednesdays and are only in person. Beginning in Week 2 you may miss two without needing to provide an explanation. If you need to miss more than two, please contact Tyrell via email to explain why. Save these absences for when you really need them. Each additional unexplained absences will result in 1 point subtracted from your final grade.

Attendance for both lectures [Mondays] and collaborative discussions [Wednesdays] will be taken via TopHat. It is your responsibility to make sure you are registered for TopHat and to sign in each class. You must stay for the whole class – i.e., you cannot just come to sign in on TopHat and then leave. It's too disruptive to the class and unfair to other class members.
2. Reading, discussion, and contribution to classroom environment: Our shared collaboration this semester depends on your sustained engagement and participation. You must complete the required readings listed for a given week **by Monday night [see below]**. Take notes and bring specific ideas and questions to class. The suggested readings are truly suggestions – if you are interested in reading further on a particular topic, this is a place to start. **If you have not read the readings for a particular class, do not contribute to classroom discussion.** When class discussion moves in the direction of general topics related to society and politics, it is tempting to offer one's opinion or belief – but we will keep our discussion rigorously based on what we have read and viewed. We will challenge one another to think in new ways and to question our assumptions, and we will always do so with respect.
3. Reading Interventions: Beginning in Week 2, you will write a reading intervention for each week. These will be short questions/responses of approximately 200-400 words [less than one page] in response to prompts on Canvas. These interventions should be submitted via the appropriate week's Canvas Discussion Board by 11, 59 pm on Mondays. These responses are intended to be a foundation for our discussion. Citations not needed. These responses will be graded on a Complete/Incomplete scale as follows:
 Complete: Response submitted.
 Incomplete: Response not submitted
AS THESE RESPONSES ARE MEANT TO FACILITATE CLASS DISCUSSION, LATE SUBMISSIONS ARE NOT PERMITTED. EVERYONE CAN MISS 2 RESPONSES

WITHOUT EXPLANATION OR PENALTY; IF YOU MISS MORE THAN 2 RESPONSES, TALK TO THE INSTRUCTOR. DO NOT USE CHATGPT OR OTHER AI TOOLS.

4. Two Short Essays: You will write two short essays of 1000-1200 words [4-5 pages] during the first two-thirds of the semester. There will be a selection of questions/prompts for you to choose from for each essay. The prompts for the first essay will be posted on Canvas by Monday, 12 February, and will be due via Canvas by 11,59 pm on Friday, 23 February. The prompts for the second essay will be posted on Canvas by Monday, 18 March, and will be due via Canvas by 11,59 pm on Friday, 5 April. There is a 72-hour grace period during which late essays can be turned in without penalty, but they will not receive comments. After 72 hours, late essays will receive 2% off per 24-hour period late.
5. Final essay: The final assignment for this course will be a final essay, similar to the two short essays. The prompts will be posted on Canvas by Monday, 17 April, and will be due via Canvas by 11,59 pm on Friday, 3 May. LATE FINAL ESSAYS CANNOT BE ACCEPTED.

Discussion Board Posts	30%
Two essays	40%
Final essay	30%

For honors option undergraduates and graduate students:

- 1 and 2 as above remain the same.
- You may complete 4 and 5 as above, OR you may opt to do one long-term project, either a seminar paper [roughly 20-25 pages], a translation into English of an unpublished piece of literature in a language that you read, or another equivalent project in a relevant medium to be developed in conjunction with the instructor.
- You must decide by the due date of the first short essay [23 February], which option you will choose. If you choose the long-term project, updates will be due on 23 February [one paragraph on your planned project and 5 April [two-page outline/introduction]. The final project will be due in its entirety at 11,59 pm on Friday, 3 May.

Grading:

Attendance and Participation	
Discussion Board Posts	30%
Writing (whether 3 essays or long-term project)	70%

Grading Scale (all students):

A	93-100
AB	88-92
B	83-87
BC	78-82
C	70-77
D	60-70
F	Below 60

Academic Policies (standard, UW-wide policies):

Rules, Rights & Responsibilities: See the Guide's Rules, Rights and Responsibilities

Academic Integrity: By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UW-Madison's community of scholars in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest academic integrity standards. Academic misconduct compromises the integrity of the university. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these acts are examples of academic misconduct, which can result in disciplinary action. This includes but is not limited to failure on the assignment/course, disciplinary probation, or suspension. Substantial or repeated cases of misconduct will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards for additional review. For more information, refer to studentconduct.wiscweb.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/.

Accommodations for Students With Disabilities: The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. (McBurney Disability Resource Center syllabus statement, <http://mcburney.wisc.edu/facstaffother/faculty/syllabus.php>)

Diversity and Inclusion: Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world. (Institutional statement on diversity, <https://diversity.wisc.edu/>)

A Few Relevant Resources:

1. **The Writing Center:** <http://writing.wisc.edu>
2. **Mental Health Services, University Health Services:** <https://www.uhs.wisc.edu/mental-health/>
3. **Multicultural Student Center:** <https://msc.wisc.edu/>

4. **Black Cultural Center:** <https://msc.wisc.edu/black-cultural-center/>
5. **Latinx Student Center:** <https://msc.wisc.edu/identity-centers/latinx-cultural-center/>
6. **Asian Pacific Islander Desi American Student Center:**
<https://msc.wisc.edu/identity-centers/apidasc/>
7. **International Student Services:** <https://iss.wisc.edu/>
8. **Gender and Sexuality Campus Center:** <https://lgbt.wisc.edu/>

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COURSE TOPIC AND READING CALENDAR

Week 0 | 24 January [W] | Introduction to the Course

Week 1 | Stories, Politics and Responsibility

- Note: This week will have a different format than all subsequent weeks. Both Monday and Wednesday classes will be a combination of lecture and discussion. You should plan to attend both. There are no required Reading Interventions/Discussion Board posts this week.

29 January [M] | Creating a classroom community

Required Provocations:

- The syllabus! Read it closely and bring questions.
- Selections from bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (New York: Routledge, 1994).
- Viet Thanh Nguyen. “Why I Teach.” *New York Times*. 23 September 2019.
<https://vietnguyen.info/2019/why-i-teach>

31 January [W] | Who is political? Who is a writer? Whose stories are told?

Required Provocations:

- Vaclav Havel. “Stories and Totalitarianism.” *Index on Censorship*. Volume 17, Number 3, 1988. Pages 14-21.
- Viet Thanh Nguyen. “What Amanda Gorman Teaches Us About Our Shared America.” *Time*. 12 February 2021.
<https://vietnguyen.info/2021/what-amanda-gorman-teaches-us-about-our-shared-america>
- Khairani Barokka, “The Case Against Italicizing “Foreign” Words,” *Catapult*, 11 February 2020. Available online at:
<https://catapult.co/stories/column-the-case-against-italicizing-foreign-words-khairani-barokka>

Recommended Provocations:

- Gina Apostol. 2013. “Borges, Politics, and the Postcolonial.” *Los Angeles Review of Books*. 18 August. Available online at:
<http://lareviewofbooks.org/article/borges-politics-and-the-postcolonial>
- Gina Apostol. 2014. “Why Benedict Anderson Counts: Lessons on Writing, Culture, and José Rizal.” *Los Angeles Review of Books*. 4 March. Available online at:

<https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/benedict-anderson-counts-lessons-writing-culture-jose-rizal/>

Week 2 | 5 and 7 February | Literature in a Time of Repression and Violence (Indonesia)

Required Provocations:

- John Roosa. "The State of Knowledge about an Open Secret: Indonesia's Mass Disappearances of 1965." *Journal of Asian Studies* 75.2 (May 2016). Pages 281-297.
- Pipit Rochijat. 1985. "Am I PKI or Non-PKI?" Translated and with an afterword by Benedict Anderson. *Indonesia* 40 (October): 37-56.
- Sobron Aidit. "August Raid." Translated by Mary Zurbuchen. *The Lontar Anthology of Indonesian Short Stories: Short Fiction from the Twentieth Century, Volume 2, The New Order and Beyond, 1965-2000*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2017. 448-454.
- Hersri. 1995. "Art and Entertainment in the New Order's Jails." Translated and introduced by Keith Foulcher. *Indonesia* 59 (April): 1-20.

Suggested Provocations:

- Geoffrey Robinson. 2018. *The Killing Season: A History of the Indonesian Massacres, 1965-1966*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Leila Chudori. 2015. *Home*. Translated by John McGlynn. New York: Deep Vellum Publishing.
- Hersri Setiawan. *Buru Island: A Prison Memoir*. Translated by Jennifer Lindsay. Melbourne: Monash University Publishing, 2020. [Selections]
- Pramoedya Ananta Toer. 1997. "My Cell Mate." Translated by James T. Siegel. *Indonesia* 64 (October): 1-8.
- James T. Siegel. 1997. "Revolutionary Stink and the Extension of the Tongue of the People: The Political Languages of Pramoedya Ananta Toer and Sukarno." *Indonesia* 64 (October): 9-20.
- Seno Gumira Ajidarma. 1999. "Fiction, Journalism, and History: A Process of Self-Correction." Translated by Michael H. Bodden. *Indonesia* 68 (October): 164-171.
- Pramoedya Ananta Toer. 2000. *The Mute's Soliloquy*. Translated by Willem Samuels. New York: Penguin.
- "Myth and History: Writing from Indonesia," *Words Without Borders*, August 2015, Available online here: <https://www.wordswithoutborders.org/issue/august-2015>
- Harry Aveling, editor and translator. *GESTAPU: Indonesian Short Stories of the Abortive Communist Coup of 30th September 1965*. Southeast Asian Studies Working Paper No.6. Reproduced by the Southeast Asian Studies Program University of Hawai'i, 1975.
 - Introduction, i-vii
 - Usamah, "War and Humanity," 12-22
 - Mohammad Sjoekoer, "Death," 23-26
 - Gerson Poyk, "A Woman and Her Children," 58-76
 - Sosiawan Negroho, "A Minor Conflict," 97-107

Week 3 | 12 and 14 February | Surveillance, Belonging and Not-Belonging (Malaysia, Singapore)

Required Provocations:

- Tan Tarn How. 2011 (1994). "Undercover." *Six Plays*. Singapore: Epigram Books.
- Jeremy Tiang. 2015. *It Never Rains on National Day*. Singapore: Epigram Books. [Selections]

Suggested Provocations:

- Wong Koi Tet. 2016. "Black Panther." Translated by Hong Xinyi, Lee Chee Keng and Tina Sim. *Words Without Borders* October. Available online here:

<https://www.wordswithoutborders.org/article/october-2016-multilingual-singapore-black-panther-wong-koi-tet>.

Week 4 | 19 and 21 February | The Impossibility of Queerness (Singapore)

Required Provocations:

- Selections from Marylyn Tan, *Gaze Back*. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2022.
- Selections from *SQ21: Singapore Queers in the 21st Century*, edited by Jason Wee (Singapore: Math Paper Press, 2016).
- Selections from Ng Yi-Sheng, Stephanie Chan, Andy Ang, Ang Jin Yong, Tan Boon Hui, Atifa Othman and Kokila Annamalai, eds. *Exhale: an Anthology of Queer Singapore Voices*. Singapore: Math Paper Press, 2021.
- Eleanor Wong. 2005. "Mergers and Acquisitions." *Invitation to Treat*. Singapore: Firstfruits.

Suggested Provocations:

- Audrey Yue and Jun Zubillaga-Pow, eds. 2012. *Queer Singapore: illiberal citizenship and mediated cultures*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Lynette Chua, *The Politics of Love in Myanmar: LGBT Mobilization and Human Rights as a Way of Life* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2018).

Week 5 | 26 and 28 February | Writing and Drawing Genocide (Cambodia)

Required Provocations:

- Ben Kiernan. "Introduction: The Making of the 1975 Khmer Rouge Victory" and "The End of the Pol Pot Regime." In *The Pol Pot Regime: Race, Power, and Genocide in Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge, 1975-1979*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996. Pages 1-30, 440-466.
- Henri Locard. 2004. "The Hunt for 'Enemies of the People.'" In *Pol Pot's Little Red Book: The Sayings of Angkar*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books.
- Vann Nath. *A Cambodian Prison Portrait: One Year in the Khmer Rouge's S-21*. Translated by Moeun Chhean Nariddh. Bangkok: White Lotus, 1998.

Suggested Provocations:

- Vaddey Ratner. 2014. *In the Shadow of the Banyan*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Vaddey Ratner. 2017. *Music of the Ghosts*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Sharon May, ed. 2015. "Angkor to Year Zero and Beyond." *Words Without Borders*. November. Available online at: <https://www.wordswithoutborders.org/issue/november-2015-cambodia-angkor-to-year-zero-and-beyond>

Week 6 | 4 and 6 March | In the Aftermath of Genocide (Cambodia)

Required Provocations:

- Vaddey Ratner. 2013. "The Cripple's Last Dance." *Guernica: a magazine of global art & politics*. 30 April. Available online at: <https://www.guernicamag.com/vaddey-ratner-the-cripples-last-dance/>
- U Sam Oeur. 2016. "The Saccamng and the Eisei." Translated by Ken McCullough. *Asymptote*. October. Available online at: <http://www.asymptotejournal.com/nonfiction/u-sam-oeur-the-saccamng-and-the-eisei/>.
- Chanrithy Him. "When the Owl Cries." In *Children of Cambodia's Killing Fields: Memoirs By Survivors*. Compiled by Dith Pran. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1997. Pages 146-153.

- Sokunthary Svay. 2006. "Leaving Battambang, the City of Answers." In *Homelands: Women's Journeys Across Race, Place, and Time*. Edited by Patricia Justine Tumang and Jenesha De Rivera. CA: Seal Press. Pages 173-184.

Recommended Provocations

- Huy Vannak. *Bou Meng: A Survivor from Khmer Rouge Prison S-21*. Phnom Penh: Documentation Center of Cambodia, 2010.

Week 7 | 11 and 13 March | Home, Exile and Displacement (Vietnam, Cambodia, United States)

Required Provocations:

- Viet Thanh Nguyen. 2017. *The Refugees*. New York: Grove Press. [Selections]
- Viet Thanh Nguyen. 2018. *The Displaced: Refugee Writers on Refugee Lives*. New York: Harry N. Abrams. [Selections]
- So, Anthony Veasna. *Afterparties: Stories*. New York: Ecco, 2021.
- So, Anthony Veasna. *Songs on Endless Repeat: Essays and Outtakes*. New York: Harper Collins, 2023.
- Selections from Putsata Reang. *Ma and me: a memoir*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2022.

Recommended Provocations:

- She Who Has No Master(s). "From My Mother I Inherited." *BOMB Magazine*. 31 May 2017. Available online at <http://bombmagazine.org/article/8275518/one-poem>.
- Isabelle Thuy Pelaud, Lan Duong, Mariam B. Lam, and Kathy L. Nguyen, eds. *Troubling Borders: An Anthology of Art and Literature by Southeast Asian Women in the Diaspora*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014. [Selections]

Week 8 | 18 and 20 March | Diaspora, Anew (Laos, Thailand, United States)

Required Provocation:

- Kao Kalia Yang. *The Late Homecomer: A Hmong Family Memoir*. Minneapolis: Coffee House Press, 2008.

Recommended Provocations:

- Mai Der Vang. 2017. *Afterland*. Minneapolis: Greywolf Press.
- OUT OF THE MARGINS, series by *diaCRITICS: Covering the arts, culture and politics of the Vietnamese at home and in the diaspora*. See: <http://diacritics.org/?cat=1633>.

Week 9 | 25 and 27 March | SPRING BREAK = NO CLASS!

Week 10 | 1 and 3 April | Testimony and Literature of Witness (Thailand)

Required Provocations:

- Prachatai. *Faces of the Dead, Lives of the Murdered: The Martyrs of 10 April 2010*. Translated by Tyrell Haberkorn. Justice in Translation x/2024.
- Eef Vermeij. "Ratchaprasong Notes (Say Hi to the Leaders)." 11 January 2023. *International Institute of Social History Blog*. Available online here: <https://iisg.amsterdam/en/blog/ratchaprasong-notes-say-hi-leaders>
- International Institute for Social History. "Say Hi to the Leaders Collection." Available online here: <https://search.iisg.amsterdam/Record/ARCH03249>

Recommended Provocations:

- Claudio Sopranzetti, Sara Fabbri and Chiara Natalucci. *The King of Bangkok*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021.

Week 11 | 8 and 10 April | What Cannot Be Said, Written or Read (Thailand)

Required Provocations:

- Lao Khamhom. 2017. *The Deva*. Translated by Damnoen Garden. Bangkok: Aan Press.
- Khamphiphaksa [Judgment], Black Case No. O.3959/2551 (Red Case No. O.2812/2552), 28 August 2552 [2009]. English translation in *Fa Diew Kan*, 7.4 (October-December 2552 [2009]), 130-151.
- Arnon Nampha. *The Monarchy and Thai Society*. London: PEN International, 2021. Available online here: <https://pen-international.org/app/uploads/The-Monarchy-and-Thai-Society.pdf>
- Arnon Nampa, *Letters from Prison: Volume 1 (Nos. 1-25, 3 October-15 November 2023)*, translated by the Article 112 Project, Justice in Translation/JSEALab, UW Madison.

Recommended Provocations:

- Thongchai Winichakul. *Thailand's Hyper-royalism: Its Past Success and Present Predicament*. ISEAS Trends in Southeast Asia, no. 7. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2016.
- Panusaya Sitthijirawattana, Parit Chiwarak, Panupong Jadnok, and Arnon Nampha. *The Day the Sky Trembled: A Call to Reform the Monarchy*. London: PEN International, 2021. Available online here: <https://pen-international.org/app/uploads/The-Day-the-Sky-Trembled-complete-r18-August-2021.pdf>

Week 12 | 15 and 17 April | Writing the City and Against Violence (Philippines)

Required Provocations:

- Randy Ribay. *Patron Saints of Nothing*. New York: Penguin, 2020.
- Selections from Maria Ressa, *How to Stand Up to a Dictator: The Fight for Our Future* (NY: Harper, 2022).

Recommended Provocations:

- Ian Rosales Casocot. 2012. *Beautiful Accidents: Stories*. Manila: University of the Philippines Press.
- Jessica Hagedorn, ed. 2013. *Manila Noir*. New York: Akashic Books. [Selections]
- Jessica Hagedorn. 1997. *The Gangster of Love*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Gina Apostol. 2013. *The Gun Dealer's Daughter*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Week 13 | 22 and 24 April | Literature of Imprisonment (Thailand and Myanmar)

Required Provocations:

- Win Tin, "The Tiger," *Guernica*, 1 April 2015, <https://www.guernicamag.com/the-tiger/>
- Prontip Mankhong. *All They Could Do To Us*. [Selections]

Recommended Provocations:

- Ma Thida. 2015. *Prisoner of Conscience: My Steps Through Insein*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books.
- Barbara Harlow. 1992. *Barred: Women, Writing and Political Detention*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

Week 14 | 29 April and 1 May | Literature Towards a New Future

Required Provocations:

- TBA!