Cultures of Southeast Asia (Writing Component)

**Course objective and content:** The course aims to provide a general introduction to important themes in the anthropological literature on Southeast Asia. Principal among the themes that we will consider are the following: conflicting attitudes toward hierarchical and egalitarian social relations; varying Understandings of gender roles; and diverse forms of governance. The aim is to increase students' understanding of the nature of Southeast Asian societies, and by doing so, to increase students' understandings of their own attitudes and practices.

Readings are taken from several different genres: an anthropological memoir, two novels (one translated from Thai, the other from Indonesian), a history text, a family memoir, and a biography. The point of this eclecticism is to note how information about social relations can be gathered from many different kinds of sources.

Students should note at the outset that the reading assignments are many and lengthy. They are, in my opinion, extremely compelling, and none of them requires the sort of concentration that highly theoretical writing in the social sciences often calls for. Nevertheless, this course does demand a considerable commitment to reading on the part of students. If you are taking other courses that require large amounts of reading, you should ask yourself whether this is the right time to take this course.

We will also devote considerable class time to discussing writing. Few students find this enjoyable, although many find it useful. If you have no interest in improving your writing skills, you might want to look for a class in which the professor takes this responsibility less seriously.

Here follows the Writing Flag description provided by the Center for the Core Curriculum:

“This course carries the Writing Flag. Writing Flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. In this class, you can expect to write regularly during the semester, complete substantial writing projects, and receive feedback from your instructor to help you improve your writing. You will also have the opportunity to revise one or more assignments, and to read and discuss your peers' work. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work.”

**Course requirements:** Students are required to do all of the reading, as well as attend class. Grades will be based on three essays of about four pages (each worth 22 points), six short assignments of about one page (each worth 3 points), one précis of a published article (worth 6 points), and attendance and participation (worth 10 points). (Seven short assignments are listed in the syllabus. A student can drop one of these without penalty. If a student opts to submit seven short responses, the lowest grade will be dropped.) There is no extra credit option for this course.

**Class policy:** Students are expected to reach class on time and to remain till the end of class. Behavior that distracts other students or me will not be permitted. Laptop computers and other electronic devices may not be used during class.
Grading policy: You will need to submit assignments in two forms: using Blackboard, you must submit a copy online; and you must also submit a hard copy in class (and remain to attend a class, as well). Please make sure you are familiar with the “Assignment” function on Blackboard so that you will have no problem getting your assignment submitted on line. Be sure, too, that you use a program that I will be able to read: MSWord or Text Editor seem to be the safest options. Assignments turned in late lose a full grade a day. Extenuating circumstances will be taken into consideration provided I receive verifiable documentation from a third party (e.g., medical personnel in the case of illness, relatives in the case of a family emergency). Otherwise, the penalty stands.

If you are dissatisfied by a grade you receive on any assignment, you are free to have me review the grade. However, I cannot guarantee that I will change your grade.

Blackboard email addresses: It is important that I be able to communicate with students by email. I can do this most efficiently by making use of Blackboard. Blackboard uses a student’s UT-assigned email address as a default setting. If you do not regularly check emails on your UT-assigned email address, you should be sure to register the email address you do use with UT.

Other useful information:

Undergraduate Writing Center (UWC) FAC 211, 512-471-6222 uwc.utexas.edu The Undergraduate Writing Center provides university undergraduates individualized, professional advice on all aspects of writing on a walk-in basis or by appointment. Students may request that UWC send me a note confirming their visit.

Students with disabilities: The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic adjustments for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259, 471-4641 TTY. Please make known to me, in a timely manner, any special needs you might have so that reasonable accommodation can be made. I cannot make these arrangements immediately before a major assignment is due.

Counseling and Mental Health (CMHC) SSB 4th floor, 512-471-3515 cmhc.utexas.edu The Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC) helps students with their personal concerns so they can meet the daily challenges of student life. The CMHC is staffed by psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and other licensed mental health professionals. CMHC’s 24-hour phone counseling line is 512-471-CALL (2255).

Readings:

The following readings are available for overnight loan in PCL Reserves. The books are also for sale (some in used copies) at the Coop Bookstore.

PL 5089 M345 D8713 2004 PCL Reserves

PL 4209 K8 S513 1998 PCL Reserves


The following title is no longer available for sale (although you might be able to find a copy at Amazon.com). The portions of the text we will be reading will be available on line.


Reading and assignment schedule:

**Week 1.** January 14 - 18  
Introduction

Reading: Raybeck, pp. 1 – 113.

Blackboard: The prompt for the first short assignment, **due by 10 p.m.,** Wednesday, January 23, will be available on the Blackboard site for this course, after class on Thursday, January 17. Check the “Assignments” folder to find the prompt. Send me an email (see above) if you cannot get access to this assignment. Please note that you are also required to bring a **hard copy** of your assignment to class on Thursday, January 24, and every time you have submitted an assignment for the rest of the semester. This hard copy should show your name only the **back of the last page** because it is important that students in the class be able to look at each other’s work anonymously.

This same pattern—submitting your assignments electronically and then bringing a hard copy to class—will apply to all assignments in the course of the semester except the final essay.

In order to make sure that you will not encounter any problems submitting assignments through Blackboard, please go as soon as possible to the Blackboard site for the course and follow the instructions for the assignment called Test run.

**Week 2.** January 21 - 25  
Lowland rural life

Reading: Raybeck, pp. 115 – 238.

Blackboard: Second short writing assignment, **due by 10 p.m.,** Wednesday, January 30.

**Week 3.** January 28 – February 1  
Lowland rural life

Reading: Khukrit Pramoj, pp. 3 - 350

Note: the novel, *Four Reigns*, contains a total of 656 short, entertaining pages. You can divide your reading up as you like, but you will be expected to have completed the novel when you write your first essay.
Blackboard: Third short writing assignment, **due by 10 p.m., Wednesday, February 6.**

**Week 4.** February 4 - 8

Urban aristocratic life

Reading: Khukrit Pramoj, pp. 350-656

**Blackboard: First essay assignment available after class on Thursday, February 7. A first draft is due by 10 p.m., Wednesday, February 13.**

**Week 5.** February 11 - 15

Urban aristocratic life

No additional reading.

Blackboard: revise the first draft of your essay, and resubmit by 10 p.m., Wednesday, February 20.

Note that if you have done an adequate job on your first draft, you should be able to polish your essay and still have time to start reading Elliott’s book—a good idea, given the length of Elliott's book.

**Week 6.** February 18 – 22

Vietnam

Reading: Elliott, pp. 3 - 187

Blackboard: Fourth short writing assignment, **due by 10 p.m., Wednesday, February 27.**

**Week 7.** February 25 – March 1

Vietnam


Blackboard: Fifth short writing assignment, **due by 10 p.m., Wednesday, March 6.**

**Week 8.** March 4 - 8

Reading: Elliott, pp. 337 - 371

Trullinger, pp. 96 - 206.

**Spring Break March 11 – 15**

**Week 9.** March 18 – 22

Vietnam

Reading: Elliott, pp. 373 – 474

**Blackboard: Second essay assignment available after class on Thursday, March 21, due by 10 p.m. Wednesday, April 3.**

(You have the option of submitting a draft of your second essay on Blackboard by 10 p.m., Wednesday, March 27. You will receive comments on a draft only if you submit it to me by that date.)

**Week 10.** March 25 – March 29

Vietnam

No additional reading.
**Week 11.** April 1 – 5 Buddhism

Reading: Brown pp. 6 – 142.

Blackboard: Sixth short reading assignment, due by 10 p.m., Wednesday, April 10.

**Week 12.** April 8 - 12 Gender

Reading: Mangunwijaya pp. 1 - 82.

**Week 13.** April 15 – 19 Modernization


Blackboard: Seventh short reading assignment, due by 10 p.m., Wednesday, April 24.

**Week 14.** April 25 – 29 Modernization

No additional reading.

Blackboard: Submit by 10 p.m., Friday, April 26, the name and source of an academic essay to be summarized in a précis. Submit précis by 10 p.m., Wednesday, May 1.

**Week 15.** April 29 – May 3 Conclusion

No additional reading.

Blackboard: Final essay topic available after class on Thursday, May 5. To be submitted on Blackboard by 2 p.m., Thursday, May 12. I recommend that you also submit a hard copy to my mailbox in the Department of Anthropology front office, in case there is any problem with your Blackboard submission.