

**IPEC 4396.001 14S**  
**Political Economy of South and Southeast Asia.**  
**University of Texas, Dallas, Spring 2014**  
**Murray Leaf**

**The syllabus is subject to change as we proceed. Last update 13 Jan 2014.**

Mon 1:00 - 3:45  
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**Catalog description:**

Political Economy of South and Southeast Asia. South Asia is the Indian peninsula. Southeast Asia is the great swath of countries from Burma and Thailand through Malaysia to Indonesia and Australia. This is a region of great cultural, political, economic, religious, and historical diversity. This course surveys the region by selectively examining key countries and their mutual interactions. The major countries, which will always be included, are Pakistan, India, Thailand, Indonesia and Australia. Additional countries, which will be included according to interest and available material, include Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Burma, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, East Timor and New Zealand.

**Course Description:**

South and South East Asia together make up over half the area and population of the Old World. It is a huge region of enormous cultural and geographical diversity, which we cannot survey in detail in a single semester. So the course strategy is to focus primarily on the national and international institutions and relations that have the most affect on the overall welfare and social and political stability of the region, using very good surveys and supplementary readings that will give additional flavor of the distinctive details and flavor of the major sub-regions. We have three major texts. We first take up South Asia and then Southeast Asia. Following the order of the texts, for South Asia we proceed country by country giving a little history and mainly a contemporary portrait of each. Then we take up Southeast Asia and proceed topically, from past to present, and end up with a survey of contemporary conditions country by country arranged by cultural-geographic groups.

Depending on the number of students enrolled, I would prefer to have members of the class take the lead for each block of readings by giving their own understanding and their own view of the issues it raises, particularly behaviors and events that are either well explained or for which the explanations do not make sense. I don't have anything definite in mind for what these blocks of readings are right now; we will see how difficult you find them.

A major theme, or two major themes that interact, is the importance of ethnic identities as a barrier to forming effective national political systems and the importance of nationalism as a barrier to building interregional cooperation. Another aspect of this same set situation is the often stunning alienation of urban elites from rural "masses."

For each week, in addition to the readings in the text I will have a variety of readings or other kinds of information to give a sense of the flavor of the culture that the readings are leaving out. More and more information is on the web every month, including local newspapers and other locally generated information. I will focus particularly on what makes each place especially puzzling for Americans, and what needs to be taken into account to make accurate interpretations of what one sees and hears when one is there. This will include two films and a variety of additional short readings.

## **Grading**

Please remember that a grade is primarily the instructor's attempt to convey to the student an evaluation of what they have learned. The grade will depend on two examinations and a paper. The exams will probably be take home. We will decide in class, once we see who we are and what our interests are. The exams will count 30% each, the paper 40%. Among other things, you should be able to draw a map of each region, locating the main geographical features and present countries. There is no make up work or extra credit. If you miss an examination without making prior arrangements, you have failed it.

## **Books**

*India: Fourth Edition, 2009.* Stanley Wolpert.

Paperback: 264 pages

Publisher: University of California Press; 4 edition (August 17, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0520260325

*Government and Politics in South Asia: Sixth Edition.* Y. Malik et. al. [Paperback] \$43.55

Paperback: 504 pages

Publisher: Westview Press; 6th edition (August 19, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0813343895

ISBN-13: 978-0813343891

*Southeast Asia: Past And Present, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition.* D Sardesai [paperback] \$45.83

Publisher: Westview Press; 5 Sub edition (September 11, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0813344344

ISBN-13: 978-0813344348

Some helpful and interesting websites:

[Small blurb on a film on M. A. Jinnah planned to answer to the portrait of Jinnah in the movie Gandhi.](#)

[Very nice very pro-Jinnah site for the official view of Jinnah in Pakistan.](#)

[Review of book about Jinnah and his legacy by an Indian author, giving a mainstream Indian view.](#)

[Nehru's \*Awake to Freedom\* Speech \(statement of his vision for India.\)](#)

[Human Rights Data Analysis Group, India](#)

## **Topics week by week**

1. Introduction to the Course 13 Jan 2014.

If you can, get the books and look at them. Also look at the maps I have posted on the website. We will see and discuss slides from my work in India.

2. No class on Jan 20, 2014. This is the MLK Holiday. Read Wolpert.

3. For the third week, read Wolpert. 27 January. We will discuss it in sections. We will also watch and discuss the film *Gandhi*. It is a great film, and provides a good introduction to the region.

4. For the fourth week, 3 Feb 203. Read the chapters on India and Pakistan in Malik et. al.

India:

Pakistan:

5. Fifth Week. 10 Feb 2014. Pakistan. Still on India and Pakistan but now concentrating on Pakistan.

Read the chapters on Pakistan in Malik.

[Also: Constitution of Pakistan.](#) Read the Preamble. Also look at the First Schedule. Understand what it means to say that the section on basic rights does not apply.

Specific question on Pakistan: When they get a chance. Pakistanis vote overwhelming for democracy and secularism, and against corruption. Yet the political and economic system continues to be dominated by the military and an oligarchy of historically wealthy landlord families together with a new (but often overlapping) industrial/economic elite. How does this small group stay in control in face of massive public preference for something else.

6. Bangladesh. 17 Feb 2014. Chapters on Bangladesh in Malik. I will show power point on Bangladesh in class and we will discuss it.

Question for Bangladesh: The country started as Peoples Republic, meaning a Marxist state. It started relatively democratically but became progressively more authoritarian. The first elected head of state was assassinated. He was succeeded by a military coup. This led to the election of one of the coup leaders as a civilian.

7. Sri Lanka. 24 Feb 2014.

Read the Sri Lanka chapters in Malik. Sri Lanka is one of the very few cases in modern history of a country that started off with a good democratic constitution and a decent standard of living and undermined itself steadily thereafter.

Watch: *Sri Lankas Killing Fields*. On You Tube:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mbl-Elax9uo>

Also:

[Al Jazeera story on aftermath of Sri Lanka civil war.](#)

When the Tamils felt forced to try to secede from Sri Lanka, their efforts increasingly took this shape. There are also self-described “Maoist” rebellions or guerilla movements in India and Nepal that evidently see themselves as linked to what the film is describing.

The LTTE in Sri Lanka did not identify itself as Maoist but they were widely reported as having links to and getting support from Indian Maoist groups. Their ways of operating were the same.

The key question to focus on is: How did the wealthiest and probably best governed part of Britain’s Empire in South Asia, that gained independence with a well-worked out constitution and good foreign exchange reserves (unlike India or Pakistan), descend into ethnic civil war?

Sri Lanka presentation:

8. Nepal. 3 March 2014. Nepal Chapters in Malik. If we did not finish with Sri Lanka the previous week, will start with it here.

Nepal, too, is a seemingly successful country that descended into civil war. In this case, however, the country was not a colony. It was legally independent, although under British hegemony. In theory, this meant that the British oversaw its international affairs, but left its domestic affairs alone. It was also a monarchy. So the question for you is how did the monarchy manage to remain in power despite strong pressure for democracy and the example of India next door? The rest of the dynamic, represented by the rise of the Maoists, is that when an oligarchy can control the mechanisms of democratic reform, these mechanisms can themselves become tainted, and efforts to achieve what most people view as freedom from domination then take forms that are violent and anti-democratic.

Presentation:

The text’s account stops in 2007. Since then the monarchy has been ended, the

country has declared itself a republic, the Maoists are included in the Parliament, and so far they have given up the demand that establish their own authoritarian state although they have not clearly promised to stop seeking it. So a second question you might try to consider is: What could Nepal do to assure that this does not happen.

MIDTERM. The midterm will be on South Asia. We will make it up in class; take-home essay format.

March 10-15 is Spring Break.

9. Southeast Asia: Historical/Cultural overview. 17 Mar 2014. Sardesai's book is arranged thematically first, and then by region. We will discuss by region. To do so, we will break out of each thematic section the parts that pertain to each of the regions we will be concerned with.

For today part read Sardesai's Part I.

I think this covers too many different ideas and events to assign to anyone. We will just have a general discussion, comparing it and linking it to what we have already covered for South Asia.

10. Part 2 Colonial Legacy. 24 Mar 2014.

Film for class: *From the Barrel of a Gun*. 60 minutes. VT2130 pt. 3

It is focused on Vietnam and Indonesia and is mainly relevant to those sections in Sardesai's book. But it also makes references to other post-WWII nationalist independence movements and conveys a sense of how widespread this type of leftist post-colonial reaction was.

Sardesai's chapters are not country by country but rather colonial power by colonial power, so we should assign preparations on that basis. The powers are:

English:

Dutch:

French:

In each case, focus on how they maintained control, the effect they had on the local population, and the legacy they left for independence. Especially, what did they leave in the areas of rule of law and the economy.

11. Indonesia and the Philippines (the main Polynesian populations). 31 Mar 2014: Sardesai Chapters 12 (general), 13 and 19 (Philippines), and Chapters 14, 22, 23 (Indonesia).

This is a good new Al Jazeera special report on the Papua New Guinea movement to seek independence from Indonesia. Note the Gandhian ideas:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/peopleandpower/2013/01/201313018313632585.html>

Film: The Goddess and the Computer

Preparation:

Indonesia: The question is whether democracy can now be considered secure.

Philippines: Main question is the persistent problem of corruption. Why is it so intractable? Does ethnic diversity and difficulty of travel (hence local isolation) help maintain it?

12. Myanmar and Thailand: 7 Apr 2014. (The main continental countries in the South Asian Cultural Sphere within the Southeast Asian continental landmass) Sardesai 15 and 20 (Myanmar), and 11, 16 and 21 (Thailand).

Myanmar: The main question here is to explain first of all long military dictatorship and the way they closed the country off. How did they manage? And secondly why have they now started to open up (apparently genuinely).

Sardesai 7<sup>th</sup> edition covers the latter. Sixth edition does not.

Thailand: Thailand is a monarchy and was never a colony. They have done well, generally. So in this case the question is how they have managed it. How do you explain it?

13. Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia: 14 Apr 2014. Sardesai chapters 17, 18, 25, 26. Most of the chapters cover more than one of these countries at a time, and they are adjacent. The borders are also fairly porous, so the recent wars in one have leaked over into the others. So we will take them together.

This is a good background article by Al Jazeera on minority ethnic independence movements in Myanmar:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2011/12/201112193521860555.html>

Preparations

Vietnam: Here, I suppose the big question is how they have managed to defeat two major world powers and finally gain independence.

Cambodia: And in this case the main puzzle is the horror story of the Khmer Rouge, especially in contrast to Thailand and Viet Nam.

Laos:

14. Malaya and Singapore 24, 27. 21 Apr 2014. News stories:

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2010-11-10/singapore-seen-overtaking-malaysia-45-years-after-split-left-lee-in-tears.html>

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2010-09-08/malaysia-loses-gdp-power-as-najib-lets-dagger-waving-repel-ethnic-chinese.html>

Preparations:

Malaya:

Singapore: In both cases, the main problems concern nature of the ethnic politics.

2013 FINAL EXAM IS HERE. We will develop a new one for Spring 2014.

15. Conclusion. 28 Apr 2014. Culture at the grass roots and bringing the story up to the present.

Preparations:

Is anyone brave enough to attempt a general synthesis of what keeps ethnic identity so important in the region's politics?

Another possible topic is the prospect for democracy, or perhaps even the need for it.

16. Last day. 5 May 2014. I am leaving this for overflow for now.

18. Not a Class. Possible South and Southeast Asia food study group meeting, if you are interested. At my house; time to be determined.

Another possible film: *Indonesia* [video recording] / produced by Maryland Public Television, NHK (Japan) Film Australia and InCA (U.K.).

### **Course & Instructor Policies**

I do not provide for extra credit or make up work. It takes too much of my time and it is too hard to do it in a way that is fair for other students. You are expected to complete all assignments on time. Anything not handed in on time is failed, unless you have made an arrangement with me in advance.

### **No Field Trips**

The following statements are standard for all syllabi and come from general UTD rules. They are required in response to accreditation criteria of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

**Standard UTD policies are procedures for all classes are on the U T Dallas website at: <http://coursebook.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies/>.**

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