

Course Title: Islam, Democracy and Secularism in Southeast Asia

Meeting Times:

Instructor: Saskia L. Schaefer

Office Hours:

Credits: 3-credits

Prerequisites

This course does not presume any previous experience in Southeast Asian studies or Islamic studies.

Course Overview

This course is designed to introduce students to new and emergent literature in the field of Southeast Asian Islam and to familiarize them with ongoing debates on the concepts of religion, democracy and secularism. Bridging academic and media material, this course brings together the main actors and structures in the current transformation of the relationship between religion and politics in peninsular Southeast Asia. How is Islam organized structurally across the different political systems in Southeast Asia? We assess recent shifts and transformations of religious and political authority and trace the question as to whether Indonesia is becoming more liberal or more Islamic and whether this dichotomy is actually adequate. Crucial elements of this course are debates that mirror key actors and structures of the religio-political landscape. The course thus also introduces students to the main actors and channels of power in contemporary Southeast Asia, in particular Indonesia and Malaysia.

We begin with a general assessment of concepts of democracy as well as concepts of secularism and then move on to the thematic case studies. In the case studies, we identify the most important voices and actors and try to understand their respective perspectives, interests and strategies.

Course Requirements and Grading

Class Attendance and Participation (30% of the final grade):

Attendance and participation (15%): Students are expected to read the assigned texts and conduct the expected own research before class. Students are expected to read and think seriously and critically, and to discuss their ideas in class. Students will be awarded marks for participating actively in seminars (not just attending). Attendance will be recorded; more than two absences will lower a student's final grade.

Discussion Postings (15%): In order facilitate our discussions and engage with each other's views, each week, students are expected to post brief reflections, comments or questions about each week's readings and topic. Students are expected to write at least 10 pages of postings throughout the semester and may spread these pages according to their own time schedules (i.e. either write each one page for ten of the sessions or write five pages on two sessions each, etc.). All postings must be submitted two days before class at 6 pm so that everyone has time to read them. Posts which are not uploaded by that time cannot be counted. Responding to the comments is strongly encouraged and can count toward students' "posts." It is expected that students will have read the posts and be able to discuss them. More information will be provided the first day of class.

Position Paper for Role Play Discussion (30% of the final grade)

In the third part of the course, students will represent one of the central actors in public discussions on Islam, democracy and secularism in Indonesian and Malaysian debates in a role play discussion. For this, students are expected to develop a 5 page position paper has to be prepared in advance. The focus in this short paper lies in sketching the actor's position and arguments, drawing on the course material as well as own internet research. For this, students are expected to include aspects from the theoretical readings concerning the compatibility of Islam and democracy from the first part of the course as well as aspects regarding local and regional history and structures from the second part. More information will be provided the first day of class.

Final Research Paper or Independent Study (40% of the final grade)

Students are expected to write a 15-20 page policy or research paper that focuses on a specific issue relating to the course topic of Islam, Democracy and Secularism in Southeast Asia. Topics will be determined in close consultation with the instructor. Students are asked to turn in a research question and tentative bibliography for the paper during Week 8. A paper outline or rough draft is due Week 12. Final papers are due one week following the last day of class. Further guidelines will be provided during class.

Papers will be graded based on the substance of the paper, originality, topic appropriateness, research thoroughness and presentation of the material. Research and writing is an essential part of the learning process and a vital medium through which students demonstrate their understanding of a subject. Including own library- as well as internet research in addition to texts reads in class is highly encouraged. Quality academic writing usually contains the following attributes:

- Arguments supported by reference to secondary and, if possible, primary material
- Adequate range of sources
- Central question or issue clearly defined and answered
- Discussion of key issues and relevant narrative
- Logical flow of ideas and arguments
- Evidence of creative thought and articulation of own ideas
- Conclusions supported by evidence and argument

- Argument and conclusions linked to larger debates in relevant literatures
- Contains adequate introduction and conclusion
- Fluent and succinct writing
- Accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation
- Neat presentation
- Full bibliography of references cited

Papers should neither only summarize other people's views nor offer only descriptive accounts of events or points but additionally demonstrate students' own understanding of the question or issue. Papers should go beyond description, be original and advance a particular argument, supported by evidence, leading to a conclusion or demonstrating the need for further research. Late submissions will result in grade reduction for a full-mark per day (e.g. an "A" will be reduced to "B" if submission is one day late).

Grading Standards for the Paper:

A: The argument is clearly articulated and logically developed, using relevant evidence. The research is of high quality, cleverly ordered to support the argument with an original and creative synthesis of materials and displaying understanding of wider issues. The presentation is of high standard.

B: The argument is well proposed but the structure is not fully developed. The research is quite extensive but sources are not fully utilized which limits the ability to be creative and deal with a full range of issues. The presentation is solid but can be improved.

C: The argument is satisfactory, with some limitations, but the structure is not well thought out. The research used is adequate, but insufficient to develop fully the argument or display much originality. The presentation is adequate and could be improved.

D: While the essay displays a basic understanding of the subject, the argument lacks coherence and logical development. The research is basic and the use of evidence does not sufficiently support the argument nor display originality or understanding of wider issues. The presentation is not of sufficient standard.

F: The presentation is well below acceptable standard. The essay is incoherent with glaring misunderstandings.

Grade Breakdown:

- Research question and initial bibliography **5%** (due mid-October)
- Paper outline or draft and annotated bibliography **5%** (due mid-November)
- Final Paper: **40%** (due mid-December)

Course Schedule

Part I Islam, Democracy and Secularism

Week 1: Introduction to the course and to Islam in Southeast Asia

In this session I will give a general overview of the course, students will get to know each other and I will give an introductory lecture on Islam in Southeast Asia

Week 2: Muhammad and origins of the *ummah*

Esposito, John L. (1994). *Islam. The Straight Path*. Oxford University Press, pp. 3-19.

Mandaville, Peter G. (2002). "Reimagining the *ummah*? Information Technology and the Changing Boundaries of Political Islam", in: Mohammadi, Ali (ed), *Islam Encountering Globalization*. London: RoutledgeCurzon, pp. 62-65.

Week 3: Concepts of democracy

- Crouch, Colin (2004): *Post-Democracy*. Cambridge, Malden: Polity Press. Chapter 1.
- Dahl, Robert (1971): *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven: Yale University Press, pp. 1-32.
- Lukes, Steven (1974/2005): *Power – A radical view*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Introduction and Chapter 1.
- Zakaria, Fareed (1997): "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy". *Foreign Affairs*. November/December 1997

Week 4: Concepts of secularism

- Casanova, José (2011): "The Secular, Secularizations, Secularisms", in Calhoun, Craig et al (eds) *Rethinking Secularism*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 54-74.
- Taylor, Charles (2011) "Why we need a radical redefinition of secularism", in Mendieta, Eduardo and VanAntwerpen, Jonathan (eds.) *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere*. New York: Columbia University Press/SSRC, 34-59.
- Own research (it is recommended to this *before* reading the other two articles): look up 'secularism' in various encyclopedias, then introduce the used literature and share its content in class relating it to the other two articles read.

Week 5: Islam and Democracy: The debate on compatibility

- An-Na'im, Abdullahi (2008): *Islam and the Secular State: Negotiating the Future of Shari'a*. Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press. Introduction.
- Bayat, Asef 2007: *Islam and Democracy: What is the real question?* ISIM paper 8, Amsterdam University Press.
- Lewis, Bernard (2002): "What went wrong?" *The Atlantic Monthly*, January.
- Esposito, John; Voll, John (1996): *Islam and Democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp 3-10, 21-32.
- Krämer, Gudrun (1993): "Islamist Notions of Democracy," *M. East Report*, July, pp 2-8.
- Own research: look up the terms *ijtihad* and *shura* in various encyclopedias, then introduce the used literature and share its content in class relating it to the other three articles read.

Part II Contemporary Islam in Indonesia and Malaysia

Week 6: Islam within the political systems of Indonesia and Malaysia

- Bruinessen, Martin van: 2011: *What happened to the smiling face of Indonesian Islam? Muslim intellectualism and the conservative turn in post-Suharto Indonesia*, Working paper No. 222, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore, 6 January.
- Fealy, Greg; Virginia Hooker and Sally White (2006): *Indonesia* in: Fealy, Greg; Virginia Hooker: *Voices of Islam in Southeast Asia*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies pp 39-50.
- Funston, John (2006): *Malaysia* in: Fealy, Greg; Virginia Hooker: *Voices of Islam in Southeast Asia*, pp 51-61
- Hadiz, Vedi (2008): *How far to meaningful democracy? – 1* in: *Inside Indonesia*, Edition 91, April-July 2008
- Mietzner, Marcus; Edward Aspinall (2010): *Problems of Democratization*, in: Aspinall, Edward; Marcus Mietzner: *Problems of Democratization in Indonesia*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, pp 1-19.
- Othman, Norani; Mavis C. Puthucheary and Clive Kessler (2007): *Sharing the Nation*. Petaling Jaya, Malaysia: Strategic Information and Research Development Center.

- Sidel, John (2012): *Separated at Birth*. In: Foreign Policy, 15 February.

Week 7: Islam and authority in Southeast Asia

- Hasyim, Syafiq (2011): The Council of Indonesian Ulama (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, MUI) and Religious Freedom. Research Institute on Contemporary (IRASEC Discussion Papers, 12).
- Künkler, Mirjam; Leininger, Julia (2009):, “The Multi-faceted Role of Religious Actors in Democratization Processes: Empirical Evidence from Five Young Democracies” in *Democratization*, Vol. 16 (6), Dec 2009, pp. 1058-1092.
- Künkler, Mirjam and Alfred Stepan (eds.) 2013: *Indonesia, Islam and Democracy*, Columbia University Press.
- Krämer, Gudrun and Sabine Schmidtke (eds.) 2006: *Speaking for Islam: Religious Authorities in Muslim Societies*. Brill. Introduction.
- Robinson, Francis (2009): *Crisis of Authority: Crisis of Islam?* In: *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland (Third Series)* 19 (3), p. 339–354.

Week 8: Liberal Islam and Islamic Feminism in Indonesia and Malaysia

- Ali, Kecia (2003): *Progressive Muslims and Islamic jurisprudence: the necessity*; in Safi, Omid: *Progressive Muslims. On Justice, Gender and Pluralism*. Oxford: Oneworld, pp 263-189.
- Kurzman, Charles: *Liberal Islam. A Sourcebook*. Introduction.
- Own research on the topics “Liberal Islam” and “Islamic Feminism” on the platform Qantara as well as on the websites of Sisters in Islam and Women Living Under Muslim Law. Students are expected to choose, print and read at least five articles, press releases or interviews and to be ready to summarize and discuss them in class. <http://www.qantara.de>; <http://www.sistersinislam.org.my>; <http://www.wluml.org/>

Week 9: Religious violence in Southeast Asia

- Sidel, John (2007): On the 'anxiety of incompleteness': a post-structuralist approach to religious violence in Indonesia. *South East Asia research*, 15 (2). pp. 133-212.
- Sidel, John T. (2009): *Jihad and the Specter of Transnational Islam in Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Comparative Historical Perspective*, in: Tagliacozzo, Eric: *Southeast Asia and The Middle East. Islam, Movement, and the Longue Durée*. Stanford University Press, pp. 111-135.

- Own research: Pick four sources on either Thailand, the Philippines or Malaysia from Fealy, Greg; Hooker, Virginia (2006) "Voices of Islam in Southeast Asia: A Contemporary Source Book, Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asia Studies. Students are expected to be ready to introduce and discuss them in class.

Week 10: Islam, Modernity and Consumption

- Eisenstadt, S. N. (2000) 'Multiple modernities', *Daedalus* 129: 1–29
- Fischer, Johan (2008): *Proper Islamic Consumption: Shopping Among the Malays in Modern Malaysia*, Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, Copenhagen.
- Hoesterey, James B. (2008): "Marketing Morality: The Rise, Fall, and Re-branding of Aa Gym." In *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia*, eds. Greg Fealy and Sally White. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Position papers for the role play discussion are due at the end of the week!

PART III Central actors and arguments in contemporary Southeast Asian Islam-vs-state-discussions

Week 11: Central actors and arguments

- Based on the previous readings, this session leaves room for summarizing the most important actors and positions. Students are given the opportunity to present their discussion papers in guided teamwork in order to prepare for the role play discussion

Week 12: Role play discussion session I

- Students assume the position they have prepared in their papers and in the previous class
 - 1) The case of the Indonesian Ahmadiyya: Banning an Islamic minority in a secular state? Key actors:
 - a. The Council of Indonesian Ulama
 - b. The Ministry of Religious Affairs
 - c. Representatives of the Ahmadiyya
 - d. The National Commission on Human Rights
 - e. The Liberal Islam Network
 - f. Traditional Javanese Clerics
 - g. A representative from neighboring Malaysia

Week 13: Role play discussion session II

Banning Lady Gaga, Irshad Manji and the local Playboy in Indonesia? Key actors:

- h. The Islamist Prosperous Justice Party
- i. LGBTQ activists
- j. The Council of Indonesian Ulama
- k. Christian authorities opposing LGBT rights and Lady Gaga's performance
- l. Representative from the Philippines and Korea where protest against Lady Gaga was vibrant
- m. Muslim feminists

Week 14: Final wrap-up session

In this session, we return to the question posed in the first lesson, address any remaining problems from throughout the course and discuss issues in which the newly gained knowledge from Southeast Asia can be applied to other contexts.

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A bibliography with additional literature for students' research will be provided after students have specified their particular interests in the first class meeting.