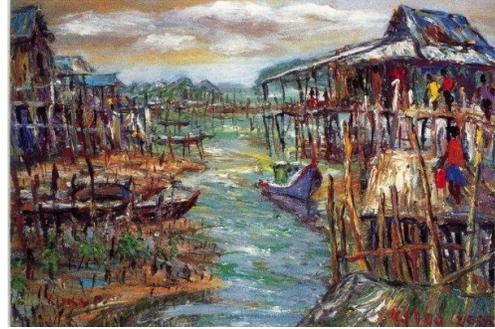


ARLT 100g
Southeast Asian Literature & Film:
Postcolonial Perspectives
Spring Semester, 2012
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 2:00-3:50
Von KleinSmid (VKC) 203



Professor: Brian Bernards (Ph.D.), bernards@usc.edu
Office Hours: Thursdays, 10-12 or by appointment, Taper 356P
Course Website: Log on using your USC account at www.blackboard.usc.edu

Course Description:

Whether or not we are aware, Southeast Asia is present in our everyday lives: the peoples, cultures, products, and cuisines of Southeast Asia have traveled the world for centuries, and are now integral to many metropolitan centers, including our own city of Los Angeles. Like Los Angeles, the nations that compose Southeast Asia are themselves dynamically multicultural and multilingual. It was Southeast Asia's diverse, abundant, and coveted resources that first lured European and other colonists to this tropical region. These often traumatic and violent colonial encounters produced the borders of the Southeast Asian nations that we see on the map today.

In addition to familiarizing students with the modern histories of several Southeast Asian nations (Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, and Myanmar), this course offers a general introduction to literary and cinematic production in postcolonial Southeast Asia, emphasizing themes of colonialism, nationalism, and multiculturalism. Why literature and film? By examining these creative forms of cultural production, we resist objectifying Southeast Asia by focusing on ways in which Southeast Asian voices represent and narrate themselves, their communities, their nations, and their histories. Furthermore, several of the stories we read and the films we watch are about marginalized ethnic minorities in Southeast Asia. These "non-standard" perspectives reflect on issues of language, nation, and culture in ways that are both imaginative and illuminating. *To enroll in this class, no prior knowledge of Southeast Asian history, cultures, or languages is assumed or required. All readings are either in English translation or English original. All films are subtitled in English.*

Course Objectives:

Upon completion of this course, you will hopefully:

- 1) Be able to articulate the unique ways in which works of Southeast Asian literature and film interact with their colonial and postcolonial historical contexts.
- 2) Be able to critically discuss the relationship between issues of colonialism, nationalism, and multiculturalism based on their literary and cinematic representation.
- 3) Understand how to write a paper of close literary and film analysis that is built around a coherent argument, solid thesis statement, and critical and substantive interpretation.

Required Texts (available at the USC Pertusati Bookstore):

- Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *This Earth of Mankind* (Trans. Max Lane, New York: Penguin, 1996)
- Zhang Guixing, *My South Seas Sleeping Beauty: A Tale of Memory and Longing* (Trans. Valerie Jaffee, New York: Columbia University Press, 2007)
- Duong Thu Huong, *Paradise of the Blind* (Trans. Phan Huy Duong and Nina McPherson, New York: Perennial, 1993)
- Pascal Khoo Thwe, *From the Land of Green Ghosts: A Burmese Odyssey* (London: Harper Perennial, 2002)
- Other readings are available in PDF format on the class website under “Course Readings.”

Films (DVDs available on 3-4-hr reserve at Leavey Library Circulation):

Films will be screened in class. Some of the longer films (*Max Havelaar*, *Dekada '70*, and *Salween*) will be screened in edited format in order to not exceed the one class period. All the DVDs of the films, including the longer ones, will be available for additional viewing at the Leavey Library Circulation Desk. Some of the titles are available for rent through Netflix, and others are available for purchase (but some are hard to find) through various websites. During our discussion of the films I will replay important clips and then post them on Blackboard for review.

- *Max Havelaar* (The Netherlands/Indonesia: dir. Fons Rademakers, 1976)
- *Dekada '70* (The Philippines: dir. Chito Roño, 2002)
- *My Magic* (Singapore: dir. Eric Khoo, 2008) [DVD bundled with *No Day Off*, 2006]
- *Sepet* (Malaysia: dir. Yasmin Ahmad, 2004)
- *The Traveling Circus* (Vietnam: dir. Viet Linh, 1988)
- *Salween* (Thailand: dir. Chatrichalerm Yukol, 1993)

Student Requirements & Grading:

- 1) **Weekly Preparation & Seminar Participation (15%).** This course is one-third lecture/film screenings and two-thirds discussion seminar. A seminar is defined largely by the active participation of students. The level of engagement, quality of questions, and amount of enthusiasm you bring will directly impact everyone’s success and enjoyment of the course. I will do my part to create an environment that fosters the open and inclusive sharing of ideas, thoughts, and questions. Your responsibility is to come to each class session on time and ready to demonstrate that you have prepared by completing the readings and watching the films. Students are expected to contribute thoughtful comments, raise critical questions, take notes, actively listen, and engage the other members of the seminar in discussion. Small group discussions will serve as a warm-up for larger class discussions. To facilitate participation, I will also call on group members to contribute. I have prepared a list of discussion questions for each session that will enable you to more efficiently approach each week’s readings and films (students may access these questions through the course website). *Complete all readings and film prior to their day of discussion. Turn cell phones off. Use laptops only for taking notes.*
- 2) **Four (4) Literature Posts and Three (3) Film Posts to the Discussion Board on the Course Website (3% each – 21% total):** Prior to our seminar discussion of a particular reading or film, students should post initial responses of at least 350 words to the Discussion Board on Blackboard. These responses will help get our ideas flowing for the

discussion. The form of the post is flexible: students may raise questions about specific aspects of the film or reading, directly address one of the discussion questions provided by the instructor, relate the current week’s reading or film to previous ones, or more loosely address how the reading or film relates to our course themes of colonialism, nationalism, and multiculturalism. Posts should not be a simple summary of plot or events in the narrative, but should begin with your reaction to the reading or the film: how did it make you feel? What about the reading/film made you feel that way? Speculate as to what the author/director might be trying to convey by making audiences feel this way. For films, address specific scenes; for readings, address specific passages or quotes. Sample student posts are available for your reference on Blackboard. You may only post once to a given forum. Points from additional posts will be applied to missing points from previous posts. *Students may post at any time during the semester and on any text or film as long as we have not yet discussed that reading or film in class. Posts must be completed by 11am on the day the film or reading will be discussed in class.*

- 3) **Two (2) Papers: One (1) Literary Analysis, One (1) Film Analysis (15% each – 30% total).** These papers, of 4-6 pages in length each (double-spaced in 12-point Times New Roman Font), will closely examine one film and one work of literature with respect to one or more of the course themes. Each paper should be well-organized (with clear introductory and concluding paragraphs) around a solid thesis statement that addresses how the theme you have selected is depicted in the text. Each paper should have a creative title as well as a works cited page with all references listed in MLA format (refer to “Course Bibliography in MLA Format” on Blackboard). Your literary analysis should highlight key passages in the text by citing quotes (including page numbers) or paraphrasing important events in the narrative, addressing not only content but also aspects of the writing such as language and tone. Your film analysis should refer to specific scenes and address such aspects of the film as style, cinematography, and soundtrack as well as narrative and plot. Both papers should address relevant aspects of the particular film or literary work’s historical context (refer to the Lecture Notes on Blackboard). Sample student papers are available for your reference on Blackboard. *Papers due in .doc or .docx format to Blackboard by 5pm on Feb 17 and April 17.*
- 4) **Take-home Midterm (15%).** At the end of class on Tuesday, October 11, I will distribute a take-home midterm consisting of four (4) mini-essay questions. Students will choose to respond to two (2) of the questions and write a short 1-2 page essay for each. Midterms will be graded on how sufficiently, eloquently, and thoroughly the two mini-essays answer the question. Avoid extraneous summary. *The midterm must be submitted on Blackboard by 5pm on Monday, March 5.*
- 5) **Final Examination, Thursday, May 3, 2-4pm (19%).** The final examination will consist of three parts: a map (10%), identifications (20%), and short answers (70%). Students must bring one (1) blank examination booklet (which may be purchased from the USC Bookstore). *A final study guide of all the possible test questions will be made available on Blackboard for review on April 19.*

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| A = 94% and above | B = 83-86% | C = 72-75% | D = 61-64% |
| A- = 90-93% | B- = 80-82% | C- = 69-71% | D- = 60% |
| B+ = 87-89% | C+ = 76-79% | D+ = 65-68% | F = below 60% |

Student Resources:

- **Academic Honesty.** All academic work for this course must meet USC's standards for academic honesty. Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work (see http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct/grad_ai.htm). Students turning in any written assignment or exam that is not entirely of his or her own creation will be reported to the Office of the Dean. For tips on how to avoid plagiarism, see http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct/ug_plag.htm. On how to cite sources and construct a Works Cited page using the proper format, see http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/RES5e_ch08_o.html.
- **The Writing Center.** Taper 321: <http://dornsife.usc.edu/writingcenter/>

Course Schedule

I. MAPPING POSTCOLONIAL SOUTHEAST ASIA

Week 1: Course Overview

Tuesday, January 10

Course introduction: outline of syllabus (including attached map) and course themes.

Explanation of resources on Blackboard. Please introduce yourselves.

Overview of Southeast Asian Geography & History: see Week 1 Lecture Notes (all lecture notes available from course website).

Thursday, January 12

Reading discussion (please access course website for discussion questions):

Donald Emmerson, “Southeast Asia’: What’s in a Name?” [1984]

(Download from Blackboard under “Course Readings,” noted hereafter as CR)

Paul Briens, “Postcolonial Literature’: Problems with the Term” [1998]

(Read online at <http://www.wsu.edu/~briens/anglophone/postcolonial.html>)

II. COLONIALISM & NATIONHOOD

Weeks 2-3: Indonesia

Tuesday, January 17

Preliminary Discussion: see Weeks 2-3 Discussion Questions.

Overview of Indonesian History: see Week 2 Lecture Notes.

Background on *Max Havelaar* and Pramoedya Ananta Toer.

Thursday, January 19

Film Screening: *Max Havelaar* [shortened from 170 mins.]

Tuesday, January 24

Film Discussion:

Max Havelaar [dir. Fons Rademakers, 1976]

Thursday, January 26

Reading Discussion:

Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *This Earth of Mankind* [*Bumi Manusia*, 1979]

Weeks 4-6: The Philippines

Tuesday, January 31

In-class workshop: discuss paper writing strategies and identifying thesis statements. Please access the sample student paper questions and read the sample student papers on Blackboard in advance.

Thursday, February 2

Preliminary discussion: see Weeks 4-6 Discussion Questions.

Overview of Filipino History: see Week 4 Lecture Notes.

Background on Nick Joaquin and *Dekada '70*.

Tuesday, February 7

Reading Discussion:

**Nick Joaquín, “Doña Jerónima” [1965],
“The Woman Who Had Two Navels” [1961] (CR)**

Thursday, February 9

Film Screening: *Dekada '70* [shortened from 135 mins.]

Tuesday, February 14

Film Discussion:

***Dekada '70* [dir. Chito Roño, 2002]**

III. MIGRANT, SETTLER, & INDIGENOUS RELATIONS

Weeks 6-8: Singapore

Thursday, February 16

Preliminary Discussion: see Weeks 6-8 Discussion Questions.

Overview of Singaporean History: see Week 6 Lecture Notes.

Background on Singaporean authors and film director Eric Khoo.

Friday, February 17 (First paper due on Blackboard by 5pm)

Tuesday, February 21

Reading Discussion:

Rama Kannabiran இராப கண்ணபிரான், “Losses” [இழப்புகள், 1978] (CR)

Mohamed Latiff Mohamed, “The Loss” [*Kehilangan*, 1982] (CR)

Yeng Pway Ngon 英培安, “Wrongly Delivered Mail” [寄錯的郵件, 1979] (CR)

Gopal Baratham, “A Personal History of an Island” [1995]

Film Screening: *No Day Off* [39 mins.]

Thursday, February 23

Discuss procedures for take-home midterm.

Film Screening: *My Magic* [75 mins.]

Tuesday, February 28 (*Instructions for take-home midterm available on Blackboard*)

Film Discussion:

No Day Off [dir. Eric Khoo, 2006] and *My Magic* [dir. Eric Khoo, 2008]

Weeks 8-11: Malaysia

Thursday, March 1

Preliminary Discussion, Part I: see Weeks 8-11 Discussion Questions.

Overview of Malaysian History: see Week 8 Lecture Notes.

Background on Yasmin Ahmad.

Monday, March 5 (*Take-home midterm due on Blackboard by 5pm*)

Tuesday, March 6

Film Screening: *Sepet* [104 mins.]

Thursday, March 8

Film Discussion:

Sepet [dir. Yasmin Ahmad, 2004]

Tuesday, March 13 and Thursday, March 15 (*Spring Break: no class*)

Tuesday, March 20

Preliminary Discussion, Part II: see Weeks 8-11 Discussion Questions.

Overview of Borneo (East Malaysian) History: see Week 11 Lecture Notes.

Background on Zhang Guixing.

Thursday, March 22

Reading Discussion:

Zhang Guixing 張貴興, *My South Seas Sleeping Beauty*

[我思念的長眠中的南國公主, 2001]

IV. CENTRALIZED STATES, MULTICULTURAL FRONTIERS

Weeks 12-13: Vietnam

Tuesday, March 27

Preliminary Discussion: see Weeks 12-13 Discussion Questions.

Overview of Vietnamese History: see Week 12 Lecture Notes.

Background on Việt Linh and Dương Thu Hương.

Thursday, March 29

Film Screening: *The Traveling Circus* [74 mins.]

Tuesday, April 3

Film Discussion:

The Traveling Circus [*Gánh xiếc rong*, dir. Việt Linh, 1988]

Thursday, April 5

Reading Discussion:

Dương Thu Hương, *Paradise of the Blind* [*Những thiên đường mù*, 1988]

Weeks 14-15: Thailand

Tuesday, April 10

Preliminary Discussion: see Weeks 14-15 Discussion Questions.

Overview of Thai History: see Week 14 Lecture Notes.

Background on Thai authors and Chatrichalerm Yukol.

Thursday, April 12

Reading Discussion:

Kampon Boontawee คำพูน บุญทวี, *A Child of the Northeast* [ลูกอีสาน, 1976]
(Chapters 1, 23, and 35) (CR)

Samruam Singh สำรวม สิงห์, “The Necklace” [กำไลคอ, 1979] (CR)

Prathip Chumphon ประทีป ชุมพล, “Water and Earth” [ผืนน้ำและแผ่นดิน, 1979] (CR)

Monday, April 16 (*Second paper due on Blackboard by 5pm*)

Tuesday, April 17

Film Screening: *Salween* [shortened from 129 mins.]

Thursday, April 19 (*Final study guide available on Blackboard*)

Film Discussion:

Salween **สาละวิน** [dir. Chatrichalerm Yukol ชาตรีเฉลิม ยุคล, 1993]

Week 16: Myanmar (Burma)

Tuesday, April 24

Preliminary Discussion: see Weeks 15-16 Discussion Questions.

Overview of Burmese History: see Week 15 Lecture Notes.

Background on Pascal Khoo Thwe.

Thursday, April 26

Reading Discussion:

Pascal Khoo Thwe, *From the Land of Green Ghosts: A Burmese Odyssey* [2002]
(Foreword, Prologue, Chapters 1, 2, 5, 9, 11, 14, 15, 16, 18, 23, 25, 27, 29)

Also refer to the “Synopsis and Plot Development” (CR)

Finals Week

Thursday, May 3

Final Examination, 2-4pm, VKC 203 (*Bring one blank examination booklet*)

Enjoy your summer!