Course Description

As a dynamically multilingual and multicultural region of the world, modern Southeast Asia came into being as a historical “cross-waters” where various cultures, languages, resources, spiritual faiths, and civilizations of North and South, East and West came into contact—sometimes peacefully, at other times violently. As a region historically shaped by such interactions and currently undergoing intensified processes of regional integration, Southeast Asia epitomizes the forces of globalization affecting all corners of the world today. With a specific focus on the four major nations of maritime Southeast Asia (Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Malaysia), this course offers a general introduction and comparative approach to modern literary and cinematic production from the region. Our approach emphasizes a range of interconnected themes and issues, including: national and global citizenship; colonial history and imperial legacy; religion and interfaith education; gender identity and sexual orientation; labor migration and economic development; race, ethnic diversity, and multiculturalism; environment and landscape; and language, music, and the performing arts.

Image Caption: Murals at Tanjong Pagar Railway Station, Singapore
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