

*EALC 599: Special Topics  
Readings in  
Southeast Asian Studies*

**Spring Semester, 2024  
Fridays, 2:00-4:50 p.m.  
THH 109**



Professor: **Brian Bernards** (bernards@usc.edu)

Office Hours: Mondays, 2:00-3:00 p.m. (in-person) & Thursdays, 4:00-5:00 p.m. (Zoom)

Course Website: Log on using your USC account at [www.blackboard.usc.edu](http://www.blackboard.usc.edu)

*Course Description*

Perhaps more than any other subfield of area studies, Southeast Asian studies has most consistently been subject to a self-reflexively diagnosed identity crisis stemming from its organizational logic, conflict-obsessed origins, knowledge retrieval-oriented strategy and methodology, and perceived precarity within the North American academy. Conceived and designed to both inform and closely align with foreign policy and diplomacy, Southeast Asian studies emerged in the US in the immediate mid-twentieth aftermath of the Pacific War, a conflict that shifted the previously myopic and self-interested gaze of the Western Allied nations from individual colonial “possessions” and toward a region of newly emergent postcolonial nation-states. Southeast Asian studies in the US went through its first existential crisis in the 1980s as the specter of the US-Vietnam War and the Cold War receded and program enrollments waned, yet it gained renewed vitality in the early 1990s due to the increased presence and input from students of Southeast Asian heritage who petitioned for more diverse curricula on Southeast Asia. Since the turn of the millennium, as public sources of financial support for academic research and language courses in Southeast Asian studies have become scarce, an “offshoring” of the American neoliberal university model of Southeast Asian studies in Southeast Asia has counterbalanced this decline. Southeast Asian studies now has more of a global presence with Southeast Asian scholars themselves largely sustaining its vitality.

This graduate seminar introduces Southeast Asian studies with the aim of helping graduate students in the humanities—namely in East Asian studies, comparative literature, film and media studies, history, and ethnic and cultural studies—situate their work within ongoing conversations in the field. Following introductory readings about the field itself and some foundational works that put Southeast Asia at the center of global debates about the historiography of colonialism, nations, and nationalism, we will read from some of the most up-to-date, cutting-edge research in the field relevant to the scholarly interests of enrolled students, including: global Sinophone, Anglophone, and Arabophone studies; literary and translation studies; print capitalism and postcolonial modernity; cinema, media, and photography studies; queer theory and Buddhism; and ecocriticism and transpacific studies. Students will produce original research related to their areas of interest while situating it within critical debates in Southeast Asian studies.

\*Image source: “Seaside,” oil on board, 1951, by Cheong Soo Pieng 鍾瀾濱, Collection of National Gallery, Singapore.

## Course Objectives

By the end of this seminar, you should:

- Understand Southeast Asian studies as a dynamic academic field, including its problematized origins, genealogy, interdisciplinary scope, and current trends.
- Be able to situate original research within the field of Southeast Asian studies while articulating its intervention in and contribution to that field.

## Course Texts

The link to each text listed below is available in the Course Readings folder on Blackboard. Each week, students are required to read the introduction and conclusion plus one chapter of the student's choosing from the same book. Students can access this additional chapter by downloading it from the available ebook (listed with an asterisk\* below) through USC's online catalogue or by requesting it via USC's Interlibrary Loan service. Students are encouraged to borrow the digital (available through ARES Course Reserves online) or hard copy of the book for which they will lead the seminar discussion, (see Student Requirements & Grading below):

- 1) *Of Peninsulas and Archipelagos: The Landscape of Translation in Southeast Asia*, edited by Phrae Chittiphalangsri and Vicente Rafael (Abingdon, Oxon, UK: Routledge, 2023)\*
- 2) Cheryl Narumi Naruse, *Becoming Global Asia: Contemporary Genres of Postcolonial Capitalism in Singapore* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2023)\*
- 3) Ben Tran, *Post-Mandarin: Masculinity and Aesthetic Modernity in Colonial Vietnam* (Fordham University Press, 2017)\*
- 4) Arnika Fuhrmann, *Ghostly Desires: Queer Sexuality and Vernacular Buddhism in Contemporary Thai Cinema* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016)\*
- 5) Annette Damayanti Lienau, *Sacred Language, Vernacular Difference: Global Arabic and Counter-Imperial Literatures* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2023)
- 6) Elmo Gonzaga, *Monsoon Marketplace: Capitalism, Media, and Modernity in Manila and Singapore* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2023)
- 7) Cheow Thia Chan, *Malaysian Crossings: Place and Language in the Worlding of Modern Chinese Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2023)\*
- 8) Thak Chaloemtiarana, *Read Till It Shatters: Nationalism and Identity in Modern Thai Literature* (Canberra: ANU Press, 2018)\*
- 9) Juno Salazar Parreñas, *Decolonizing Extinction: The Work of Care in Orangutan Rehabilitation* (Duke University Press, 2018)\*
- 10) Thomas Barker, *Indonesian Cinema after the New Order: Going Mainstream* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2019)\*
- 11) Adrian De Leon, *Bundok: A Hinterland History of Filipino America* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2024)\*
- 12) Thy Phu, *Warring Visions: Photography and Vietnam* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2022)\*

## Course Films

Films are available to stream through the links provided in the Course Films folder on Blackboard:

- o **Mekong 2030** (directed by Anysay Keola, Kulikar Sotho, Sai Naw Kham, Anocha Suwichakornpong, Pham Ngoc Lan, 2020)
- o **Yuni**, directed by Kamila Andini (2021)

### ***Student Requirements & Grading***

- o **Preparation & Participation (20%).** A seminar is a unique learning environment 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. As a member of the seminar, you must come to each class session on time and ready to demonstrate that you have critically read the required weekly text(s). Students are expected to contribute thoughtful comments and raise critical questions to the seminar. *You need to complete the specified reading and or/film prior to attending each session.* See course schedule below for details.
- o **Two (2) Reading Discussion Facilitations (20%).** Students are responsible for leading the discussion of two assigned texts. Signups will take place on the first day of class. Your responsibility is to provide a walkthrough of the day's reading, prepare a few questions for discussion, and present your preliminary viewpoints.
- o **Overview/Forecast & Conference-Style Presentation of Seminar Paper—or—Two (2) Book Review Presentations (20%).** During Week 8's seminar, students will share a preliminary written report of 5 pages that overviews and forecasts their planned seminar papers (see below). Following the presentation, students will submit their preliminary written reports to the professor via email. On the last day of class (Week 16), students will deliver 15-minute grad conference-style presentations of their paper drafts. For those choosing the book review option (see below), students will present their first book review during Week 8 and their second during Week 16.
- o **Seminar Paper—or—Three (3) Book Reviews (40%).** The seminar paper should represent original research related to the student's area of interest, but it should also provide some Southeast Asian studies framing and converse with course readings. The paper should be 15-20 pages in length, double-spaced in Times New Roman font, and it should use either the Chicago Humanities Style or MLA citation guidelines. *The final draft will be due as an email attachment to the professor on Monday, May 6.* Alternatively, students may submit 3 scholarly book reviews of course texts over the course of the semester, following the conventions of the *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*. *First book review due Monday, Mar 4; second and third due Monday, May 6.*

### ***Course Schedule***

#### **Week 1 (Fri, Jan 12): *(De)Stabilizing a Field: (Re)Defining Southeast Asian Studies***

- o Course Overview
- o Self-Introductions
- o Syllabus Outline & Discussion Facilitation Signups

- o Reading Discussion (links to readings to be emailed to students before Week 1):
  - ❖ Benedict Anderson, **Introduction to *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia and the World*** (London: Verso, 1998), pp. 1-26
  - ❖ Carlo Bonura and Laurie J. Sears, “**Knowledges That Travel in Southeast Asian Area Studies**,” in *Knowing Southeast Asian Subjects*, edited by Laurie J. Sears (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), pp. 3-32

**Week 2 (Fri, Jan 19): *Archipelagic & Arterial Framings: Translating Southeast Asia***

- o Reading Discussion:
  - ❖ *Of Peninsulas and Archipelagos: The Landscape of Translation in Southeast Asia*, edited by Phrae Chittiphalangsri and Vicente Rafael (Abingdon, Oxon, UK: Routledge, 2023)
- o Film Discussion:
  - ❖ *Mekong 2030* (directed by Anysay Keola, Kulikar Sotho, Sai Naw Kham, Anocha Suwichakornpong, Pham Ngoc Lan, 2020)

**Week 3 (Fri, Jan 26): *Singapore, Postcolonial Capitalism, & the Global Anglophone***

- o Reading Discussion:
  - ❖ Cheryl Narumi Naruse, *Becoming Global Asia: Contemporary Genres of Postcolonial Capitalism in Singapore* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2023)

**Week 4 (Fri, Feb 2): *Vietnam, Print Capitalism, & Anti-Colonial Literature***

- o Reading Discussion:
  - ❖ Ben Tran, *Post-Mandarin: Masculinity and Aesthetic Modernity in Colonial Vietnam* (Fordham University Press, 2017)

**Week 5 (Fri, Feb 9): *Thailand, Vernacular Buddhism, & Queer Cinema***

- o Reading Discussion:
  - ❖ Arnika Fuhrmann, *Ghostly Desires: Queer Sexuality and Vernacular Buddhism in Contemporary Thai Cinema* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016)

**Week 6 (Fri, Feb 16): *The Malay Archipelago & the Global Arabophone***

- o Reading Discussion:
  - ❖ Annette Damayanti Lienau, *Sacred Language, Vernacular Difference: Global Arabic and Counter-Imperial Literatures* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2023)

**Week 7 (Fri, Feb 23) *Zoom Class Meeting: Tropical Media Capitals & Capitalism***

- o Reading Discussion:
  - ❖ Elmo Gonzaga, *Monsoon Marketplace: Capitalism, Media, and Modernity in Manila and Singapore* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2023)
  - ❖ Nick Joaquín, selection from *The Woman Who Had Two Navels and Tales of the Tropical Gothic* (specific story TBD)



**Week 8 (Fri, Mar 1): *Midterm Research Reports***

- o Overviews/Forecasts of Seminar Papers or 1<sup>st</sup> Book Review Presentation:
  - ❖ Following presentation, *please submit 5-page report with preliminary bibliography or book review* to professor via email **before midnight on Mon, Mar 4.**

**Week 9 (Fri, Mar 8) *Zoom Class Meeting: Sínophone Malaysia & Literary Cartography***

- o Reading Discussion:
  - ❖ Cheow Thia Chan, *Malaysian Crossings: Place and Language in the Worlding of Modern Chinese Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2023)

**Week 10 (No Class – Spring Break)**

**Week 11 (Fri, Mar 22): *Thai Nationalism, Cultural Integration, & Literary Imagination***

- o Reading Discussion:
  - ❖ Thak Chaloemtiarana, *Read Till It Shatters: Nationalism and Identity in Modern Thai Literature* (Canberra: ANU Press, 2018)

**Week 12 (Fri, Mar 29): *Borneo, Ecocriticism, & an Ethics of Care***

- o Reading Discussion:
  - ❖ Juno Salazar Parreñas, *Decolonizing Extinction: The Work of Care in Orangutan Rehabilitation* (Duke University Press, 2018)

**Week 13 (Fri, Apr 5): *Post-Authoritarian Pop Culture & Indonesian New Cinema***

- o Reading Discussion:
  - ❖ Thomas Barker, *Indonesian Cinema after the New Order: Going Mainstream* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2019)
- o Film Discussion:
  - ❖ *Yuni*, directed by Kamila Andini (2021)

**Week 14 (Fri, Apr 12): *Vietnam, Photography, War, & Diaspora***

- o Reading Discussion:
  - ❖ Thy Phu, *Warring Visions: Photography and Vietnam* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2022)

**Week 15 (Fri, Apr 19): *Transpacific Indigeneity, Labor Migration, & Racial Economy***

- o Reading Discussion:
  - ❖ Adrian De Leon, *Bundok: A Hinterland History of Filipino America* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2024)
- o In-Person Class Interview with **Adrian De Leon**, USC Assistant Professor of American Studies and Ethnicity.

**Week 16 (Fri, Apr 26): *Wrap-Up Workshop & Reception***

- o Conference-Style Presentations of Seminar Papers or 2<sup>nd</sup> Book Review Presentation

- o Seminar Reception with Food & Refreshments

**Finals Week (Mon, May 6): *Seminar Paper Submission Deadline***

- o *Please submit Seminar Paper or Book Reviews 2 and 3 to professor via email before midnight on Mon, May 6.*

***Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems***

***Academic Conduct***

- o **Academic Integrity.** The University of Southern California is foremost a learning community committed to fostering successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic misconduct is in contrast to the university's mission to educate students through a broad array of first-rank academic, professional, and extracurricular programs and includes any act of dishonesty in the submission of academic work (either in draft or final form). This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the USC Student Handbook. All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for the course/section in this academic term. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s). Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity. Other violations of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage. The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university. For more information about academic integrity see the [student handbook](#) or the Office of Academic Integrity's website, and university policies on Research and Scholarship Misconduct.
- o **Use of AI.** While the use of artificial intelligence, like Chat GPT, is not prohibited as an aid for assignments in this course, work submitted that is more than 30% AI-assisted will receive deductions depending on the egregiousness of the case. AI should be used as a helpful reference, not as a substitute for your own original work.
- o **Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university.** You are encouraged to report any incidents to the EEO-TIX Office <https://eeotix.usc.edu> or to the *Department of Public Safety* <https://dps.usc.edu/contact/>. This is important for the safety of the entire USC community. Another member of the university community (such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member) can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services* <https://sites.google.com/usc.edu/rsvpclientservices/home> provide 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage describes reporting options and other resources.

***Students and Disability Accommodations***

- **The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS):** (213) 740-0776  
<https://osas.usc.edu/>
  - USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the university's educational programs. OSAS is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. Email [osasfrontdesk@usc.edu](mailto:osasfrontdesk@usc.edu).

### *Support Systems*

- **The Writing Center:** (213) 740-3691 <http://dornsife.usc.edu/writingcenter/>
  - USC provides resources and support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more, visit the Writing Center in THH 216a, or email [writing@usc.edu](mailto:writing@usc.edu).
- **American Language Institute:** (213) 740-0079 <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>
  - The ALI sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international students for whom English is not a native or first language.
- **Student Health Counseling Services:** (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call  
<https://sites.usc.edu/counselingandmentalhealth/>
  - Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. Email [studenthealth@usc.edu](mailto:studenthealth@usc.edu).
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call  
[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)
  - Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- **Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP):** (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call <https://sites.usc.edu/clientservices/>
  - Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.
- **Office of Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX) | Title IX:** (213) 740-5086 <https://eeotix.usc.edu/>
  - Information about how to get help or help a survivor of harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following protected characteristics: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic

information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations.

- **Bias Assessment Response and Support:** (213) 821-8298 [https://usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care\\_report/index.php/pid938083?](https://usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report/index.php/pid938083?)
  - Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.
- **USC Campus Support and Intervention:** (213) 740-0411 <https://campussupport.usc.edu/>
  - Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:** (213) 740-2101 [diversity.usc.edu](https://diversity.usc.edu)
  - Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.
- **USC Emergency - UPC:** (213) 740-4321, **HSC:** (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call [dps.usc.edu](https://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](https://emergency.usc.edu)
  - Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.
- **USC Department of Public Safety - UPC:** (213) 740-6000, **HSC:** (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call [dps.usc.edu](https://dps.usc.edu)
  - Non-emergency assistance or information.
- **Office of the Ombuds:** (213) 821-9556 <https://ombuds.usc.edu/>
  - A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.
- **Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice:** (323) 442-2850 <https://chan.usc.edu/patient-care/faculty-practice>
  - Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance. Email [otfp@med.usc.edu](mailto:otfp@med.usc.edu).