

Governance and Conflict in East Asia: Studying Politics Through Biography

Politics 190t • 62073 • Spring 2012
University of California, Santa Cruz
Prof. Benjamin L. Read

Email: bbread (at) ucsc (dot) edu
Web site: <http://benread.net>
Course meetings: Mon/Wed/Fri 11:00a–12:10p, Crown Classroom 201
Office hours: Mon/Wed 9:30a–11:00a in 157 Merrill Faculty Annex, and by appointment
Date of this syllabus: March 26, 2012. Subject to change; check websites for latest version.

Overview:

Understanding the politics of East Asian countries requires coming to grips with two seemingly contradictory themes. One is the long tradition of statecraft, state-building, and state-centric thinking in these political systems and their historical predecessors. The other is the equally long tradition of popular movements, contention, resistance, rebellion and revolution that has challenged, subverted, reformed and shaped these states. In this reading-intensive seminar we will engage with work that speaks to this tension and explores conflict and cooperation in state-society relations. China is the topic of special emphasis but some readings deal with other East Asian countries as well.

Specifically, we will read four outstanding and recent biographies of important Asian leaders, as a window into the above topics and issues. Students will write weekly reading responses as well as a final paper. For the final paper, students have the following options: 1) An essay on the legacy of one of the four figures we're reading about; 2) a biographical essay about some brief period or component of the life of a non-U.S. political figure; or 3) a detailed critique of one of the four books we've read that puts the book into dialogue with other biographies or materials. All the options require you to do considerable research, in consultation with the instructor.

Readings:

The books below are available for purchase at the Literary Guillotine bookstore in downtown Santa Cruz (not at the Bay Tree bookstore). The Literary Guillotine is at 204 Locust Street, right next to Red Restaurant & Bar. Its hours are Monday–Saturday 10a to 6p, phone 831-457-1195.

- Marie-Claire Bergère, *Sun Yat-Sen* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998)
- William J. Duiker, *Ho Chi Minh: A life* (New York: Hyperion, 2000)
- Justin Wintle, *Perfect hostage: A life of Aung San Suu Kyi, Burma's prisoner of conscience* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2007)
- Paul M. Handley, *The king never smiles: A biography of Thailand's Bhumibol Adulyadej* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006)

I strongly encourage you to purchase these books. As careful and timely reading is important, you will want to have them close at hand. They are also worth owning. But there are other options. The full text of Handley's book is available as an online resource via the UCSC library system (look it up in CruzCat, then follow instructions. If you are off-campus, you will need to log in first via the "off-campus" link from the main library page.) Also, Bergère, Duiker, and Handley's books are available for 2-hour loan as reserves at McHenry.

Assignments and Ground Rules:

- Please read the following items carefully before deciding to stay enrolled in this course.
- Class attendance is a firm requirement. Attendance will be taken at every session at the beginning of class. I am

quite understanding about family emergencies, illness or other serious exigencies, and will treat them as excused absences if verifiable documentation is provided. See my web page for the absence form, which must be printed, filled out, and signed. Two percentage points will be deducted from your course grade for every unexcused absence. To put that in perspective, the difference between a B+ and a C+ is ten percentage points.

- This course involves a substantial amount of reading and **you are required to do it**. Readings must be completed before the class meeting for which they are assigned. Note that although I have strived to make it easy for you to find the readings, it is your responsibility to obtain and read these items.
- You must use and regularly check your official email account, i.e. the one that AIS or MyUCSC sends mail to.
- Assignments:
 - Active participation in discussion, and starting discussion in turn, 20%
 - One page-long reading response per week, 25% total
 - One ten-page term paper draft, 10%
 - One 12-14 final version of the same term paper, 40%
 - In-class presentation on term paper, 5%
- The percentages above are subject to adjustment. All grades are given on a 0-100 scale, where 90-100 is an A, 80-89 is a B, etc. A-range grades are reserved for work of exceptionally high quality.

Week 1:

Monday, April 2

- Class introduction
- George Santayana, paragraph from *Three Philosophical Poets* (1910)
- Susan Magarey, "Three Questions for Biographers: Public or Private? Individual or Society? Truth or Beauty?," *Journal of Historical Biography*, 4 (2008), 1-26.

Wednesday, April 4

- Bergère on Sun Yat-sen: Introduction and Chapters 1-2

Friday, April 6

- Bergère on Sun Yat-sen: Chapters 3-4

Week 2:

Monday, April 9

- Bergère on Sun Yat-sen: Chapters 5-7
- Kenneth Silverman, "Biography and Pseudobiography," <http://www.common-place.org/vol-03/no-02/silverman/index.shtml>
[Note: this essay is in three parts]

Wednesday, April 11

- Bergère on Sun Yat-sen: Chapters 8-9

Friday, April 13

- Bergère on Sun Yat-sen: Chapters 10-11

Week 3:

Monday, April 16

- Duiker on Ho Chi Minh: Preface, Introduction, and Chapters 1-2

Wednesday, April 18

- Duiker on Ho Chi Minh: Chapters 3-4

Friday, April 20

- Duiker on Ho Chi Minh: Chapters 5-7

Week 4:

Monday, April 23

- Duiker on Ho Chi Minh: Chapters 8-9

Wednesday, April 25

- Duiker on Ho Chi Minh: Chapters 10-11

Friday, April 27

- Duiker on Ho Chi Minh: Chapters 12-13

Week 5:

Monday, April 30

- Duiker on Ho Chi Minh: Chapters 14-15

Wednesday, May 2

- Duiker on Ho Chi Minh: Epilogue

Friday, May 4

- **** No class ****

Week 6:

Monday, May 7

- Handley on King Bhumibol, Preface, Introduction, and Chapters 1-3

Wednesday, May 9

- Handley on King Bhumibol, Chapters 4-6

Friday, May 11

- Handley on King Bhumibol, Chapters 7-11

Week 7:

Monday, May 14

- Handley on King Bhumibol, Chapters 12-15

Wednesday, May 16

- Handley on King Bhumibol, Chapters 16-19

Friday, May 18

- Handley on King Bhumibol, Chapters 20-22
- Catharin Dalpino, "Thailand: From Violence to Reconciliation?" *Current History* (September 2010), pp. 258-263

Week 8:

Monday, May 21

- Wintle on Aung San Suu Kyi, Prologue and Chapters 1-8 (These chapters are short.)

Wednesday, May 23

- Wintle on Aung San Suu Kyi, Chapters 9-15

Friday, May 25

- Wintle on Aung San Suu Kyi, Chapters 16-21

Week 9:

Monday, May 28

- **** No class; Memorial Day ****

Wednesday, May 30

- Wintle on Aung San Suu Kyi, Chapters 22-33 (Longer assignment due to holiday)

Friday, June 1

- Wintle on Aung San Suu Kyi, Chapters 34-36 and Postscript
- Emma Larkin, "The Awakening: Inside the Burmese Spring," *The New Republic* (January 11, 2012)

Week 10:

Monday, June 4

- Student presentations

Wednesday, June 6

- Student presentations

Friday, June 8

- Student presentations

The final version of the final paper is due at noon on Monday, June 11. You must turn in a hard copy in the box outside my office, and also submit an electronic version as an email attachment, by that time.