SOUTHEAST ASIAN HISTORY: THEMES & RESOURCES
What Is Southeast Asia???

Is it a tiny subsection of a China dominated Asia?
Is it a unique region?
How do we understand it?
Is it possible to cover the history of *ALL* of this region in one session?

Is it possible to cover the history of even *ONE* of its *TEN* countries in one session?
A. Cultural Themes

1. Southeast Asia as an crossroads: maritime and land + riverine
2. Region of diversity
   a. religion – Buddhism, Islam, Christianity & Hinduism + animistic base
b. linguistic groups
(Malay-Polynesian, Thai-Lao, Vietnamese, Mon-Khmer, Burmese, Chinese, Hindi, + lesser languages as well as wide knowledge of English)
c. external cultural influences

1.) earliest = Indian (religion Hinduism & Buddhism, esp. Theravada and ideas of statecraft)

2.) Islamic = India & Arabian peninsula
3.) Chinese = Confucianism for social & political values & religion, esp. Mahayana Buddhism

4.) West = Christianity, political organization & ideals such as democracy
3. Geographic – mainland
   a. mountains & river systems = impact on ethno-linguistic diversity
   b. river flood plains = wet rice agriculture – Thailand as a world producer
c. ability to build and sustain large state apparatus of palaces, irrigation systems & temple complexes

d. powerful central states and imperial armies for wars with neighbors
4. Geographic – Island
   a. open shallow waters for easy communication & less ethno-linguistic variation
   b. few & small flood plains for rice production – root crops and sea food diet
c. relatively fewer architectural landmarks – Borobudur and Prambanan in central Java
d. maritime empires based on trade and control of waters not land and people
e. few strong dynastic states as political power is fluid
5. Dominant cultural traits – whole region
   a. crossroads region is very open to cultural adoption – **SYNCRETIC**
   b. family kinship structure – bilateral $\rightarrow$ important implications for women
1.) areas of impact = divorce, inheritance, residence post-marriage, education, work outside the house, etc.)
2.) contrast with patrilineal kinship societies e.g. China
c. fictive kinship
1.) via marriage sponsorships,
2.) friend groups of long lasting status
3.) builds on family network
4.) implications for business, government, & military
B. Historical Themes

1. Crossroads region
   a. linkages with many other regions and cultures – trade & ideas
   b. as a syncretic culture major religions and philosophies find a home
c. Southeast Asians adopt but also transform cultural borrowings
d. fit world history patterns of colonial contact, to imperial era defeat, to increasing political sophistication & post-war independence
e. resistance to other foreign domination

1) Vietnam vs. China
2) Vietnam & Javanese vs. Mongols
3) WW II & Japan
4) ASEAN as Cold War alternative
f. intra-regional wars limited to pre-colonial era – current conflicts indirect

1.) 1960s Indonesia’s “Konfrontasi” vs. Malaysia “irregular” guerrillas
2.) Philippines vs. Malaysia over Sabah – use of special ops & surrogates
3.) Vietnam’s occupation of Cambodia a residual of the American War in Vietnam
C. Teaching Resources

What’s in my file “Rodell Southeast Asian History”?

2. “World History Essay on Southeast Asia” MS Word Doc
(Bulletin of the World History Association special section on Asia in World History)
3. Milton Osborne’s “What Is Southeast Asia”
   a. background to recent recognition of the existence of the region
   b. comes up with a cultural approach
4. Power Point lectures from my “Modern Southeast Asia”
a. Cultural Southeast Asia
b. Early Southeast Asian States
   - Maps
c. SEA Trade & European Links to WW II
d. The Overseas Chinese

e. Colonial Econ & Soc Transformations

f. Nationalism & Social Change

g. WW II as Catalyst

5. Bonus Power Point – India

Southeast Asia Connection
D. Book Recommendations

General Textbooks & Monographs

- Southeast Asia in World History
  Craig A. Lockard

- Dance of Life
  Popular Music and Politics in Southeast Asia
  Craig A. Lockard

- The Chinese Overseas
  From Earthbound China to the Quest for Autonomy
  Wang Gungwu
General Textbooks & Monographs (cont.)
Islam in Southeast Asia

Howard Federspeil

Gordon Means
Country Specific History Textbooks (1)
Country Specific History Textbooks (2)
Culture & Customs Series
E. On-Line Resources

1. Asia Times:
http://www.atimes.com/

2. East-West Center
http://www.eastwestcenter.org/
and
http://www.eastwestcenter.org/publications/publications-home
3. *Education About Asia – Assn. for Asian Studies (US)*

[https://www.asian-studies.org/EAA/index.htm](https://www.asian-studies.org/EAA/index.htm)


[www.iias.nl](http://www.iias.nl)
5. World History Connected – World History Association, online journal and teaching resource

http://worldhistoryconnected.press.illinois.edu/