

Anarchism and Southeast Asia
GETSEA Mini-course
June 1–July 6, Summer 2022 (1 credit)
Wednesdays 8-10pm ET, Zoom
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“There are as many anarchisms as there are anarchists”¹

Description:

What is anarchism? Why have prominent theorists of Southeast Asia such as Benedict Anderson and James Scott gravitated towards it in the course of their work? (Or have they?) Who are Southeast Asian anarchists and what do they have to say about anarchism? This course explores these three questions in progression, covering (1) anarchist interventions in anthropology, sociology, and geography; (2) debates on Scott’s “anarchist history” of Zomia; (3) writings from and about Southeast Asian anarchists from Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Vietnam; and (4) punk subcultures, particularly Islamic and Buddhist punk in Indonesia, Myanmar, and Indonesia. The course takes a comparative approach, giving students an overview of anarchism in the region.

In the spirit of horizontalism, the course hopes to encourage student ownership of the class and the fostering of a collective learning community. We will draw on critical pedagogical methods, wherein everyone brings their *whole* selves to the virtual class, not confined to domain knowledge and book learning. In the spirit of GETSEA classes, your full participation is expected, such as engaging with readings and being in conversation with fellow classmates.

Credit:

This is a 1 credit course, but it is not automatically credited. If you require it, we can work with your institution to provide you the credit, or alternatively provide a certificate of completion of the course. If you do not require credit, you are still expected to do the same amount of work as a requirement for participating in the class.

Technology:

1. Synchronous meetings will be held on Zoom. Attendance will be taken.
<https://umich.zoom.us/j/99657763570?pwd=aEYvT0NYeTZlSmxSVTFJcVlBdkhMQT09>
2. In lieu of Canvas/Blackboard, class communications and discussions will take place over Slack. One of the key features of GETSEA courses is to facilitate connections between students. (If you have trouble accessing Slack, let me know immediately.)
https://join.slack.com/t/anarchismsea/shared_invite/zt-19u6i38f5-9lhGtDUvmLi1itHj~tWhpg

¹ Terry M. Perlin, “Preface,” in Terry M. Perlin, ed., *Contemporary Anarchism* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1979)

Assignments:

1. Assignments will consist of weekly readings and discussion questions. Post at least 2 discussion questions 24 hours before class, and make at least 1 response to someone else's post before class.
2. The Final Project will be a zine collectively produced by the class, aimed for contribution to the Southeast Asian Anarchist Library (if they will accept it) or elsewhere. For examples of zines, see below.

Readings:

Because of the nature of anarchism, except for some academic journal articles, nearly all of the texts below are freely available online in the [Southeast Asian Anarchist Library](#) or elsewhere. In the case of books, only selected chapters will be assigned. Aside from these, other resources will also be curated to supplement the readings as suggested but not required material. All required readings will be provided in this Google Drive:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/1JfCTkn4Tp96QGIA3tzYUOxE9Us8qyG7L>

Week 1. Anarchist interventions in Anthropology, Sociology, and Geography:

Orientations

Required:

- Erwin F. Rafael. *The Promise of an Anarchist Sociological Imagination*, 2018.
- Graeber, David. *Fragments of an anarchist anthropology*. Prickly Paradigm Press, 2004. (pp.1–37, 95–105)
- Springer, Simon. *The anarchist roots of geography: Toward spatial emancipation*. University of Minnesota Press, 2016. (Introduction, pp.1–23)

Suggested:

- Graeber, all; Springer, Chapter 1
- Heryanto, Ariel. "Can There Be Southeast Asians in Southeast Asian Studies?." *Moussons. Recherche en sciences humaines sur l'Asie du Sud-Est* 5 (2002): 3-30.
- carla bergman and Nick Montgomery. *Joyful Militancy: Building Thriving Resistance in Toxic Times*. AK Press, 2017. ([Chapter 5](#))

In class:

- Introductions

Week 2. Anarchist (pre)histories of upland Southeast Asia: Debates

Required:

- Scott, James. *The art of not being governed*. Yale University Press, 2009. (Chapter 1)
- Jonsson, Hjorleifur. "Paths to freedom: Political prospecting in the ethnographic record." *Critique of Anthropology* 32.2 (2012): 158-172.
- Krasner, Stephen D; Roberts, Neil; Greenhouse, Carol J.; Manicas, Peter; Clunan, Anne. Review Symposium: State, Power, Anarchism: A Discussion of The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia, Cambridge University Press, *Perspectives on Politics*, 9(1), pp. 79-102

Suggested:

- Scott, Chapter 2 and Conclusion.

Week 3. Comparative Anarchisms: Mainland (Cambodia, Vietnam)

Required:

- Mèo Mun, [Anarchist Views from Vietnam](#), Interview with Final Straw Radio (2021)

- Hue-Tam Ho Tai. *Radicalism and the Origins of the Vietnamese Revolution*. Harvard University Press, 1996. (Chapter 2)
- Simon Springer. “Violent accumulation: A postanarchist critique of property, dispossession, and the state of exception in neoliberalizing Cambodia.” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 103.3 (2013): 608-626.
- Benedict Anderson. *The spectre of comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia, and the world*. Verso, 1998. (Chapter 13: Radicalism after Communism)

Suggested:

- Ngô Văn. *In the Crossfire: Adventures of a Vietnamese Revolutionary*. AK Press, 2010. (Chapter 11 & “A Factory Occupation in May 1968”)
- Kasian Tejapira. *Commodifying Marxism: The Formation of Modern Thai Radical Culture, 1927–1958*. Kyoto Area Studies on Asia, vol. 3, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University. Kyoto: Kyoto University Press; Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2001. (Introduction)

Week 4. Comparative Anarchisms: Archipelago (Philippines)

Required:

- Bas Umali. *Pangayaw and Decolonizing Resistance. Anarchism in the Philippines*. Ed. by Gabriel Kuhn. PM Press, Oakland, 2020. (Introduction; Interview; Sketches...)
- Simoun Magsalin, [Towards an Anarchism in the Philippine Archipelago](#), Bandilang Itim, 2020.
- Lara Cuevas-Hewitt, *Re-imagined communities: the radical imagination from Philippine independence to the postcolonial present*, Dissertation, 2016. (Chapter 10)
- Benedict Anderson. *Under three flags: Anarchism and the anti-colonial imagination*. Verso, 2005. (Introduction, Chapters 1–2)

Suggested:

- Bas Umali, all.
- [Anarchy in the Philippines](#), Dazed, 2018

In-class:

- Zine show and tell, also [How to make a zine](#)

Week 5. Comparative Anarchisms: Archipelago (Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore)

Required:

- Tim Harper. *Underground Asia*. Harvard University Press, 2021. (Chapter 9)
- Dominic Berger. [Indonesia’s new anarchists](#), Inside Indonesia (2013).
- Vadim Damier and Limanov Kirill. [Anarchism in Malaya, Singapore and Malaysia](#) and [Anarchism in Indonesia](#) (2017)
- Yong, Ching Fatt. *The origins of Malayan communism*. No. 40. South Seas Society, 1997. (Chapter 2)

Suggested:

- Yong, Intro & Chapter 1.
- Asian History: Anarchism in Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia, Red Star Videos, 2021 ([link](#))
- [Explore Malaysia’s opposing skinhead subcultures](#), Jess Kohl, Dazed, (2021)
- Datuk Khoo Kay Kim and Ranjit Singh Malhl. [Malaysia: Chinese Anarchists Started Trade Unions](#). *The Sunday Star* (Kuala Lumpur), September 12, 1993.
- Tim Harper. “Singapore, 1915, and the Birth of the Asian Underground.” *Modern Asian Studies* 47.6 (2013): 1782-1811.

Week 6: Anarcho-punk and other anarchisms (Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar)

Required:

- carla bergman and Nick Montgomery. *Joyful Militancy Building Thriving Resistance in Toxic Times*. AK Press, 2017. ([Chapter 5](#))
- Jim Donaghey. "Punk and feminism in Indonesia." *Cultural Studies* 35.1 (2021): 136-161.
- Andreas Hartmann. [My Buddha is Punk](#). Film, 2015. (67 mins.)
- Carolin Hirsch. [Becoming Rebel Punk: \(Per\)forming \(as\) a cultural minority](#). MyanmarMemo, 2021.
- Terror, [Hang Loklaq](#). MV, 2021

Suggested:

- One Day, [The Rebel Riot](#). Album, 2021. ([Review](#))
- No Good, Punk Gong. Album, 2021. ([Review](#))
- Prasetyo, Frans Ari. "Punk and the city: A history of punk in Bandung." *Punk & Post-Punk* 6.2 (2017): 189-211.

In class:

- Wrap up

Additional Resources

Southeast Asia specific:

- SEA Library: Knowledge-Building & Resistance in Southeast Asia. ([Interview](#) by Matt Dagher-Margosian)
- Chen Jing-Lian and Lau Kek Huat, [Absent Without Leave](#), 2016. (89 minutes)
- Springer, Simon. *Cambodia's neoliberal order: Violence, authoritarianism, and the contestation of public space*. Routledge, 2010.
- Lee, Julian CH, and Marco Ferrarese, eds. *Punks, monks and politics: Authenticity in Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2016.
- Anthony T. Fiscella. "From Muslim punks to taqwacore: An incomplete history of punk Islam." *Contemporary Islam* 6.3 (2012): 255-281.

General references on anarchism:

- bergman, carla, and Nick Montgomery. *Joyful militancy: Building thriving resistance in toxic times*. AK Press, 2017.
- Milstein, Cindy. *Anarchism and its aspirations*. AK Press, 2010.
- Peter Kropotkin. *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*. (1902) Any edition
- Murray Bookchin. *The ecology of freedom*. New Dimensions Foundation, 1982.
- Robert Graham (ed.). *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas*, Volumes 1–3 (2005). Montreal and New York: Black Rose Books.

Some zine archives

- [Internet archive](#), [Barnard zine library](#), [Queer Zine Archive Project](#)