HH3022 World War II and Southeast Asia

Semester 1, AY 2017/18; Academic Units: 3
Venue: LHS-TR+32
Time: Tuesdays, 15:30-18:30
Course Instructor: Assistant Professor ZHOU Taomo
Office: HSS 05-22 (Please email me to make an appointment)
Email: tmzhou@ntu.edu.sg

I. Course Description

In August 1945 the US dropped atomic bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima, bringing to an end the Second World War (or WWII). Yet in Southeast Asia, the end of the three year, 9 month and 1 day occupation by Japan marked only the beginning of another round of intense conflicts. Events of 1941-45 led to destabilization of every country in the region and dramatically affected the ability of Western colonial powers to regain their colonial territories. Japan presented to Southeast Asian countries renewed hope and renewed fear but changed the way the people in the region thought of themselves in any event. As a result, revolutions of national independence were waged in nearly every Southeast Asian country after WWII ended. Was Japanese occupation of Southeast Asia the same as Western colonization, only on a more intense scale time-wise? Or were Japan’s “crowbar” effects crucial for the development of postwar independence movements? How do we understand WWII in relation to the birth and rise of a new Asian world?

In this class, we seek to answer these questions by studying WWII in Southeast Asia through a country-by-country approach. For each country or group of countries, the following aspects will be discussed: Situations before the outbreak of the war, especially with regards to Western colonial powers; the timeline of Japanese invasion and involvement; the economic, political and cultural changes that occurred during the Japanese occupation; the end of the war and post-war repercussions.

II. Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students should demonstrate:

- A comprehensive knowledge of the Southeast Asian theatre of WWII;
- A basic degree of literacy in the existing literature on the history of 20th century Southeast Asia;
- The ability to write research paper by reading and thinking analytically;
- Competence in classifying historical sources by genre, recognizing content, tone, and audience, and using primary sources and scholarly arguments.

III. Course Components

The format of this course is designed to encourage participation at every meeting except for the two field trips (September 8 & 22) as well as the first and last weeks (August 11 & November 10). During the 9 sessions in between, we will spend our three-hour seminars according to the following schedule:

15:30-16:20am Lecture

The course instructor reserves the right to amend, modify, or expand upon the themes and materials listed in this syllabubs.
Important: The first 10-15 minutes of each seminar will usually be devoted to going over important administrative matters. These could also include discussing the requirements of class assessment components & instructions for handing in assignments and formatting. It is highly encouraged that students are present during this crucial time of the seminar. Often times, the impromptu nature of the questions during this time means that the issues are not included in any other material or repeated elsewhere. As always, it is the students’ responsibility to ensure that they are abreast of all information given during lecture and tutorial slots. If you miss this information, you should ask a fellow student instead of asking the instructor to repeat herself unnecessarily.

16:20-16:30 am Break

16:30-17:30 am Presentations
Each student will pick a topic ahead of time from the “Presentation Topics & Recommended Readings” section of the syllabus and conduct further research. The recommended reading listed on the syllabus serves as a gateway for more in-depth study on the subject. Students will present their findings in a 15-minute presentation. PowerPoint slides are compulsory and a one-page outline, including a bibliography, is due at the time of the presentation. Hardcopies of the outline should be distributed in class. Students are encouraged take the presentation as an opportunity to test out preliminary ideas for their final research papers. If you are interested in presenting on topics outside of the listed selection, please consult the instructor beforehand.

17:30-17:40 am Break

17:40-18:30 pm Debate
Each student will bring to class a “Position Paper” summarizing his or her position on the week’s debate topic. This paper consists of an opening sentence plus twenty-five words or less. In the opening sentence, each student takes an unequivocal position in the affirmative or the negative. In position papers for Week 2, for example, every student should open by saying either, “Yes, Japan’s Pan-Asianist ideology shattered the myth of white prestige,” or “No, Japan’s Pan-Asianist ideology did shatter the myth of white prestige.” Hard copies of position papers need to be handed in at the end of every class.

To launch the debate each week, three or four students will act as Debate Moderators. The Debate Moderators have two responsibilities:

The first is to prepare a Debate Moderator Sheet and upload it to the “Discussions” section of NTULearn by 5pm (17:00) on Monday during the week he or she has signed up for. Hardcopies of the Debate Moderator Sheet should be distributed in class. This sheet should contain quotations from the week’s assigned readings and questions formulated in response to these readings. The questions may or may not be related to the debate topic on the reading list but should set up issues that may be discussed on the basis of the week’s readings. Both questions and quotations should be chosen for the purpose of stimulating discussion and should be short enough to fit on one page in standard size type.

The Debate Moderators’ second responsibility is to open discussion in class by making a brief (5 minutes) oral statement in which the moderator identifies the topics that should be taken up in that session. Ordinarily, the moderator’s statement will be based on the assigned readings, the students’ presentations, and his or her own list of questions and quotations.
It is extremely important for the presenters and debate moderators to honor their commitments. As a general rule, cancellations are not accepted. If urgent circumstances prevent a student from fulfilling his or her duty, one should inform the instructor as early as possible. The student must find someone to replace his or her role for that week.

Grades will be based on:

a. Active Participation (10%) Position papers as well as engagement in debates will be evaluated throughout the semester. If you expect to miss more than 20% of seminars, you must come see the instructor to explain your absence and how you will make up for the lost time.

b. Performance as Debate Moderator (15%). Each student should serve once in the semester as debate moderator, on a topic different from his or her presentation. Debate Moderator Sheets and oral presentations will be evaluated.

c. Presentation (15%) Each student should give one presentation in the semester. The depth of research & organization of ideas as reflected in the presentation outline, PowerPoint slides and oral delivery will be evaluated.

d. Short Writing Assignment (20%). Each student should write an 800-word short essay. One could either write a book review on one of the following historical fictions or write an extended position paper on a topic the student has not signed up as either debate moderator or presenter. Please see a separate handout for instructions.


e. Final Research Paper (40%) Each student is expected to hand in one piece of written work. This is a research essay of no less than 2,000 words and no more than 3,000 words (excluding footnotes and bibliography). This should be submitted to Turnitin by 5pm (17:00) on Monday, November 27, 2017. A hard copy should be submitted to my mailbox (HSS-05-22) before the office closes at 5:15pm (17:15) on Monday, November 27, 2017. Please refer to a separate handout for instructions & the grading system.

VI. Reference Books

• Alfred W. McCoy ed., Southeast Asia under Japanese Occupation (New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1980). [In reserves]
• Ken’ichi Gotô, Tensions of Empire: Japan and Southeast Asia in the Colonial and Postcolonial World (Singapore: NUS Press, 2003).

VII. Course Schedule:

Week 1 (August 15): Introduction: World War II in Memory and History
Housekeeping: Assignment of presentation & debate moderating topics.

Required Readings:
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Week 2 (August 22): Pan-Asianism

Debate Topic: Japan’s Pan-Asianist ideology shattered the myth of white prestige.

Required Readings:

Presentation Topics & Recommended Readings:
- The Southern Co-prosperity Sphere

Week 3 (August 29): British Malaya

Debate Topic: Japanese policy in the realms of ethnicity and religion in British Malaya spurred racial animosity.

Required Readings:
• Bayly and Harper, *Forgotten Wars*, pp.48-59. [On NTULearn & In reserves]

Presentation Topics & Recommended Readings:

- Background: Malay society
  
- Japanese occupation and the rise of the Malayan Communist Party
  
- The collapse of British colonial rule in Malaya
  
- Mass Participation and Mobilization in Wartime Singapore

**Week 4 (September 5): The Philippines**

**Debate Topic:** Elites of the Philippines remained intact before and after WWII.

**Required Readings:**

  

**Presentation Topics & Recommended Readings:**

- Comfort women
  
- Comparative studies of the rise of communist movements in Southeast Asia during WWII
  
- Japanese Propaganda in the Philippines
  
- The Muslim minorities in the Philippines during WWII

**Week 5 (September 12): Netherlands East Indies**

**Debate Topic:** Japanese occupation forged a sense of Indonesian nationhood.

**Required Readings:**

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• Anthony Reid, “Indonesia: From Briefcase to Samurai Sword,” in McCoy ed. *Southeast Asia under Japanese Occupation*, pp. 16-32. [on NTULearn]

**Presentation Topics & Recommended Readings:**

• Background: The Dutch East Indies before WWII
• Japanese strategies of total mobilization
• Indonesian Islam under the Japanese occupation
• Britain and the birth of Indonesia

**Week 6 (September 19): Fieldtrip TBD**

**Historical Sites in Singapore relating to WWII:**
• Changi Museum ([http://www.changimuseum.sg/](http://www.changimuseum.sg/))
• Bukit Batok WWII Memorial
• Syonan Jinja (Shinto Shrine) in Macritchie reservoir.
• Kranji War Memorial
• Point 270 (Remains of the Battle of Pasir Panjang)
• Japanese Cemetery Park (Address: 825B Chuan Hoe Ave, 549853)
• Reflections at Bukit Chandu ([http://www.nhb.gov.sg/NHBPortal/Museums/ReflectionsatBukitChandu](http://www.nhb.gov.sg/NHBPortal/Museums/ReflectionsatBukitChandu))
• The Battle Box at Fort Canning (the Fort Canning Bunker)

**Week 7 (September 26): Meeting cancelled due to conference travel of the instructor.**

**October 3 Recess Week**

**Week 8 (October 10): Burma/Myanmar**

**Debate Topic:** The Japanese occupation empowered new elites in Burmese politics.

**Required Readings:**

**Presentation Topics & Recommended Readings:**

• The Burma Road

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- The Thailand-Burma Railway

- Ethnic Minorities in Burma during Japanese occupation

**Week 9 (October 17): Siam/Thailand**

**Debate Topic:** Thailand’s experience during WWII was unique because of its independent status.

**Required Readings:**


**Presentation Topics & Recommended Readings:**

- Review of *Sunset at Chaopraya* (adapted from Thai novel *Koo Kam* by Thommayanti) with focus on the ambivalent relations between Siam and Japan during WWII.
- The Chinese in Thailand during WWII
- The Indian Communities in Thailand and Singapore during WWII

**Week 10 (October 24): Indochina**

**Debate Topic:** In Indochina, the rule by Japanese was substantially different from that of European powers.

**Required Readings:**

Presentation Topics & Recommended Readings:

- Japanese policy towards religion in Vietnam
- The end of French colonial rule
- Laos during WWII

**Week 11 (October 31): Australian Forces in Southeast Asia**

Debate Topic: WWII has revolutionized Australia’s relations with Southeast Asia.

Required Readings:


Presentation Topics & Recommended Readings:

- The Battle of Timor
- Borneo Campaign
- Advance to the Philippines
- Papuan Campaign

**Week 12 (November 7): Legacies**

Debate Topic: Japan has made sufficient apologies for WWII.

Required Readings:


Presentation Topics & Recommended Readings:

- Contemporary controversies over historical writings
  Open Letter in Support of Historians in Japan [on NTULearn]
- The development of the Japanese official narrative during the Cold War era
- The economic relations between Japan and Southeast Asia since WWII

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**Week 13 (November 14): Conclusion: Overview of the Course**