

**INTR8022: International Relations in the Asia-Pacific**  
**IR Department, Bell School, Australian National University**  
**Semester 2, 2024**

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### **Course Description**

Why is there no NATO in Asia?  
Is there an “American tributary system” in the Asia-Pacific?  
Was the “domino theory” in Asia accurate or flawed?  
Why was the battle of Dien Bien Phu important in colonial and 20<sup>th</sup> century warfare?  
Is China a “status quo” or a “revisionist” power?  
Why does ASEAN seem so boring?

These and many more questions will be explored in this course on the International Relations in the Asia-Pacific (INTR8022). The course will introduce you to key figures, institutions, and major historical processes that have shaped region’s international politics. It will also introduce you to fresh ways to think about International Relations (IR). To this end, the course will combine insights from Cold War international history with new approaches in IR that have opened our eyes to how race, gender, colonialism, class, and emotions shape international politics. Please note: this course is less commentary on *international affairs* and more of a deep dive into the historical and sociological motors that drive the *international politics* of Asia-Pacific (though, as you will see, the two are naturally interlinked).

### **Learning Outcomes**

At the completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Situate contemporary international developments in Asia in an historical perspective.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of old and new scholarly approaches in IR to study the Asia-Pacific.
3. Cultivate students' appreciation for the key dynamics shaping major changes in Asia-Pacific affairs and evolving projects in order-building.
4. Critically assess the role of Great Powers in the Asia-Pacific.
5. Develop the capacity to craft clear arguments in both written work and oral presentations.
6. Cultivate skill for reading scholarly writing (historical or theoretical writings).

### **Assessment: Types, Weightage and Due Dates**

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|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. Online Quiz 1 (10%)        | Due: 8 August 2024 (Week 3)                      |
| 2. Online Quiz 2 (10%)        | Due: 16 October 2024 (Week 11)                   |
| 3. Course Participation (10%) | Assessed over 12 seminars.                       |
| 4. Take Home Exam (30%)       | (1500 words) Due: 6 September (Teaching Break)   |
| 5. Long Essay (40%)           | (2000 words) Due: 30 October(week after Week 13) |

*Seminar Topics at a Glance*

- 1. The “Asia-Pacific” or Indo-Pacific: What’s in a Name?**
  - 2. Race, Emotions, Gender: New Looking Glasses for Asian IR.**
  - 3. The Cold War and Asia I: Decolonization – Korea and Vietnam**
  - 4. The Cold War and Asia II: The Vietnam War/American War**
  - 5. The Cold War and Asia III: The Third Indochina War & Breakdown in Asian Internationalism**
  - 6. ASEAN’s Diplomacy: Golf, Rituals, and Authoritarianism**
  - 7. The US in Asia: “Benign” and “Indispensable” or a “Tributary” Power”?**
  - 8. China in Asia: A “Revisionist” or “Status Quo” Power?**
  - 9. Australia in the Asia-Pacific**
  - 10. India and Indonesia: Strange Parallels**
  - 11. Disputes: Taiwan and the South China Sea**
  - 12. Spectres from Asia’s Past: A New Cold War or Something Different?**
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## Seminar Abstracts & Readings

### 1. The “Asia-Pacific” or Indo-Pacific: What’s in a Name?

There are two aims to this seminar. One, to defamiliarize and denaturalize the very terms of reference for this module —what is “Asia-Pacific,” “Indo-Pacific,” “Southeast Asia”? We will interrogate whether these are historically fixed and ‘natural’ geographical regions or in fact relatively recent constructs produced by a range of political and intellectual practices. Two, we get the ball rolling on how the story of Asia’s international politics has been written and passed down in IR. I’ll give you the standard account of these various approaches – spanning realism, liberalism, constructivism, and so on– and end with a twist, setting the stage for next week.

#### *Essential*

#1 Robert Vitalis (2015) “Introduction: A Mongrel American Social Science,” in *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations* (Cornell University Press). [Note: this chapter is relevant for this as well as next week’s seminar].

#2 Amitav Acharya (2017) “Theorising the International Relations of Asia: Necessity or Indulgence? Some Reflections.” *The Pacific Review* 30(6): 816-828.

#### *Optional Readings:*

Donald Emmerson (1984) “‘Southeast Asia’: What’s in a Name?” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*.

Arif Dirlik (1992) “The Asia-Pacific Idea: Reality and Representation in the Invention of a Regional Structure.” *Journal of World History* 3(1):55-79.

Acharya, Amitav and Barry Buzan (2017) “Why is there no Non-Western International Relations Theory? Ten Years On.” *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 17 (3): 341–70.

## 2. Race, Gender, Emotions: New Looking Glasses for Asian IR

We continue the task of thinking theoretically about Asian IR. While the previous seminar explored the traditional terrain of IR theory (and seemingly “indigenous” but conservative response of “Global IR”), this week we chart into new waters. Specifically, we will examine cutting edge work that shows the salience of race, gender, and emotions in shaping international processes and outcomes. Read these texts closely — you will be asked to relate these concepts to concrete historical and current day cases in your take home exam.

### Question: What research methods can we use to study emotions in world politics?

#### *Essential*

#1 Todd H. Hall (2015) *Emotional Diplomacy: Official Emotion on the International Stage* (1st ed.). Cornell University Press. Read Introduction + Chapter 1.

#2 Carol Cohn (1987) “Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defence Intellectuals.” *Signs* Volume 12(4): 687-718.

#3 Srdjan Vucetic, (2011) Chapter 3 “ANZUS Britain and the Pacific Pact” in *The Anglosphere: A Genealogy of a Racialized Identity in International Relations* (Stanford University Press).

#### *Optional*

Neta Crawford, LHM Ling, Dan Nexon (2016) “A Discussion of Robert Vitalis’s White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations,” *International Studies Quarterly* 14(4):1123-1129.

Wong, Seanon. (2020). “One-upmanship and Putdowns: The Aggressive Use of Interaction Rituals in Face-to-Face Diplomacy.” *International Theory* 13(2): 341-371.

Neumann, Iver (2008) “The Body of the Diplomat.” *European Journal of International Relations*, 14(4): 671-695. (See how both class and gender intersect in this superb study. Also, note the methods used.)

Charles Hirschman, (1986) “The Making of Race in Colonial Malaya: Political Economy and Racial Ideology,” *Sociological Forum*, 1(2): 330-361.

Jelena Subotic and Srdjan Vucetic. (2017). “Performing Solidarity: Whiteness and Status Seeking in the Non-Aligned World,” *Journal of International Relations and Development* 22: 722-743.

Cynthia Enloe (2001) *Beaches, Bananas and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press). Chapter 1.

Bina D'Costa and Katrina Lee-Koo. 2009. "Critical Feminist International Relations in the Asia-Pacific." In *Gender and Global Politics in the Asia-Pacific.*, edited by Bina D'Costa and Katrina Lee-Koo. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 3– 18.

Karin Aggestam & Ann Towns (2019) "The Gender Turn in Diplomacy: A New Research Agenda," *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 21:1, 9-28.

### 3. The Cold War and Asia I: Decolonization: Korea and Vietnam

We start the substantive study of this course, as one must, with history. The starting point is early 20<sup>th</sup> century when large swathes of Asia reeled under varying forms of Euro-American and Japanese colonial rule. There are two aims to this seminar: One, to understand a key juncture when an 'Asian international system' emerged following decolonization and the onset of the Cold War. Two, to understand how this 'deep' colonial, post-war, and postcolonial history has had important consequences for shaping contemporary realities. I will explore this important period by focusing on the contrasting (and fascinating) fates of Cold War Korea and Vietnam.

#### *Essential*

#1 Ngoei, Wen-Qing. 2014. "The Domino Logic of the Darkest Moment: The Fall of Singapore, the Atlantic EchoChamber, and 'Chinese Penetration' in U.S. Cold War Policy toward Southeast Asia." *The Journal of American-East Asian Relations*, 21(3): 215-245.

#2 Hemmer and Katzenstein (2002) Why is There No NATO in Asia? Collective Identity, Regionalism, and the Origins of Multilateralism. *International Organization* 56(3):575-607. [Read the Introduction and focus especially from pages 583 to 607].

#3 Christopher Goscha (2009) "Choosing between the Two Vietnams: 1950 and Southeast Asian Shifts in the International System" in Goscha and Osterman eds. *Connecting Histories: Decolonisation and the Cold War in Southeast Asia* (Woodrow Wilson Centre Press).

**Question: Based on the readings for this week, what methods can we use to study race and racial identity in world politics? How do set scope conditions for the study of race and other similar structural constraints like gender and social class?**

#### 4. The Cold War and Asia II: The Vietnam War/American War

We enter the heady decade of the 1960s. This is the world of John F. Kennedy and the Civil Rights Movement (and *Mad Men*) in the United States but also the *Year of Living Dangerously* in Cold War Indonesia and the decade which saw *The World's First Television War* — the “Vietnam War.” This seminar introduces you to this iconic and tragic grand conflict of the Cold War in Asia. We ask a range of questions around this conflict: who were the protagonists of this war? Why did a superpower lose to a poor, battle-hardened communist army? Why did South Korea have the second largest military contingent fighting the war in Vietnam?

**Question: Why and how did the North Vietnamese defeat the world's most powerful military?**

##### *Essential*

#1 Documentary: *Vietnam: A Television History*. (Share with us which episode you enjoyed the most and why).

#2 Frederik Logevall (2010) “The Indochina Wars and the Cold War 1945-1975” in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War Volume II* edited by Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, pp 281-304.

#3 Gregory A Daddis (2020) “Chapter 4: The Vietnamese Reality” in *Pulp Vietnam: War and Gender in Cold War Men's Magazines* (Cambridge University Press).

##### *Optional*

Anthony O Edmonds, (1998) *The War in Vietnam* (Westport: Greenwood Press), see chapter 1. [For a simple introduction to the War]

Fredrik Logevall (2012) *Embers of War: The Fall of an Empire and the Making of America's Vietnam*. Random House. [A door stopping book but highly readable and enjoyable!]

#### 5. The Cold War and Asia III: The Third Indochina War and Breakdown in Asian Internationalism

This week we approach one of the most poorly understood grand conflicts of the Cold War— the Third Indochina War. One of the reasons this conflict is little known is because the archives are only just opening up, and because the war is remembered in deeply partisan ways in many countries in Asia. But this was also a maddeningly complex conflict! It comprised two invasions, a refugee crisis, a decade long civil-war in Cambodia, a major diplomatic campaign in the corridors of the UN in New York, and a grim genocide where two million people perished (does the “Khmer Rouge” ring a bell?). Besides giving you historical context and understanding, the aim of this seminar is to also set you thinking about how this grim past informs contemporary fault lines and realities in Asian international politics.

**Question: In what ways does the Third Indochina War continue to shape the international politics of the Asia-Pacific?**

*Essential*

#1 Odd Arne Westad (2006) "Introduction: From War to Peace to War in Indochina" in Odd Arne West and Sophie Quinn Judge (ed.) *The Third Indochina War: Conflict between China, Vietnam and Cambodia 1972-1979*. (e-book, download from library).

#2 Ben Kiernan (2001) "Chapter 8: External and Indigenous Sources of Khmer Ideology" in Odd Arne West and Sophie Quinn Judge (ed.) *The Third Indochina War: Conflict between China, Vietnam and Cambodia 1972-1979*.

#3 Christopher Goscha "Chapter 7: Vietnam, the Third Indochina War and the Meltdown of Asian Internationalism" in Odd Arne West and Sophie Quinn-Judge (ed.) *The Third Indochina War: Conflict between China, Vietnam, and Cambodia 1972-1979*.

*Optional*

Anthony Barnett. 1990. "Cambodia Will Never Disappear," *New Left Review* [This is a brilliant article on how French colonial writings constructed the mythology of the great Khmer Empire — myths that were appropriated and have informed Khmer nationalism from Sihanouk to Pol Pot].

**6. ASEAN's Diplomacy: Golf, Rituals, and Authoritarianism**

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations – as the name suggests– is a diplomatic project centered on Southeast Asia. But not only has this deeply conservative diplomacy outlasted larger and more ambitious Asian diplomatic projects, it also enjoys an intriguing (and often frustrating) position as a ‘gatekeeper’, ‘manager’, and ‘driver of diplomatic arrangements on an Asian scale. What makes ASEAN tick and what are its prospects? We look into the deep history of ASEAN (forged in the cauldron of the Cold War) to understand its DNA and its diplomatic practices (the so-called “ASEAN Way”). We will examine what ASEAN has accomplished historically and its current footprint in Asian diplomacy (the ARF, EAS, ADMM and other indigestibles in a thick alphabet soup). Finally, we engage head on with a long-running and inconclusive debate: does ASEAN matter? How can something considered to be bogus and empty actually have (powerful) effects?

**Question: How would Southeast Asia look like without ASEAN?**

*Essential*

#1 Michael Leifer (1999) “The ASEAN Peace Process: A Category Mistake,” *The Pacific Review* 12(1) 25-38.

#2 Yuen Foong Khong (2005) The Elusiveness of Regional Order: Leifer, the English School and Southeast Asia. *The Pacific Review* 18(1): 23 – 41.

#3 Deepak Nair (2020) “Sociability in International Politics: Golf and ASEAN’s Cold War Diplomacy.” *International Political Sociology* 14(2): 196-214.

### *Optional*

Mathew Davies (2018) *Ritual and Region: The Invention of ASEAN*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Deepak Nair (2019) “Saving Face in Diplomacy: A Political Sociology of Face-to-Face Interactions in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.” *European Journal of International Relations* 25(3): 672-697. (Focus especially from p. 682 onwards).

Lee Jones. (2012) Chapter 4 “Cambodia: Representation, Refugees, and Rebels” in *ASEAN, Sovereignty and Intervention in Southeast Asia*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave and Macmillan). (This captures ASEAN’s diplomatic response to the 3rd Indochina War.)

Naoko Shimazu. (2014) “Diplomacy as Theatre: Staging the Bandung Conference of 1955,” *Modern Asian Studies* 48 (1): 225-252.

## **7. The United States in Asia: “Benign” and “Indispensable” or an “American Tributary System”**

The US is more than 15,000 kilometers away from Australia, but it remains a preponderant military power in Asia and enjoys deep security partnerships with a raft of Asian states. While our previous seminars (on the Indochina Wars, for example) would have given you an insight into the history of American enmeshment in Asian security through the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, this seminar is an opportunity to examine *contending ways of thinking about* American power in Asia. Generations of foreign policy elites in non-communist Southeast Asia and indeed Australia have hailed the US as an “indispensable” and “benign” power— notwithstanding a history of war and subversion in the region. Others think of the US as an Empire central to the continuation of contemporary forms of neocolonialism in Asia. And then there is an intriguing account which suggests *Pax Americana* is best understood as a highly successful version of the Tributary system usually associated with Imperial China. We will explore which of these frameworks appeals to you and why.

**Question: Is democracy a strength for America’s foreign policy?**

### *Essential*

#1 Yuen Foong Khong, "The American Tributary System," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Volume 6, Issue 1, Spring 2013, Pages 1–47.

#2 Natasha Hamilton-Hart. *Hard Interests Soft Illusions: Southeast Asia and American Power*. Cornell University Press, 2012. Read Chapter 1 ("Beliefs about American Hegemony in Southeast Asia" and Chapter 5 "Professional Expertise."

### *Optional*

Michael J Green. 2017. *By More than Providence: Grand Strategy and American Power in the Asia Pacific since 1783*. New York: Columbia University Press, (Introduction)

Karen Yarhi-Milo. After Credibility: American Foreign Policy in the Trump Era. *Foreign Affairs*; New York Vol. 97, Iss. 1, (Jan/Feb 2018): 68-77.

Cha, Victor D. 2009/10. "Powerplay: Origins of the U.S. Alliance System in Asia." *International Security* 34 (3): 158–96.

Chacko, Priya and Kanishka Jayasuriya. 2017. "Trump, the Authoritarian Populist Revolt and the Future of the Rules-Based Order in Asia." *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 71 (2): 121–27.

Cohen, Eliot A. 2019. "America's Long Goodbye: The Real Crisis of the Trump Era." *Foreign Affairs* 98 (1): 138–46.

Nye, Joseph S. Jr. 2019. "The Rise and Fall of American Hegemony from Wilson to Trump." *International Affairs* 95 (1): 63–80.

Trubowitz, Peter and Peter Harris. 2019. "The End of the American Century? Slow Erosion of the Domestic Sources of Usable Power." *International Affairs* 95 (3): 619–39.

## **8. China: A "Revisionist" or "Status Quo" Power?**

We take stock of China's domestic transformations – from revolutionary power under Mao to its pragmatic capitalist turn under Deng Xiaoping — to understand the rise of China in historical perspective and its implications for Asian security. There are two further aims: one, to evaluate a long running debate on whether China can be understood as a "status quo" power or a "revisionist" power; and two, to better understand China in the Xi Jinping era. The latter, as we will see, has a bearing on how we respond to this debate on the China's place in the world.

Question: **Can China's rise be peaceful?**

### *Essential*

#1 Alastair Iain Johnston (2003) “Is China a status quo power?” *International Security* 27(4):5-56.

#2 Yuen Yuen Ang (2018) “Autocracy with Chinese Characteristics: Beijing’s Behind the Scenes Reforms” *Foreign Affairs*, New York Vol. 97, Issue 3, (May/June 2018).

#3 Lee Jones and Sahar Hameiri (2016) “Rising Powers and State Transformation: The Case of China,” *European Journal of International Relations* 22(1): 72-98

#4 Goldstein, Avery (2020) “China’s Grand Strategy under Xi Jinping: Reassurance, Reform, and Resistance.” *International Security* 45 (1): 164–201.

### *Optional*

Harry Harding, *China's Second Revolution: Reform After Mao* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1987),

Victor C. Shih, *Factions and Finance in China: Elite Conflict and Inflation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)

Thomas J. Christensen, “China, the US-Japan Alliance, and the Security Dilemma in East Asia”, *International Security* 23:4 (Spring 1999): 49-80.

Zhao, Suisheng. 2021. “Rhetoric and Reality of China’s Global Leadership in the Context of COVID-19: Implications for the US-led World Order and Liberal Globalization.” *Journal of Contemporary China* 30 (128): 233–48.

Baviera, Aileen S. P. 2016. “The Domestic Mediations of China’s Influence in the Philippines.” In *Rising China’s Influence in Developing Asia*, edited by Evelyn Goh. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 101–28.

Goh, Evelyn. 2019. “Contesting Hegemonic Order: China in East Asia.” *Security Studies* 28 (3): 614–44.

Jones, Lee and Jinghan Zeng. 2019. “Understanding China’s ‘Belt and Road Initiative’: Beyond ‘Grand Strategy’ to a State Transformation Analysis.” *Third World Quarterly* 40 (8): 1415–39.

Loke, Beverley. 2016. “Unpacking the Politics of Great Power Responsibility: Nationalist and Maoist China in International Order-Building.” *European Journal of International Relations* 22 (4): 847–71.

Yan, Xuetong. 2019. “The Age of Uneasy Peace: Chinese Power in a Divided World.” *Foreign Affairs* 98 (1): 40–46.

## 9. Australia in the Asia-Pacific

This seminar we pay attention to Australia and especially to how history and identity inform a long-running question at the heart of Australia's foreign policy orientation: Is Australia part of Asia? The Anglosphere West? Oceania? Or something else?

### Question: Is Australia safer with AUKUS?

*Essential*

David Walker (2019) "Significant Other: Anxieties about Australia's Asian Future", *Australian Foreign Affairs*, Issue 5, pp. 5-27.

Sarah Teo, (2019) "Can Australia be One of US? The View from Asia", *Australian Foreign Affairs*, Issue 5, pp. 77-93.

Brendan Taylor (2020) "Is Australia's Indo-Pacific strategy an illusion?", *International Affairs*, 96:1, pp. 95-109

## 10. India and Indonesia: Strange Parallels

We will examine the domestic and foreign policy arcs of the first and fourth most populous countries in the world. Both India and Indonesia are associated with strident anti-colonial nationalisms (one more violent than the other), both embraced inclusive nationalisms that incorporated disparate regions and ethnicities, embarked on non-communist projects of postcolonial nation-building alongside a high profile diplomacy of non-alignment during the Cold War, and both diverged with autocratic consolidation in Suharto era Indonesia and the renewal of democracy in post-Emergency India. These diverging paths have converged in the post-Cold war period with political and economic liberalization in both states accompanied with an ongoing erosion in their democratic credentials. A deep understanding of domestic political currents will inform our understanding of the foreign policy interests and practices of these two pivotal states in Asian and global security.

### Question: How has the rise of hard-line Hindu and Islamic political parties and movements impacted foreign policy in India and Indonesia?

*Essential*

#1 Huju, Kira (2022) "Saffronizing Diplomacy: The Indian Foreign Service under Hindu Nationalist Rule." *International Affairs* 98(2):423-41.

#2 Umar, Ahmad Rizky, (2023) "The Rise of the Asian Middle Powers: Indonesia's Conceptions of International Order." *International Affairs*.

#3 Chacko, Priya (2018) "The Right Turn in India: Authoritarianism, Populism and Neoliberalisation," *Journal of Contemporary Asia*

### *Optional*

Anwar, Dewi Fortuna. *Indonesia in ASEAN: Foreign Policy and Regionalism*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994.

Fibiger, Mattias. "A Diplomatic Counterrevolution: Indonesian Diplomacy and the Invasion of East Timor." *Modern Asian Studies* 55.2 (2012): 587–628.

Leifer, Michael. *Indonesia's Foreign Policy*. London: Routledge, 1983.

Nabbs-Keller, Greta. "Reforming Indonesia's Foreign Ministry: Ideas, Organization, and Leadership." *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 35.1 (2013): 56–82.

Nair, Deepak. "Spooks, Goons, 'Intellectuals': The Military-Catholic Network in the Cold War Diplomacy of Suharto's Indonesia." *History and Anthropology* 33.3 (2021): 372–390.

Sukma, Rizal. *Islam in Indonesian Foreign Policy*. London: Routledge, 2003.

Ganguly, Sumit. 2017. "Has Modi Truly Changed India's Foreign Policy?" *Washington Quarterly* 40 (2): 131–43.

## **11. Flashpoints: Taiwan and the South China Seas**

We will examine two long-standing and increasingly fraught theatres of contention in Asia-Pacific security. One is in Northeast Asia, the other in Southeast Asia. The first flashpoint is the Taiwan problem, with parallels recurrently drawn between Taiwan and Ukraine in the backdrop of Russia's invasion. The second potential flashpoint are the maritime disputes on the atolls, artificial features, and islands in the South China Sea. These disputes fuse regional dynamics with global power struggles and could potentially redefine Asia-Pacific international relations as we know it.

**Question: Does the Taiwan dispute have greater stakes than the South China Sea disputes for the future of Asia-Pacific security?**

### *Essential*

#1. Raymond, M., & Welch, D. A. (2022). What's Really Going on in the South China Sea? *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 41(2), 214–239.

#2. Lin, D. (2022) "One China" and the Cross-Taiwan Strait Commitment Problem. *The China Quarterly* 252, 1094-1116

### *Optional*

De Castro, R. C. (2016). The Duterte Administration's Foreign Policy: Unravelling the Aquino Administration's Balancing Agenda on an Emergent China. *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 35(3), 139–159.

Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *Dangerous Strait: The U.S.-Taiwan-China Crisis* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2005)

Ian Storey (2009) "The South China Sea Dispute: Increasing Stakes and Rising Tensions" *The Jamestown Foundation*.

Bill Hayton (2014) *South China Sea: The Struggle for Power in Asia*, Yale University Press. (Introduction)

Taylor Fravel (2011) "China's Strategy in the South China Sea" *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 33(3): 292-313.

Carl Thayer (2012) "ASEAN's Code of Conduct in the South China Sea: A Litmus Test for Community Building" *Japan Focus* Vol 10, Issue 34, No. 4.

## **12. Spectres from Asia's Pasts: A New Cold War or Something Different?**

By several accounts, Great Power struggles for influence have grown sharper in the Asia-Pacific. Both policy makers and scholars appear to agree that we are in a new phase of security competition in the Asia-Pacific. How do we conceptualize and articulate this "newness"? Policy makers have drawn on all kinds of historical analogies to make sense of this moment— from the inter-war years (Australian discourse on China, for example) to the Cold War. In this seminar we will bring our deep historical grounding to bear on this discussion. On the one hand, history remind us that external struggles for influence are by no means new in Asia (from the era of Euro-American and Japanese colonial rule to the long era of Cold War competition). But it is equally flawed to apply historical analogies in a cookie-cutter manner. What, then, is similar or different about the Asia-Pacific (indeed, the Indo-Pacific) today to its Cold War pasts? What lessons, if any, does the past hold for policy makers navigating this moment?

**Question: Is the contemporary moment in Asian security identical to Cold War Asia of the 1950s?**

### *Essential*

Deepak Nair (2023) "Populists in the Shadow of Great Power Competition: Duterte, Sukarno and Sihanouk in Comparative Perspective," *European Journal of International Relations*.

Wen Qing Ngoei (2022) The Deeper Roots of a Potential new Cold War with China

*Washington Post* < <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2022/04/05/deeper-roots-potential-new-cold-war-with-china/>>

*Optional*

Victor Cha (2011) *The New Cold War in Asia*. CSIS  
<https://www.csis.org/analysis/new-cold-war-asia>

Thitinan Pongsudhirak (2022) “Southeast Asia’s New Old Cold War” <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/us-china-new-cold-war-southeast-asia-by-thitinan-pongsudhirak-2022-02>

Hanna Beech, et al. (2022) “With Us or With Them? In a New Cold War, How about Neither?”  
*New York Times* <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/24/world/asia/cold-war-ukraine.html>

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