INTERPRETING INDONESIAN POLITICS

Introduction. The purpose of this course is to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of alternative interpretations of Indonesian political developments since independence in 1945. We begin with basic description of pre-colonial and Dutch colonial history, the experience of Japanese occupation, revolution, and the independence period, divided into subperiods of parliamentary democracy, Guided Democracy, the New Order, and the current reform era. Several alternative interpretations are then examined, beginning with the most popular, culture, and ending with Professor Liddle’s own research emphasis on leadership and agency.

There will be a mid-term, worth one-third of the course grade, and a final exam worth two-thirds. Both will be in-class exams, but the exam questions will be handed out several days before the exam date. The mid-term will be on Monday, October 15, the final on Tuesday, December 4 from 11:30AM-1:18PM. Students are expected to read the assigned materials before class, which will be conducted as a seminar to the extent possible. One additional grade level (for example, from B to B+) will be given for regular and effective participation.

Book and article availability. Two books will be available for purchase: Benedict Anderson and Audrey Kahin, Interpreting Indonesian Politics: Thirteen Contributions to the Debate, Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1982; and Robert Hefner, Civil Islam, Princeton University Press, 2000. Soemarsaid Moertono, State and Statecraft in Old Java, can also be ordered from the publisher if desired. The cost is $9.00. All other materials will be in the main library reserve room and will be made available for photocopying by the student.

Topics and Readings

Part One: Introduction

September 24. Interpreting Indonesian Politics: First Thoughts.

Readings:

Part Two: Overview of Indonesian Political History


FILM: RIDING THE TIGER, PART I, KINGS AND COOLIES.

Readings:
Robert Cribb and Colin Brown, Modern Indonesia: A History Since 1945, Chapters One, Two, and Three.


FILM: RIDING THE TIGER, PART II, FREEDOM OR DEATH.

Readings:
Cribb and Brown, Modern Indonesia, Chapters Four and Five.

FILM: RIDING THE TIGER, PART III, THE NEW ORDER.

Readings:
Cribb and Brown, *Modern Indonesia*, Chapters Six and Seven.


FILM: INDONESIA—MINI-DRAGON.

Readings:


FILMS: ABDURRAHMAN WAHID, MEGAWATI SUKARNOPUTRI.

Readings:

OCTOBER 15. MIDTERM EXAMINATION.

This examination will be taken in class but with questions handed out earlier.
Part Three: Alternative Interpretations

October 17 and 22. Culture I: Overview.

FILMS: AZHARI ALI, AN ACEHNESE UNIVERSITY STUDENT; PAK MENGGUNG, A JAVANESE ARISTOCRAT.

Readings:
Hildred Geertz, “Indonesian Cultures and Communities,” in Ruth McVey, *Indonesia.*

October 24. Culture II: Javanism.

Readings:
Soemarsaid Moertono, *State and Statecraft in Old Java,* all.


Readings:
Robert Hefner, *Civil Islam,* all.

October 31. Ideology/Parties/Party System.

Readings:
Sukarno, *Islam, Marxism, and Nationalism,* all.
November 5. Patrimonialism.

**FILM: THE BUPATI OF SUBANG.**

Readings:

November 7. The Military.

Readings:

November 12. Class.

Readings:
- Rex Mortimer, “Class, Social Cleavage and Indonesian Communism,” in *Interpreting Indonesian Politics*, pp. 54-68.
- R. William Liddle, “The Middle Class and New Order Legitimacy,” “Indonesia is Indonesia,” and “East Asian Political Development,” in Tanter and Young, *The Politics of Middle Class Indonesia*. 


November 14. The State.

Readings:


Readings:

November 21. Leadership and Agency I.

Readings:

FILM: SUKARNO.

Readings:
J. D. Legge, Sukarno, all.
R. W. Liddle, “Indonesia,” in P. Shively, Comparative Governance. (See also assignment for October 8.)


Readings:
R. W. Liddle, “The Story Behind Abdurrahman,” The Jakarta Post, February 9 and 10, 2000. Also available on Professor Liddle’s website as “My Name is Abdurrahman Wahid.”

FINAL EXAMINATION: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 11:30AM-1:18PM.

The examination will be taken in class but with questions handed out earlier.