

Syllabus of Record

Program: CET Vietnam: Development Studies

Course Code / Title: (HC/POLI 345) The Political Economy of Vietnam: Authoritarianism, Democratization, and Society

Total Hours: 45

Recommended Credits: 3

Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings: Political Science / Development Studies

Language of Instruction: English

Prerequisites / Requirements: None

Description

The past three decades have seen Vietnam rising as a political and economic power in Southeast Asia. This course provides a perspective on the interplay of politics and economic reforms in contemporary Vietnam. It focuses on the discussion how political, economic and social forces shape a “socialism-oriented market economy” as the Vietnamese government calls it.

The course is organized into two broad primary portions: 1) the history of Vietnam and the its economic renovation (*Doi Moi*) since 1986, and 2) contemporary issues. This first part captures key periods and turning points in Vietnam’s, which is necessary for understanding how historical institutions continue to shape the politics and economy today. The remainder of the course is on the Vietnamese economic reform since 1986 and contemporary issues, with an emphasis on political economy and cross-country comparisons as well as the key challenges facing the Vietnamese Communist Party leadership, such as regime stability, pollution, and political reform.

Objectives

Through their participation in this course, students gain an understanding of:

- Vietnam from a political economy perspective
- the hierarchical structure and decision-making process of the Vietnamese government, and
- the distinctive dynamic of politics, economy, and legal system in Vietnam, and how it differs from other western models.

In addition, the course improves students’ ability to think about Vietnam’s complex development more comprehensively and critically; and to enable students to integrate what they have learned from this course into other Vietnam-related courses in their own discipline of study.

Course Requirements

Attendance. Attendance requirements are outlined in the CET Attendance Policy.

Participation. Student participation, including actively contributing to class discussion, is an important part of the grade. Students are expected to complete all reading assignments before coming to class, and to be prepared to discuss them with thoughtful questions and comments.

Reading Responses. Students write and submit two reading responses (1,200 words) with a clear thesis statement and an argument that seriously engages with and reflects upon readings in a

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coherent and comprehensive way. These responses are not to be summaries of the readings, but offers a critical analysis of their strengths and weaknesses.

Midterm Exam. The midterm is an in-class, closed-book test with multiple choice questions and a 800-word essay. short-response, covering material from the first half of the course.

Final Paper. Students write a 2,000 word final paper on a central issue in Vietnamese political economy. Topics are chosen according to students' interests and in consultation with the instructor.

Grading

The final grade is determined as follows:

- Participation: 20%
- Reading Responses: 30%
- Midterm Exam: 20%
- Final Paper: 30%

Readings

Vu, Tuong. *Vietnam's Communist Revolution: The Power and Limits of Ideology*. New York: Cambridge University, 2017.

London, Jonathan D. *Politics in Contemporary Vietnam: Party, State, and Authority Relations*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2014.

Elliott, David W. P. *Changing Worlds: Vietnam's Transition from Cold War to Globalization*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Hayton, Bill. *Vietnam: Rising Dragon*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010.

Kerkvliet, Benedict J. *The Power of Everyday Politics: How Vietnamese Peasants Transformed National Policy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005.

Maruichi, Daisuke & M. Abe (2019). Corruption and the Business Environment in Vietnam: Implications from an Empirical Study, *Asia & the Pacific Policy Studies*, 6, 2.

Deprez, Sophie (2018). The Strategic Vision behind Vietnam's International Trade Integration, *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 37, 2, 2-38.

Malesky, R. and M. Taussig. (2018). Participation, Government Legitimacy and Regulatory Compliance in Emerging Economies: A Firm-Level Field Experiment in Vietnam, *American Political Science Review*, 1-22.

Fforde, A. (2017). The Emerging Core Characteristics of Vietnam's Political Economy, *Asian-Pacific Economic Literature*, 1-16.

Bui, T. H. (2016). The Influence of Social Media in Vietnam's Elite Politics, *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 35, 2, 89-112.

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Nguyen, T. T. Anh, Luu M. Duc, & T. D. Chieu (2016). The Evolution of Vietnamese Industry, Brookings Working Paper No. 19.

Bui, T. H. (2013). The Development of Civil Society and Dynamics of Governance in Vietnam's One Party Rule, *Global Change Peace & Security*, 25, 1.

Perkins, D. W. & Vu T. T. Anh (2013). Vietnam's Industrial Policy: Designing Policies for Sustainable Development, Prepared for UNDP – Harvard Policy Dialogue Paper, 1-57.

Nguyen, T. T. & M. A. Van Dijk (2012). Corruption, Growth, and Governance: Private vs. State-Owned Firms in Vietnam, *Journal of Banking & Finance*, 36, 2935-2948.

Malesky, E., R. Abrami, & Yu Zheng. (2011). Institutions and Inequality in Single-Party Regimes: A Comparative Analysis of Vietnam and China, *Comparative Politics*, 43, 4, 401-419.

Gainsborough, M. (2009). "Privatisation as State Advance: Private Indirect Government in Vietnam," *New Political Economy*, 14, 2, 257-274.

Outline of Course Content

1. Introduction

- Overview of Vietnamese Politics, including main historical events before and after 1975.

2. Vietnamese Identity and Nationalism.

- What are the factors that underlie and support a unique Vietnamese identity and ideology?
- Does ideology play a role in Vietnam's historical struggles?
- The modern construction of Vietnamese identity

3. Vietnam's Economic Renovation (*Doi Moi*)

- The issue of Party legitimacy
- The lessons of the *gaige kaifang* in China and *perestroika and glasnost* in Russia for Vietnamese leaders
- Structural factors of Vietnam's *Doi Moi*

4. Post-*Doi Moi* Transformation of Vietnamese Communist Party

- Maintaining communist legitimacy in a post-communist world
- Changing incentives of Vietnamese bureaucracy
- Is Vietnam a schizophrenic state?

5. Industrial Policies and the Role of Government

- The evolution of industrial policies in Vietnam
- The state sector and state-owned enterprises (SOEs)
- Case studies of failed SOEs
- Evaluating policies

6. The Growth of Private Enterprises

- The contribution of non-state actors to Vietnam's economic growth
- The significance of privatization for the changing nature of state power

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- Privatization vs. Equitization
- The impact of privatization on the economy

7. Foreign Trade and Investment

- The benefits of trade and investment
- The political economy of Vietnam's openness to foreign trade and investments
- The role of foreign trade to Vietnam's economic growth

8. Regional Disparities and Fragmentations in Vietnam

- The Central control over provinces
- Decentralization of allocation
- Infrastructure development and regional disparities

9. Development and Vietnam's Democratization

- Different conceptions of human rights
- The nature and demographics of dissenting groups
- Evolving policies in the face of human rights pressure

10. Vietnam's Emerging Civil Society

- Space for civil society in Vietnam
- Associational approaches to civil society
- Emergence of civil groups in Vietnam

11. Ascendancy of Vietnam's Social Media and Politics of Vietnamese dissent

- The power of the Internet and online activism
- Social media censorship
- Symbolic politics / Contentious politics
- Social movements and the struggle for democracy

12. Corruption, Environment and Sustainable Development

- The impact of corruption on development
- The rural-urban inequality
- Environmental activism
- The issue of corruption and bribes

13. Future Challenges

- The issue of middle-income trap
- The need for structural change for sustainable development
- Maintaining the leadership of the Vietnamese Communist Party