

Geog 307: Geography of Asia

THE EXAM, Version 2

(February 10, 2010)

ABOUT THE EXAM

There are no formal, sit-down, fixed-date exams in this course. Instead, the exam component of your grade will come from *four* short essays (I suggest 800 - 1,200 word each, excluding references and figures.) You may submit these essays, together or one-at-a-time, at any time before the final exam deadline date (Sunday May 2 at 11.59 pm.) I strongly advise you, though, to start on the exam early, and submit them one at a time (If you are answering a question about Southeast Asia, why wait until six weeks after we have discussed the area in class to write your essay?)

Choose your essay topics from the questions below (I will add more questions as the semester progresses, but I won't remove any from the list.)

Please submit your essay to me as a Word attachment to an e-mail, be sure to put the words "Geog 307 exam" in the subject line of your e-mail, and use your last name as the name of the file (e.g. Rallisexam1.docx)

You may use any sources you wish in answering the exam questions, and you may, if you wish, ask others to read over your exam and give you feedback on it. Bear in mind, though, that your essay must be your own work, and that you must provide full and accurate references for all sources you consult in writing your essay. (Use the same referencing style as that used by the [Annals of the Association of American Geographers](#).)

A good grade will go to an essay that contains a *clear thesis*, a lucid argument (backed up with clear and properly documented evidence,) and a persuasive conclusion. Since this is a take-home exam and you have time to work on your essays, I will give good grades only to those essays that are polished, well documented, and well researched (You won't be able to do well in the exam if you rely solely on the text, other required readings, and class discussions.) I have no model answers for any of these questions; I have deliberately left room for you to use your ingenuity and imagination in answering them. You do, however, need to make sure that you answer the questions I have asked!

THE QUESTIONS

1. "Southeast Asia represents a residual region: it owes its regional identity not to internal coherence, but to external incoherence." (Jonathan Rigg, quoted in Weightman 2006.) Write an essay in which you argue for or against the

validity of this assertion.

2. Answer EITHER 2 a) or 2 b)

a) Author Cherian George (2000) has suggested that we “think of Singapore... as the Air-conditioned Nation – a society with a unique blend of comfort and central control, where people have mastered the environment, but at the cost of individual autonomy, and at the risk of unsustainability.” Write an essay in which you explain and assess the merits of this argument.

b) You have heard the argument that Singapore’s success is in large part due to its geography. Write an essay in which you discuss the validity of this argument.

3. Weightman (2006) has noted that “overseas Chinese are prominent in Southeast Asia beyond their numbers.” Tension and conflict between ethnic Chinese and other communities has also been a feature of the political culture and landscapes of several countries in region. Write an essay in which you examine the role of overseas Chinese in all or part of Southeast Asia.

4. *Note: You will need to use a computer with Google Earth installed on it to answer this question. You can download Google Earth free at <http://earth.google.com/>*

Download the file <http://regionalgeography.org/307files/A.kmz> and open it using Google Earth. Examine the area around the placeholder on the image. Then write an essay in which you *describe* what is taking place at this location (and places like it in Malaysia), and the *explain* it in terms of what you know about the changing economic and environmental geographies of Malaysia.

(Note: The link in the above paragraph was incorrect in Version 2 of the exam. The link should download a file called A.kmz. If it doesn’t, let me know and I will e-mail the file to you.)

5. The national motto of Indonesia is “Unity in Diversity.” Write an essay in which you explain – using evidence from the country’s geography and history – whether you think this slogan is appropriate.

6.

REFERENCES

George, Cherian. 2000. *Singapore: The Air-Conditioned Nation: Essays on the Politics of Comfort and Control 1990 – 2000*. Singapore: Landmark Books.

Weightmann, B. 2006. *Dragons and Tigers: A Geography of South, East, and Southeast Asia*. John Wiley and Sons.