

57-303



Demographics of Mainland Southeast Asia

The Demographics of Mainland Southeast Asia (Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam) is about how economic, political, and social change is driven by demographic change in Southeast Asia. Demographic processes discussed will include fertility (births), mortality (deaths), and migration.



The Lecturer is Tony Waters.

He is a Professor of Sociology who has taught in Thailand, California, and Germany.

His current research interests are in Myanmar governance and politics, and Thai literature.

Two periods will be discussed. The modern era (late twentieth century) will be about the demographic transition in Southeast Asia which is the time when population grew rapidly after child and infant mortality decreased, and births rates dropped in response. During this transition, there was a rapid growth in population, as rural populations moved from the countryside to the rapidly growing mega-urban areas like Bangkok, Yangon, Phnom Penh, Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi, and elsewhere. The change in demographic context correlated with technological advancement, economic development, war, famine, and even genocide.

The second part of the seminar will discuss the long-term demographic history of Mainland Southeast Asia and describe the origins of the rice-based agricultural kingdoms, highland peripheries, ethnic groups, and the difficult emergence of nation-states with complex economies. There will be a comparison between how Thailand dealt with these issues in the last 150 years to create the modern Thai nation out of diverse origins. Notably this is a goal that Myanmar, and Laos are wrestling with today.

The conclusion will be about what the emergence of new low fertility demographics will mean for the future societies and economics of Mainland Southeast Asia.