CONTEMPORARY CAMBODIA:
A CRTICIAL APPRASIAL
Dr. Will Brehm

Course Description

This course is a critical appraisal of contemporary Cambodia. By exploring three major social trends and three physical sites, this course excavates the history and culture of Cambodia, revealing political, economic, and social structures that have endured – and changed – across time. The three major social trends are the patron-client relationship, God-Kings, and "the International." These social trends are studied and developed *through* the temporal (from the 1800s to 2017) changes to three physical sites: Angkor Wat, Schools, and Phnom Penh. Organizing the class through trends and sites provides students a unique way to approach the study of history and society: instead of seeing time as linear, students will study similar ideas that can be found in different moments across Cambodia's history. Not only will students gain an in-depth understanding of Cambodia but will also develop critical analytical skills needed to evaluate the forces that have shaped and defined contemporary life.

Mode of Instruction

The primary format for this course is a participatory seminar. Members of the seminar will be asked to read weekly materials and come to class prepared to discuss them. Class discussion, readings, presentations, and written assignments will be used. I encourage students to draw on their personal experiences and opinions in discussions and class assignments. Every student brings a wealth of personal experience and practical expertise that will enhance the learning process and make our time together more meaningful. By sharing reflections on our personal, professional, and academic experiences and opinions, we will be able develop critical understandings of historical memory in this course.

Grading and assignments

Participation (30%) - Come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings, ask questions about the readings, and engage your peers in informed discussion about the assigned readings/topic. Active participation in class discussions that reflect an understanding and synthesis of assigned readings is the goal. Each class you must submit a 1 page "Reading Note" (with questions) from the readings.

Student-led Presentation and Discussion (20%) - Depending on the number of students in the class, individuals or groups of students will be responsible for preparing a presentation on a selected reading for each part of class. When it is your turn to present, you should prepare brief handouts for fellow students and set the stage for class discussion. Further details about the presentation will be discussed in class.

Writing Assignment and Presentation (50%) – Write a 5 to 7-page essay that applies one or more of the major trends discussed in class to another site, object, or instance in Cambodian history. Each student will give a 10-minute presentation on her/his essay. The written assignment is due on and the classroom presentations will take place during Class 8.

Course Materials

Reading assignments will be available online.

Course Outline

Class 1: Introduction: Social Trends

Roberts, D. (2009). "The Superficiality of statebuilding in Cambodia: Patronage and Clientelism as enduring forms of politics" In R. Paris and T.D. Sisk (Eds). *The Dilemmas of statebuilding: Confronting the contradictions of postwar peace operations* (pp. 149-170). London: Routledge.

Peang-Meth, A. (1991). Understanding the Khmer: Sociological-cultural observations. *Asian Survey*, 31(5), 442-455.

Chandler, D. (1997). "Three Visions of Politics in Cambodia" In M.W. Doyle, I. Johnstone, and O.C. Robert (Eds). *Keeping the peace: Multidimensional UN operations in Cambodia and El Salvador*. (pp. 25-52). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Recent movements: http://www.newmandala.org/hun-sens-gamble/

Class 2: Angkor Wat: Lost and found

Part 1: Angkor Lost

Andaya, B.W. and L.Y Andaya (2015). *A history of Early Modern Southeast Asia, 1400-1830*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Introduction, Chapter 1, and Conclusion

Edwards, P. (2006). The tyranny of proximity: power and mobility in colonial Cambodia, 1863-1954. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 37(3), 421-443.

Part 2: Angkor Found

Muller, G. (2006). *Colonial Cambodia's 'Bad Frenchmen': The rise of French rule and the life of Thomas Caraman, 1840-87*. London: Routledge. Chapter 1

French, L. (1999). Hierarchies of value at Angkor Wat. *Ethnos*, 64(20), 170-191.

Class 3: The Economy of Angkor Wat

Part 1: Angkor Rebuilt

Warscheid, T. and Leisen, H. (2009). "Microbiological studies on stone deterioration and development of conservation measures at Angkor Wat." In A.E. Charola, C. McNamara and R.J. Koestler (Eds.) *Biocolonization of Stone: Control and preventive methods: proceedings from the MCI workshop series (pp.* 1-18). Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press.

Bingham, R. (1993 October 18). Political Ruins. *The New Yorker*.
Part 2: Angkor for Tourism

Winter, T. (2007). *Post-conflict Heritage, Postcolonial tourism: Culture, politics and development at Angkor*, Chapter 1.

Winter, T. (2003) Tomb raiding Angkor: A clash of cultures. *Indonesia and the Malay World*, 31(89), 58-68.

Class 4: Modernizing Schools

Part 1: Pagoda Schools

Ledgerwood, J. (2011). "A tale of two temples: communities and their *wats*." In J. Marston (Ed.) *Anthropology and community in Cambodia: Reflections on the work of May Ebihara* (pp. 105-130). Melbourne: Monash University Press.

Reimer, J.K. (2012). *Local negotiation of globalised educational discourses: The case of child friendly schools in rural Cambodia*. Unpublished dissertation, The University of British Columbia,, p. 178-188

Adams, N. (2012). *Buddhism and development: Communities in Cambodia working as partners*. World Faiths Development Dialogue Reports.

Part 2: Attempts at Modernization

Clayton, T. (1995). Restriction or Resistance? French Colonial Education Development in Cambodia. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 3(19).

Curtis, G. (1998). *Cambodia Reborn? The transition to Democracy and Development*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings. Chapter 2

Harris, I. (2006). "Entrepreneurialism and charisma: Two modes of doing business in post-Pol Pot Cambodian Buddhism." In L.C.P. Ollier and T. Winter (Eds.) *Expressions of Cambodia: The Politics of Tradition, Identity, and Change* (pp. 167-180). London: Routledge.

Hinton, A. (2006). Khmerness and the Thai 'Other': Violence, discourse and symbolism in the 2003 Anti-Thai riots in Cambodia. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 37(3), 445-468.

Class 5: Dangerous Schools

Part 1: Schools in crisis

Ratcliffe, M., Patch, J.L. and Quinn, D. (2009). "Expanding primary education access in Cambodia: 20 Years of recovery" In S. Nicolai (Ed.) *Opportunities for Change: Education innovation and reform during and after conflict* (pp. 127-138). Paris: UNESCO IIEP.

Brehm, W.C. (2017). "The Contemporary landscape of education in Cambodia: Hybrid spaces of the 'public' and 'private' in K. Brickell and S. Springer (Eds.) *The Handbook of Contemporary Cambodia* (pp. 271-282). London: Routledge.

Part 2: Forgotten History

Ngo, F.J. (2014). "Revision for rights? Nation-building through post-war Cambodian social studies textbooks, 1979-2009." In. J.H. Williams (Ed.) *(Re)Constructing memory: School textbooks and the imagination of the nation* (pp. 153-170). Sense.

Sirik, S. and Tyner, J. (2017). "Violence and memorialization in Cambodia" in K. Brickell and S. Springer (Eds.) *The Handbook of Contemporary Cambodia* (pp. 368-377). London: Routledge.

Class 6: Urban beauty; urban threats

Part 1: Urban beauty

Sullivan, M. (2016). *Cambodia Votes*. Denmark: NIAS Press. Introduction

Osborne, M.E. (2008). *Phnom Penh: A cultural and literary history*. Oxford: Signal Books. Chapter 4.

Part 2: Urban threats

Bylander, M. (2014). Borrowing across borders: Migration and microcredit in rural Cambodia. *Development and Change* 45(2), 284-307.

Connell, J. and Grimsditch, M. (2017) "Forced Relocation in Cambodia" in K. Brickell and S. Springer (Eds.) *The Handbook of Contemporary Cambodia* (pp. 223-233). London: Routledge.

Class 7: Development and Protests

Part 1: Development

Percival, T. (2017). "Urban megaprojects and city planning in Phnom Penh" in K. Brickell and S. Springer (Eds.) *The Handbook of Contemporary Cambodia* (pp. 181-190). London: Routledge.

Springer, S. (2015). *Violent neoliberalism: development, discourse, and dispossession in Cambodia*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Chapter 5 and Chapter 6.

Part 2: Protest

Brickell, K. (2014). "The whole word is watching": Intimate geopolitics of forced eviction and women's activism in Cambodia. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. 1-17.

Sesser, S. (1992, May 18). Report from Cambodia. *The New Yorker*, p. 43-74.

Class 8: Conclusion: Social trends retold

Sullivan, M. (2016). *Cambodia Votes*. Denmark: NIAS Press. Conclusion

Strangio, S. (2014). *Hun Sen's Cambodia*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Epilogue.

Class Presentations

Instructor Bio

Will Brehm is an Assistant Professor at the Waseda Institute for Advanced Study, Waseda University. His research interests include the intersection of comparative and international education with international relations and the political economy of development, focused primarily in Southeast Asia. He is currently

conducting a comparative research project that explores historical memory and schooling across Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. He also consults for the World Bank in Cambodia, the Asia Productivity Organization in Tokyo, and hosts a weekly podcast on education, globalization, and society called FreshEd.