

57-307 MA THAI CULTURE AND  
SOCIETY A:

# EXPLORING REGIONAL AND LOCAL HISTORIES IN 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY THAILAND



Goals:

This course is designed to impart to attendees a fundamental understanding of how people in different regions and sub-regions in Thailand look at their own histories and how their fate is connected with that of the modern nation-state and beyond. The course shall furthermore introduce students to relevant, but for a long time neglected source material reflecting regional and local perspectives on historical developments in Thailand during the last two centuries. This includes the method of oral history. The course material will consist primarily of English language literature and translations of primary sources. Knowledge of Thai, French or German is not required, but might prove advantageous.

For a long time, Thai history has been taught from the perspective of successive Siamese kingdoms and their respective capitals: Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, Thonburi, and Bangkok. The modern Thai nation-state was seen just as a logical continuation of these Siamese kingdoms. Thai historiography heavily relied on written sources in Thai (Siamese) language, such as the royal chronicles of the Ayutthaya and Bangkok periods (discussed in course 57-308), but largely neglected the rich source material of the the Upper North (Lan Na), the Northeast (Isan) and the South (both the Thai and the Malay South). These regions comprising more than half of Thailand's territories had belonged to independent or autonomous polities before their integration into the Thai/Siamese state since the late eighteenth century and have an historiography of their own. During the last three or four decades Thai historians have challenged the official paradigm by rediscovering regional and local histories, including the history of provinces and localities within the the central region of Thailand. Apart from local written sources, many of which were transcribed from manuscripts written in local scripts (Dhamma, Lao, Jawi etc.), also oral history (i.e., interviews with elderly people) was used as a research tool.

START ON  
WED  
14:00 – 16:00

ESA O 232

03 APRIL 2024 –  
03 JULY 2024



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