

SLOAN SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT
MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY



**15.226: Economy and Business in Southeast Asia
(ASEAN Lab)**

**Spring 2023 Syllabus
(02/02/2023)**

Course Description and Goals

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is an economic and political alliance of 10 countries (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam). All but one of the countries (Thailand) emerged post-WWII from a history of colonialism. Founded in 1967 by five of the current members (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand) its initial focus was "...to accelerate economic growth, social progress, and cultural development and to promote peace and security in Southeast Asia". In 2003 the full member group created the AEC (ASEAN Economic Community) with a goal to create a single market and production base. It is still a work in progress.

As a regional block, the ASEAN countries have a population greater than the European Union, North America, or South America. Its regional gdp would rank fifth among world economies. McKinsey & Co.'s study of leading developing economies lists eight of the ASEAN ten among the top 18 performers in gpd growth over the past 20 years. While the bloc has scale and growth characteristics, it also has significant elements of diversity: for example - Indonesia's population of 270+ million vs Brunei at .5 million; Indonesia GDP at \$1+ trillion vs Laos at \$19 billion; GPD/capita of Singapore at \$60k vs Myanmar at \$1.5k. Political systems range from democracies to authoritarian and communist governments. There is no common language and religious and ethnic groups vary inter- and intra-countries. What they do have in common is a unique positioning in the economic and political interface between China and the U.S. (and its alliances). This presents a complex set of issues to address, representing both opportunity and risk for the ASEAN region.

A major aim of this course is to analyze the decisions and performance of firms and their relationship to the greater political and economic contexts in which they operate in Southeast Asia and the global environment. As appropriate, we will highlight the region's complex and complicated situation with China in terms of economy, trade and global supply chains.

As an Action Learning course, ASEAN Lab has both a project component and classroom lectures. Students work in teams of four to solve complex management challenges facing companies operating in Southeast Asia. Project teams can be comprised of MIT students, or as joint teams with MBA students from Sasin School of Management (Bangkok). Classroom sessions will use case studies, lectures, class discussion, guest speakers and team projects to characterize the political economy and business dynamics of the region, and to explore lessons for strategy and operations of multinational and domestic organizations.

The Action Learning Lab experience of the course has three specific goals:

- To provide students with *insights into the issues and challenges businesses face* in Southeast Asia and in a global context,
- To structure for students an *intensive experiential learning opportunity working collaboratively with senior leadership* in a dynamic local organization, and
- To help students *develop skills in integrated problem solving* in order to assist organizations in complex situations to move to action.



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Faculty:

Yasheng Huang (Epoch Foundation Professor of International Management, Global Economics and Management)

John Grant (Senior Lecturer, Global Economics and Management)

Office Hours:

Yasheng Huang: by appointment. Please contact his assistant, Sumaiya Rahman Haddad (sumaiyar@mit.edu) to schedule.

John Grant: by appointment (jcgrant@mit.edu)

Key elements:

- Course: 15.226: Economy and Business in Southeast Asia (ASEAN Lab)
- Time and Location: Mondays and Wednesdays, 8:30-10:00am. Classroom E51-149.

1. Contact Information

Course Faculty:

Yasheng Huang	yhuang@mit.edu	617-253-9768	E62-462
John Grant	jcgrant@mit.edu	617-324-4373	E62-317

Faculty Mentors:

Luis Barros	lbarros@mit.edu
David Birnbach	birnbach@mit.edu
Chuck Kane	ckane@mit.edu

Teaching Assistant:

Tommy Aditya	tommya@mit.edu
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Action Learning Office:

Becca Souza	rhonohan@mit.edu	617-324-5854	E52-248
Sebastien Delisle	sebastie@mit.edu	239-850-0870	E52-254
Carolyn Shefcyk	cshfcyk@mit.edu	617-715-2617	E52-255
Stephanie LaForce	slaforce@mit.edu	617-324-9615	E52-25x

Course Assistant:

Sumaiya Rahman	sumaiyar@mit.edu	617-253-6679	E62-455
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A. Course Materials and Resources

Official Course Website (Canvas)

- **All readings and other materials are posted on Canvas.** Check the site frequently. Course announcements will be posted here as well.
- Draft group project deliverables should be shared directly with Mentors for feedback. Final versions are uploaded to Canvas, copied to mentors, and eventually shared with the host company. *Individual updates are submitted to mentors only.*
- Students without a Sloan account please email Sumaiya Rahman (sumaiyar@mit.edu).

Academic Accommodations

Sloan values an inclusive environment. If you need a disability accommodation to access this course, please communicate with us early in the semester. If you have your accommodation letter, please meet with the faculty so that we can understand your needs and implement your approved accommodations. If you have not yet been approved for accommodations, please contact Student Disability Services to learn about their procedures. We encourage you to do so early in the term to allow sufficient time for implementation of services/accommodations that you may need.

B. Course Requirements

ASEAN Lab is a course and a collaboration: a partnership between MIT Sloan, ASEAN universities, and entrepreneurial companies facing real business challenges in Southeast Asia. The faculty and other advisors from Sloan and our partner universities have devoted considerable time and resources to finding appropriate projects, and the entrepreneurs have worked hard to apply competitively for an ASEAN Lab slot. Therefore, please be aware that *MIT's and Sloan's reputations are at stake*. Future students will only get this kind of opportunity if ASEAN Lab provides value to all stakeholders.

Course Credit

This is a 12-credit course. A final grade will be applied at the end of the spring semester when you have completed all work. You must complete all components of the work (all class assignments, project-related deliverables, and the poster session). Partial credit is not given.

Attendance Policy

You are expected to prepare for and attend every class scheduled for 15.226 in full. *Each non-excused absence reduces your grade by 5 percent.* Contact the TA prior to the start of class if you anticipate being absent for a reason beyond your control. More than two excused absences will count as an unexcused absence and will reduce your final course grade.

Grading

ASEAN Lab will be letter graded. There is no P/D/F option. The final grade will be computed as follows:

- **Class Participation (25%)**
- **Mentor Assessment (65%)**
 - Work Plan
 - Interim Research Report
 - Poster



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- Final Host-Company Report
- **Host Company Feedback (10%)**

Team Work

Team dynamics are critical and will determine your success in executing your project. It is important that you and your teammates determine your work norms, including how decisions are made and disputes resolved, team member roles and responsibilities, and how you will hold each other accountable for completing your work.

Mentoring

Your ASEAN Lab team will be assigned a faculty mentor with whom you will meet at regular intervals throughout the course. The team-mentor relationship is designed in such a way that the team takes primary responsibility for working with the host company and leading the project. The faculty mentor plays a supporting role in which she/he:

- Coaches the team and team members on working together for successful completion of the project;
- Shares and facilitates feedback with the team on project management;
- Provides understanding of protocols for working with the client;
- Mediates relationship with client, only if necessary;
- Identifies Sloan, MIT and other resources relevant for the project research and analyses;
- Gives feedback on course deliverables and team dynamics; and
- Grades the course deliverables.

A mentor is your advisor, not your supervisor. Your team will own the relationship with the host company. You, not the faculty, will be responsible for negotiating and managing all aspects of the work plan and the project.

Meetings may be scheduled during designated class time or outside of class. Ample time for these meetings is available during class sessions set aside for project work.

Class Sessions

Class sessions will be used to provide context and an opportunity to work on your specific project, as well as to provide perspective on macroeconomic and industry-level issues in Southeast Asia. To meaningfully participate in the discussions, it is mandatory that you read the case(s) and/or material before the class and that you are ready to both answer important factual questions about the case(s) and to engage with your classmates in discussions and debates. We *encourage* debates based on evidence and logic, not on imputed motivations.

We will have sessions that provide an in-depth look at major current issues facing the region's economy and its engagement with the world. We encourage you to share with your classmates the knowledge and observations that you have gained from your projects and personal experiences, to the extent the knowledge and the observations are pertinent to the discussions at hand.



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C. Graded Deliverables

Class Participation

Participation during the class sessions accounts for 25% of your grade. Each participant is expected to prepare for and attend every assigned class session. If there is a case or listed reading material for a class, we expect you will contribute to the exchange of ideas based upon the readings. We value and encourage debates and discussions but ask that you to treat all points of views with respect and that you debate on the merits of the views, logic and evidence. We strongly discourage assigning putative motivations on the basis of comments given by your classmates. Debate the comments, not the persons providing the comments. We also value you bringing your work and life experiences into class discussions.

There are six class sessions set aside during the semester for teams to work on your projects. On these days teams can meet in the classroom or any other location. If teams want to meet via Zoom link, or other media, please inform your mentor. Instructors and the TA will be available on these days in the main classroom if a person/team has any questions.

Host Introduction Email & Team Organization Memo

To begin the process of team introduction and project scoping, send an introductory email to your host sponsor introducing the team, your interest in working on their project, and requesting time for an initial call to discuss the project scope and objectives. This email is due by **Thursday, February 16th**.

The success of your project is affected by how well you organize and operate as a high-functioning team. Your team should discuss personal and team goals for the project, norms of work and behavior, and roles/responsibilities. By **Friday, February 17th**, send a team memo to your mentor indicating your team agreements in these areas.

*The Team Organization Memo and Host Introduction are **non-graded deliverables**.*

Project Work Plan

Your team is responsible for creating a detailed work plan outlining the sponsor's business problem and how you intend to structure your work and resources to address the issue. Examples of past work plans can be found on the Canvas site.

Typically, a Work Plan is 7-10 pages long and covers the following elements:

- Sponsor business overview
- Problem definition
- Project scope
- Research and analytical methodology
- Timeline (workstreams, tasks, review points, deliverables)
- Contact information (names, emails, WeChat, etc.)
- Signature lines for team and sponsor approval

Your team will also submit a *draft work plan* by **Friday, February 24th**, for mentor review. Once you have your mentor's feedback, you will incorporate it into a *final work plan* and forward for your host company for sign-off by **Wednesday, March 1st**. You will also submit your host's signed copy of the work plan on Canvas.



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Interim Research Report (IRR)

The IRR is the compilation of your team's preliminary research and analyses of your project. It is the document that communicates to your sponsor the results of your work to date, your initial hypotheses regarding the issues/solutions and direction of the work effort, and your plan for how you will use your time onsite to move the project forward. The research encapsulated in the IRR is a substantial, stand-alone deliverable to your host company. IRRs often include your team's original industry analyses, market research findings, technology studies, or similar reports that give clients new insights and guidance. Sources used to prepare IRRs should be documented using complete citations to facilitate easy reference.

The form and scope of the IRR document should be negotiated with your client. It could be either a power point presentation or a written document. Typical presentations are 20-30 slides that communicate your work product to date, with citations, appendices/tables as necessary, and a bibliography. It should begin with an executive summary. If a written document, expect to produce at least 20-30 double-spaced pages of text (approximately 5,000-7,500 words, not including tables and appendices) of analysis, synthesis, and interim conclusions.

Your team will submit a *draft IRR* by **Monday, March 13th** for mentor review. Once you have your mentors' feedback, you will incorporate it into a *final IRR* and submit it to your host company and mentor by email and on Canvas no later than **Friday, March 17th**.

Final Report

You will submit a draft of your final work product by **Friday, May 5th** for mentor review; the Final Report to the sponsor is due no later than noon on **Monday, May 15th** (the final day of class). All final work product must be submitted to your host company, to your mentor, and uploaded to Canvas. Your final deliverable should "stand on its own"; that is, it should have enough detail so that anyone reviewing it would understand the problem, your research methods, your final recommendation(s), a list of all research materials used and any models that you have created. If the form of your final report is a presentation, it must be annotated as necessary to convey the subject matter to its reader.

Poster Session

We will hold an Action Learning poster session on **TBD**. This event gives each team an opportunity to highlight and publicize your work. Your team will prepare a poster and staff an online presentation position during this event. Poster details (including required dimensions and format) will be posted on Canvas.

Student Project Updates

Each team member will write two project updates and submit them via email to the team's mentor. These *updates are confidential between you and your mentor – do not submit them to Canvas or copy to any other person*. These updates will allow your mentor to better understand your project's status and how best to support you and your team.

Your write up should be written in complete sentences and contain the following information:

- Status of the project: What has the team accomplished since your last update? Is your project "on track"?
- Individual contributions: What are the roles and effort for you, other team members, and sponsor?
- What is the plan for you and your teammates in the coming weeks to move the project forward? Have you had insights or "aha" moments that have affected your approach?



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- Are there any issues you feel the mentor should know about?
- Format: 1-1½ pages, single spaced.

For your first update, please also include a paragraph that discusses your expectations for the course and what you hope to learn or gain from your experience in ASEAN Lab.

The first individual project update is due on Monday, February 27th. The second is due on Friday, April 7th.

The memos will be graded based on completion only, and can be brief if you feel the project is moving along smoothly and your mentor is aware of your progress and any challenges.

Course Reflection

Each team member will submit a reflection on what you have learned from the class – the project work, team dynamics, host company and people, market dynamics, managing in SE Asia, and the experience of working with a Sponsor located in another country. Also include any perspective you have gained on the future for the region’s business and economic performance, and its positioning among competing global powers. You can satisfy this requirement either through submitting a 2-3-page paper, or by a video report. Submit the reflection to your mentor and upload to Canvas.

The Course Reflection is due on Thursday, May 11th.

Host Company Feedback

We will solicit feedback from your host company about the team’s performance. This will be considered as input to your final grade.

D. Undergraduate Cohort

A limited number of undergraduates are eligible to take the course. These students will participate in all of the classroom lectures, case studies and guest speakers as well as working with a team on sponsored projects as an additional member of a team and to assist the graduate students with their research related to the project. A select number of undergraduates have the option of traveling to Southeast Asia in the last two weeks of March. For those who commit to be onsite for approximately two weeks, MIT will reimburse their travel expenses related to the project. Travel for less than two weeks is allowed but will have to be funded personally. No exceptions are allowed. *MIT undergraduates who take the course will fulfill the regional course requirement for participation in a future MISTI summer internship in SE Asia.*

E. Project Logistics

Administrative Support

The Action Learning Office will provide information on medical-related travel issues (what you should know about healthcare, vaccines, etc. related to your travel); library research (to assist you with your remote research); project related travel (to answer questions about visa, air travel, dates, etc.), and will review MIT policy regarding confidentiality, Non-Disclosure Agreements and data protection.



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Onsite Project Work

As of October, 2022, the status of travel to Southeast Asia is unrestricted by MIT and local country policies. We will monitor the Covid-related policies in the region and will adjust our onsite plans if necessary. Teams will work in their host company locations for 10 business days, beginning Monday, March 20th, through the close of business, Friday, March 31st.

F. Sasin MBA Visit to MIT

The Sasin MBA students will be at Sloan the week of April 24th through 28th. All ASEAN Lab students are invited to participate in the activities that will be scheduled for their visit. We will inform you of the details of their visit in April.

G. Important Deadlines & Deliverables

Important deadlines and events related to the course deliverables are as follows:

Mon, Feb 13 th	Project Bids due
Thu, Feb 16 th	Introductory email to Host; Request for initial call
Fri, Feb 17 th	Memo on Team Formation, Norms and Roles (to Canvas)
Fri, Feb 24 th	Draft Work Plan (to mentor)
Mon, Feb 27 th	1 st Project Update (to mentor)
Wed, Mar 1 st	Final Work Plan (to sponsor, mentor, upload to Canvas)
Fri, Mar 3 rd	Open Mic Slide (upload to Canvas by 5pm)
Mon, Mar 13 th	Draft Interim Research Report (to mentor)
Fri, Mar 17 th	Final IRR (to sponsor, mentor, upload to Canvas)
Fri, Apr 7 th	2 nd Project Update (to mentor)
TBD	Poster session
Fri, May 5 th	Draft Final Report/Presentation (to mentor)
Thu, May 11 th	Course Reflection (to Canvas)
Mon, May 15 th	Final Report/Presentation (to sponsor, mentor, upload to Canvas)

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Class Schedule¹:

H3

Session	Date	Classes/Meetings
1	Mon, Feb 6 th	Overview: Course Structure, Teaching Team Introductions, Team Obligations, Course Objectives Teammate Socializing
2	Wed, Feb 8 th	Project Reviews; Team Formation/Matching Process Teammate Socializing
3	Mon, Feb 13 th	Political Economy (1) Development model: Singapore: “Facing Challenges Together” (HBS, 9-720-036)
4	Wed, Feb 15 th	NDA Process; Research Support; Problem Definition, Project Scoping & Client Management; Team & Mentor Introductions
5	Tue, Feb 21 st	Team Working Session (Team Norms, Sponsor Intro); Mentor Meetings
6	Wed, Feb 22 nd	Political Economy (2) Economic and Political Development: Indonesia—Unity in Diversity (HBS, 9-715-035)
7	Mon, Feb 27 th	Team Working Session; Mentor Meetings
8	Wed, Mar 1 st	Political Economy (3) Trade and Investment: 1) Vietnam: Managing Global Value Chains (HBS, 9-718-055) and 2) Ratification Politics and Preferential Trade Agreements: Malaysia and the CPTPP (Stanford case via HBS, P-99)
9	Mon, Mar 6 th	Open Mic
10	Wed, Mar 8 th	Political Economy (4) Corruption: Political Legitimacy and Global Capital Markets: Malaysia’s 1MDB (A) (HBS, 9-720-030)
11	Mon, Mar 13 th	GlobeSmart Exercise/Discussion; Business Culture in Project Countries
12	Wed, Mar 15 th	Team Working Session; Mentor Meetings
Mar 20th – 24th, SIP Week; Mar 27th – 31st, Spring Break ASEAN Onsite Work		

¹ Note: Guest speakers are primarily located in SE Asia, which will be 11 hours ahead of our class time in H4. It may be necessary to alter the date or participation of speakers based on unanticipated changes in their schedules.

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H4

13	Mon, Apr 3 rd	Onsite Debrief; Mentor Meetings
14	Wed, Apr 5 th	Thailand Economic Development: Class guest Dr. Kobsak Pootrakool (MIT PhD '97), Senior Executive VP, Bangkok Bank, former Minister, Office of the Prime Minister of Thailand
15	Mon, Apr 10 th	Team Working Session; Mentor Meetings
16	Wed, Apr 12 th	Mobility Leadership: Grab – Building a Leading O2O Technology Company in Southeast Asia (Singapore Management U. case via HBS, SMU517)
	Mon, Apr 17 th	Patriot's Day Holiday; No class session
17	Wed, Apr 19 th	Innovation, Investment & Economic Development. Class guests: Andy Ho, Chief Investment Officer, VinaCapital, Vietnam; Dr. Kid Parchariyanon, CEO and Founder, RISE Accelerator, Thailand.
Apr 24th – 28th: Sasin MBAs Visit Week at Sloan		
18	Mon, Apr 24 th	Team Working Session; Mentor Meetings
19	Wed, Apr 26 th	Plenary Session with Visiting Sasin MBA Students; Discussion on Sustainability in the ASEAN Region: Prof. Nick Pisalyaput, Director Sasin Sustainability & Entrepreneurship Center; Prof. Loredana Padurean, Northeastern University and former Associate Dean, Asia School of Business
20	Mon, May 1 st	Singapore Ports & the Maritime Silk Road: Port of Singapore Authority: Ideology vs. Pragmatism – Trade and Geopolitics in the Malacca Strait (Darden case via HBS, UV8286)
21	Wed, May 3 rd	<p>Rebalancing Asian Supply Chains: Dr. Enki Tan (Sloan Fellow '00), Executive Chairman, Giti Tire, Singapore, MIT Sloan Dean's Asia Executive Board</p> <p>a) Asia-Pacific's supply chain rebalancing act (pwc): https://www.strategy-business.com/article/Asia-Pacifics-rebalancing-act</p> <p>b) South China Morning Post article: https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/economics/article/3205858/chain-reaction-chinas-loss-southeast-asias-gain-supply-chains-shift-away-cheaper-climes</p>
22	Mon, May 8 th	Battle for E-commerce Supremacy in SE Asia: Shopee vs. Lazada (INSEAD case, IN1798). Class guest: Tony Qiu (MBA '14), SVP Warner Brothers/Discovery APAC; former Director of Corporate Strategy & Development, JD.com
23	Wed, May 10 th	Project Presentations
24	Mon, May 15 th	Course Wrap Up; Project Reflections