

CRJS XXX3: Comparing Governments and Constitutions: Thailand and the United States

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Course Description

This course addresses the similarities and differences between:

- A. The Royal Thai Government as a tripartite constitutional Monarchy modeled after the Westminster system, and the Government of the United States of America as a constitutional democratic republic; and
- B. Their respective Constitutions which serve as systems of basic laws and principles that establish the nature and function of each government.

In this course we will examine:

- (1) How each tripartite government came into being. While Thailand has existed in some form since the 13th century, the country emerged as a modern nation state after the foundation of the Chakri Dynasty and the city of Bangkok in 1782;
- (2) How the revolutions of both Thailand and the United States helped shape the Constitutions and thereby the structures of government for both countries;
- (3) The American Revolution of 1776 established a constitutional democratic republic, and the Revolution of 1932 in Thailand brought an end to the absolute monarchy, replacing it with a constitutional monarchy;
- (4) The longevity of Constitution of the United States of America, compared with the fact that Thailand has so far had seventeen Constitutions yet has maintained the same structure of government; and how Thailand's 2007 Constitution established the present structure of the Government of Thailand; and
- (5) The comparative **basic** constitutional rights of the citizens of Thailand and America.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

- Understand the development of each country into constitutional entities;
- Identify the similarities and differences of the Constitutions of both countries;
- Identify, compare, and discuss concepts such as those found in the First, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Amendments of the U.S. Constitution and whether such "rights" exist under the 2007 Thai Constitution.

- Understand the viewpoints of both governments on civil liberties, including matters of privacy, religion, and human rights.

Grading

Your grade in this course will be based two short objective (multiple choice) tests, and on a series of short essays asking you to analyze and discuss various readings from the course. The short essays will deal with each of the areas outlined in the Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes. I will provide you with written instructions for each essay assignment.

Required Texts and Readings

I will provide students with articles pertinent to class lectures and discussions at nominal copy costs. All students should purchase or download copies of the 2007 Constitution of the Government of Thailand, and the Constitution of the United States of America.