

Dr Paul A Rodell
Assoc. Prof.



STAFF

Work at Buffalo, 1992
Work at Buffalo, M.A., 1982
Philippines (non-matriculate graduate student in an
interdisciplinary Asian Studies program), 1971-1973
B.A., Northern Illinois University, 1968

Teaching Asia, Teaching World History:

As an undergraduate student in the late 1960s, I took a course on Asia that sparked an interest that changed my life in two very important ways. First, I became fascinated with Asia and its people and have lived, worked, and studied there ever since. After graduating from college, I joined the Peace Corps and worked in agriculture and rural development in the Philippines. Then, I studied at the University of the Philippines while working for a Philippine radio station. Since this early initiation, I have travel throughout the Philippines and Southeast Asia and have familiarized myself with the region's history and its cultures. Over the years, I have also had the opportunity to travel to Japan and China on a number of occasions, especially south China around Hong Kong and the Osaka and Tokyo areas of Japan. Secondly, my college introduction to Asia affected my choice of a career. I decided to become an educator so I could share my enthusiasm for Asia with new generations of students. Having made up my mind to teach at the college level, I went to graduate school and pursued Ph.D. studies.

Because I am the only Asia historian in my department, I must cover a great deal, but I have found the process rewarding and most students leave my classes with a new awareness of Southeast Asia, China, or Japan. To make the cultures and peoples of Asia more concrete, I frequently have students view feature length Asian movies or read works of fiction by Asian authors. These materials are reinforced by documentary videos and readings of documents in English translation. Ideally, I might have a guest lecturer talk to the class, but failing that, I show slides from my travels and use personal experiences to illustrate cultural differences and behaviors.

In addition to my upper division courses, I use my Asia specialization when I teach the required core curriculum course, HIST 1112 "World History II: The Emergence of the Modern Global Community." Asia is an important part of that community, and it will be an even more important part in the future. Because World History covers much more than the Western Civilization course it replaced, it is a challenge for both faculty and student. But, students today are more immediately affected by the world than ever before, and they need to understand our complex multi-national and multi-cultural global community. I use a textbook that covers the world's history in 100-150 year increments and surveys the changes taking place around the globe in that period. The goal of each of my lectures is to underscore the interrelated impact of the world's history from the Mongol conquest of the Eurasian continent in the 1200s, to the spread of the modern industrial system, to the contemporary information age of computers and global free trade. Beyond readings and lectures, I assign a supplemental book of original documents, travel accounts, and memoirs by the original historical actors plus analyses by contemporary authors. These readings give students more than information - they challenge them to consider different ways of living and thinking and they show how cultures have impacted each other over time.

Upper Division & Graduate Courses Taught:

<http://class.georgiasouthern.edu/history/facultydir/rodell.htm>

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Information removed by the Vietnam Archive

HIST/IS 3534 Modern Southeast Asia
HIST/IS 5531 Modern Japan
HIST/IS 5532 Modern China
HIST 3030A Imperialism & Nationalism
HIST 3030B History of Vietnam

Publications, Research Projects, and Concerns:

As an historian my main interest is in the Philippines. In 2002, I published *Culture and Customs of the Philippines* a book that critically and historically surveyed many aspects of that country's cultural life from religion to art and literature as well as entertainments from music and dance to theater and the modern film industry. The book also concerned itself with Philippine social life including gender relations, marriage and family life as well as cuisine and fashion and general customs. In 2002, my book was awarded the Cecil B. Currey Book Award by the Association of Third World Studies. In this book and other writings on the Philippines, a connecting theme has always been the question of national and cultural identity ["Philippines' Search for Identity," *International Institute for Asian Studies Newsletter* (Leiden, the Netherlands) (1999).]

I also follow contemporary affairs closely and have written country evaluations about the Philippines in 2002 and 2004 for *Southeast Asian Affairs* an annual publication of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore. My concern about using history to help understand contemporary society has recently taken me to explore the importance of the 1986 People Power Revolution in the Philippines. In addition to mainstream Philippine society, I have written book chapters on Muslim secessionist movements in the southern Philippines ["The Philippines and the Challenge of International Terrorism," in *Terrorism and Transnational Violence in Southeast Asia* (2005) and "Separatist Insurgency in the Southern Philippines," in *A Handbook of Terrorism and Insurgency in Southeast Asia* (forthcoming).] As well, I have given public talks on terrorism in Southeast Asia and participated in a specialists' conference on that topic at the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies in Honolulu.

The American war in Vietnam and issues of peace and war are also prominent on my research agenda. Over the past few years, I and Professor Marc J. Gilbert of North Georgia College and State University have collaborated on an oral history and documentary study of a non-governmental organization, the International Voluntary Services (IVS). This organization fielded hundreds of young American volunteer agricultural, rural development, and education workers into Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia from 1956 to 1975. Professor Gilbert and I have interviewed over 160 former IVS volunteers and staff plus some of their Vietnamese and Laotian co-workers. We have also consulted archival records in Washington, D.C. and Goshen College, Indiana. Soon the long transcription process will be complete and we hope to begin co-writing our book. In the meantime, I published one article about the IVS experience and the organization figured prominently in a book chapter I wrote on the origins of the US Peace Corps ["The International Voluntary Service (IVS) in Vietnam: The Impact of War on Idealism, 1960-1967," *Peace & Change* (2002) and "John S. Noffsinger and the Global Impact of the Thomasite Experience," in *Back to the Future: Perspectives on the Thomasite Legacy* , (2003).]

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