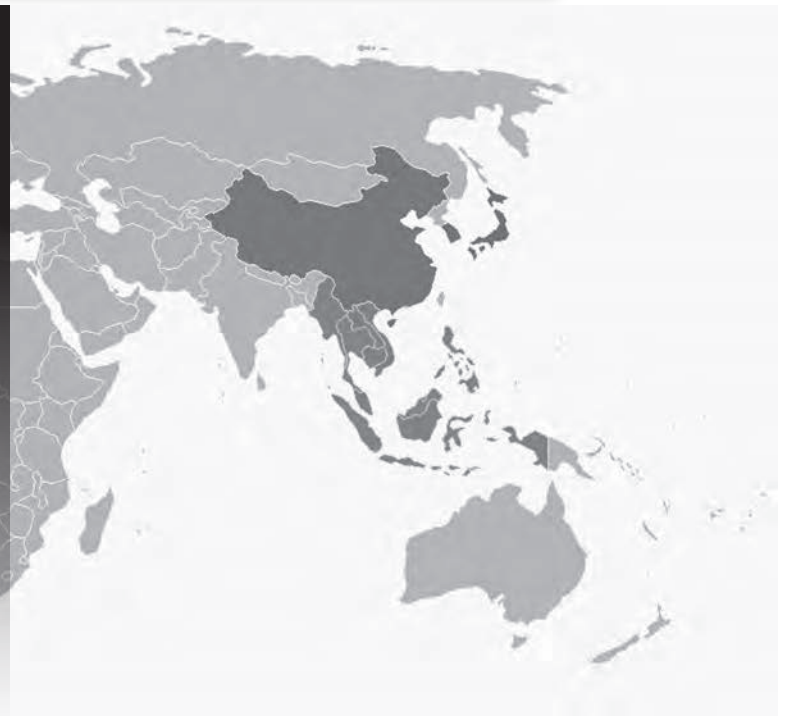


TEACHING SOUTHEAST ASIA INTERACTIVELY

The ASEAN “Plus Three” Simulation

By Ivan Dinev Ivanov and James Robert Masterson



Interactive simulations, games, and role-playing exercises have become popular methods to engage students in the classroom by assigning them specific roles within a political process and asking them to act like real political actors. These exercises offer numerous advantages, including improved information retention, development of critical thinking, speaking and presentation skills, and increased student interest in the subject.¹ In the essay below, we present the advantages of selecting ASEAN Plus Three (APT)—the ten member nations of ASEAN along with China, Japan, and South Korea—as a format of interactive simulation involving more than one institution of higher education. We also share our experience with organizing and conducting such an event in 2011 that involved Morehead State University and Georgetown College in Kentucky, and discuss what we have learned about the process and how students have reacted to this experience. Additionally, we also draw educators’ attention to the possibilities of partnering among educational institutions to successfully organize similar events in the future. Finally, we offer a list of resources and anthologies for similar exercises that could be incorporated in AP world politics classes and a variety of undergraduate and survey-level world politics or international relations courses.



Source: ASEAN Secretariat Flickr page at <http://tinyurl.com/lu5xp32>.

Model APT could serve as an excellent format for a student-based learning simulation. First, this forum makes it possible to engage a relatively small group of twenty to thirty students on a variety of topics dealing with security and economic aspects of intergovernmental negotiations. Alternatively, simulations like Model UN, African Union (AU), European Union (EU), and NATO require a minimum of thirty to fifty participants, which is a major obstacle in courses with lower enrollments. In our case, the simulation involved twenty-nine students enrolled in three courses—Asian Politics at Morehead State, and World Politics, and Alliances in International Relations at Georgetown College.

Second, ASEAN provides a flexible format for exercises that involves ten nations should instructors choose to simulate an ASEAN summit, thirteen nations should instructors choose the APT format to simulate, or fifteen nations should instructors choose to simulate an APT summit with two observers—the thirteen APT nations and the Republic of China (ROC, Taiwan)² and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK, North Korea). Additionally, instructors could choose an ASEAN Plus One format, with the “one” being any of the three regional powers, the EU, or

some other nation (such as Tunisia, Australia, or India) with which ASEAN members wish to explore closer ties. The issues we chose in our simulation, discussed below, are relevant to all the combinations listed above, with the exception of the last, depending on the particular nations chosen.

Third, the APT summit includes a very heterogeneous group of nations since the region incorporates some of the world’s most populated and least populated countries, with great variance among their political and economic systems, level of economic openness, and national wealth. Additionally, politics in Southeast Asia is shaped by a variety of ethnic, religious, and linguistic differences among countries in the region, including two political disunity issues involving the two Koreas and the China-Taiwan dispute.

Fourth, the APT simulation covers a broad set of issues requiring intergovernmental cooperation. Therefore, students could choose to serve as a security or an economic adviser for one of the participating nations. In order to facilitate interaction between economic and security advisers, national teams from the same schools were formed—nine of the APT nations were represented by Morehead State students and four by Georgetown

As a part of the course requirements, model APT participants were asked to prepare a twenty- to twenty-five-page position paper that dealt with historical, political, and economic aspects of their country and its position on the issues simulated at the APT summit.

College students (two teams were added to represent the ROC and DPRK). Economic ministers researched and debated three issues important to the region: reduction of restrictions on foreign direct investment, sustainable and cleaner energy, and development of an APT free-trade zone. The security ministers also focused their discussion on three main topics: terrorism, piracy of the sea lanes, and efforts to denuclearize North Korea.

Fifth, APT's decision-making process is based on consensus, which means states must find common solutions of mutual interest in order to pass resolutions. Representatives must negotiate long and hard with their colleagues to reach mutually agreeable solutions among all states. While this is certainly a benefit to the format, the obvious drawback from lowest common denominator resolutions is that many of them have little binding obligations for these states.

In preparation for the necessary background information about their country, students read from McGraw-Hill's *Global Studies*, Donald Weatherbee's *International Relations of Southeast Asia*, and Christopher Dent's *East Asian Regionalism* in the first four weeks of the semester (for a list of

sources on Southeast Asia, see the annotated biography). In order to follow recent developments in the region, model APT participants were required to subscribe to and follow *The Wall Street Journal* with access to an Asia edition, the *The Wall Street Journal Asia*, for the duration of the semester.

Simulation participants engaged in online diplomacy during the period between weeks five and twelve, with the face-to-face summit taking place during week thirteen on Morehead State's campus. During the week before the summit, students learned "Robert's Rules of Order" so they could effectively communicate during the summit sessions. During the online diplomacy stage, students exchanged emails with their counterparts via Blackboard, conducted real-time chat sessions, and posted threads on a discussion board. The goal of this activity was to encourage students to initiate negotiations with representatives from other countries with whom they found similar interests. To that end, advisers were encouraged to contact all or a selected group of users. Advisers began threads under each of the six issues that were open to everyone. Each thread generated an average of thirty-three posts from an average of thirteen participants. Students could also create a discussion thread for communication only among selected members of national delegations or other groups of participants. Model APT participants had to follow appropriate online diplomacy rules regarding conduct and communication that were made available beforehand.

As a part of the course requirements, model APT participants were asked to prepare a twenty- to twenty-five-page position paper that dealt with historical, political, and economic aspects of their country and its position on the issues simulated at the APT summit. The goals of the position paper reflect the underlying goals for the entire simulation. Students were expected to learn the actual position and approach of his/her country, and be able to listen to the views of other nations in order to defend or modify their position. Furthermore, students learned how to

negotiate with other delegations to gain support for a resolution and develop a consensus. Based on this, the students had to draft a brief position statement for each of the issues to be discussed during the simulation. The position statements were presented to the other participants in class prior to the APT summit.

Twenty-nine APT delegates spent five hours on a Saturday morning during week thirteen to participate in the face-to-face portion of the event for which they were compensated with the equivalent class time off during week fourteen. Classes reconvened again in week fifteen for debriefing and concluding remarks. Since the simulation required additional time and efforts on the part of the students, a significant portion (40 percent) of the overall grade was allocated to this interactive exercise to make sure that student involvement was adequately rewarded.

The simulation started with an introductory session in which the delegates had to decide on the forum membership status of North Korea and Taiwan. While North Korea was admitted, Taiwan's application was denied, and instead, the forum of-

Table 1. Simulation Attitudes: Model APT Survey

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Overall Simulation Attitudes: Model APT			
At the beginning of the semester, did you think the APT Summit would be enjoyable?	38%	47%	15%
After the summit did you find the APT summit to be enjoyable?	81%	15%	4%
Do you think more classes should have simulation learning exercises as part of the course work?	88%	4%	8%
Are you likely to recommend to other students participation in a course with simulation learning?	92%	4%	4%
The APT summit felt like a fake meeting with no connection to real world issues	23%	4%	73%
During the APT summit I felt like a diplomat negotiating on behalf of the country I was representing	85%	4%	11%
Use of Online Course Management System			
Did you find online diplomacy useful in preparation for the APT Summit?	76%	16%	8%
Did you find email useful in preparation for the APT Summit?	88%	8%	4%
Did you find the discussion boards useful in preparation for the APT Summit?	73%	19%	8%
Did you find the group pages useful in preparation for the APT Summit?	35%	23%	42%
Did you find the collaborative chat room sessions useful in preparation for the APT Summit?	4%	31%	65%
Student Perspectives on Asian Politics and International Institutions			
The APT summit deepened my understanding of Asian politics	92%	0%	8%
The APT summit increased my interest in Asian politics	74%	4%	22%
The APT summit deepened my understanding of int'l institutions	88%	0%	12%
The APT summit increased my interest in int'l institutions	77%	4%	19%

Twenty-six of the twenty-nine Model APT participants completed the postsimulation survey. Their responses are summarized in tables 1 and 2.

ferred the island an observer status. North Korea's admission to the forum stirred major points of disagreement among different ASEAN participants in the security panel and demonstrated the PRC team's skillful negotiations among other participants.

The introductory session was followed by separate meetings that we chaired with the economic and security advisers. In the economic session, members passed two resolutions—the first one established a goal to create a free-trade zone to reduce all tariffs to less than 5 percent by 2028; the second one set a benchmark requirement of a minimum of one free economic zone in each member's economy within a decade. Additionally, delegates agreed to work toward the elimination of nontariff barriers in certain areas through the standardization of labeling and packaging of goods. Lastly, in a bill sponsored by China, APT nations committed to reduce carbon emissions by 2 percent per year over a four-year period.

Following North Korea's admission to the forum, the discussion in the security session became, at times, monopolized by the polemics between the delegates from the two Koreas. Despite the fact that consensus in the security section was often at stake, delegates were able to produce two broad resolutions on the topics of terrorism and piracy of the high seas.

A lunch break followed the meetings of the economic and security advisers. The event concluded with a plenary session of all delegates in which the latter were asked to cast anonymous votes with their ranking of the top three delegations. The vast majority of security advisers thought that the delegations of two Korean states performed best on their panel; the Chinese and Singaporean delegations tied for the best economic delegation award.

After the summit, model APT participants met in their classes during the last week of the semester to debrief and were consequently requested to complete an online survey. None of the students had previously participated in a similar learning exercise; therefore, most of

Educators at institutions of higher education could use this interactive format to seek further engagement with area high schools and other community organizations, which could help them more effectively engage members of the local community and recruit future students to their academic programs.

Table 2. Overall Utility of the Model APT Simulation <i>What Students Liked Most and What They Liked Least</i>		%
What did you like best about the APT summit?		
Debate/discussion/negotiation		38%
Learning about assigned country		23%
Crafting resolutions		8%
Institutional collaboration		4%
What did you like least about the APT summit?		
Other students' level of participation		31%
Online diplomacy		15%
Workload		12%
Differences between institutional preparation		8%

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The billboard at Harmoni intersection in Central Jakarta "Jakarta Welcomes Delegations of ASEAN Summit 2011." Photo by Gunawan Kartapranata. Source: Wikimedia Commons at <http://tinyurl.com/jw3uqgg>.

them found the APT summit enjoyable and thought that more classes should have active learning exercises as part of the coursework. Furthermore, 85 percent of them felt like a diplomat negotiating on behalf of the country they were representing, while 73 percent considered the meeting connected to real world issues. The postsimulation survey also indicated that email and discussion boards were generally the preferred tool of online diplomacy in comparison to group pages and online chats; results are shown in table 1 on page 48.

Finally, 92 percent of all students reported in the survey that this exercise deepened their understanding of Asian politics; 74 percent confirmed that the simulation increased their interest in Asian politics. Similar data were reported about student interest in international relations and international institutions. Additional data on the utility of the model APT simulation are summarized in table 2 on page 49.

Recommendations for Future Model APT Simulations

Our experience points to several important recommendations for educators of Southeast Asia. First, institutional support is essential for the success of the exercise. In our case, the schools provided the venue, funding for lunch and various activities, supplies, awards, and transportation costs. Second, course selection is an important component of a simulation's planning. Therefore, when possible, organizers should include mostly upper-level courses closest to the topic of the simulation. Third, the use of a common online content management system (CMS) could be an issue. While we chose to create guest accounts for Georgetown College students so they could access Morehead State's Asian Politics online portal, instructors could consider using popular social media platforms such as Facebook in the future to encourage more effective online interaction. Fourth, educators at institutions of higher education could use this interactive format to seek further engagement with area high schools and other community organizations, which could help them more effectively engage members of the local community and recruit future students to their academic programs. ■

NOTES

1. See references for sources on interactive simulations, games, and role-playing exercises for the classroom.
2. Chinese Taipei is the diplomatic name given to Taiwan since the latter is not internationally recognized as an independent country. Hereafter, Taiwan and Taipei are used interchangeably. North Korea's constitutional name is Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

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- By focusing on ASEAN's history, strengths, and weaknesses, as well as its successes and failures, Acharya analyzes how the organization came to represent all ten countries of Southeast Asia. The book argues that integration in Southeast Asia can be traced back to the region's precolonial roots that shaped relations between nationalism, regionalism, and Cold War geopolitics.
- Clad, James, Sean M. McDonald, and Bruce Vaughn. *The Borderlands of Southeast Asia: Geopolitics, Terrorism, and Globalization*. Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2011.
- This edited collection of essays survey border rivalries in the region. By drawing a sharp distinction between reality and illusion of bordered Southeast Asia, the contributors emphasize a mix of heritage and history as the primary leitmotif for the dynamics of border rivalries in the region. Additionally, they draw a distinction between claims made by Beijing and other second-order ASEAN powers on the South China Sea and pay special attention to multilateral diplomacy aimed at countering Chinese territorial claims.
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- The author provides detailed country reports of 21 major East Asian nations and economies (Hong Kong, Macau, etc.). Each report contains current geographic, economic, political, and social statistics, along with a brief history and discussion on current issues in the country. Additionally, Collinwood provides abbreviated versions of relevant current news and journal articles for most of the polities in the text.
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- By providing a sound introduction the theory of regionalism, Dent takes readers through the historical developments of ASEAN and APEC, and discusses the prospects for an East Asian-only regional grouping. Along with a comprehensive overview of the various multilateral organizations in Southeast Asia, the author discusses current issues regarding the development of an FTA in the region, combating air pollution, and settling regional immigration and energy security conflicts.
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- The book studies the most politically important cleavages and conflicts within Southeast Asian societies and their relationship to ASEAN's theory and practice of (non)interference. Jones distinguishes between Cold War and post-Cold War practices and major interventions undertaken by ASEAN, and analyzes major players' strategic intentions as a technology of power—thus concluding that dominant forces in the region operate as state managers aimed at maintaining their interests, ideologies and political projects within evolving social, economic, and geopolitical contexts.

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This collected volume of essays presents unique perspectives from diplomats and policy makers who have been involved in the drafting of the ASEAN Charter, signed in November 2007. The essays discuss the charter's content, significance, and criticisms, as well as the practical framework that it provides for ASEAN's functioning.

Kim, Samuel, and Thomas Berger. *The International Relations of Northeast Asia*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004.

This volume edited by S. Kim offers a multidimensional and multidisciplinary analysis of the international relations of Northeast Asia. It focuses on local, regional, and global forces shaping the region's security, economy, and identity, as well as countries' overall motivations to seek regional integration.

Rumelili, Bahar. *Constructing Regional Community and Order in Europe and Southeast Asia*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

The author argues that regional orders are socially constructed, which means that they are rooted in certain structures of meaning within which actors make sense of various material conditions. Regional organizations usually act as "region-builders" by developing similarities among member states, by socializing them into community's norms and principles, and by enforcing arbitration and discipline. This book is recommended to students and scholars of regional integration because it draws valuable comparisons between patterns of regional integration in ASEAN and the EU.

SarDesai, D. R. *Southeast Asia: Past and Present*. 6th ed. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2010.

This basic text provides a comprehensive overview of the histories and colonial legacies experienced by Southeast Asian nations. The author then provides an in-depth analysis of nationalist movements in response to colonial rule. The book concludes with an overview of current political developments in each of the Southeast Asian states and a focus on the 2004 tsunami, the avian flu virus, and terrorism in Southeast Asia. The book is greatly recommended to secondary school and college students for its accessible presentation of complex issues. A seventh edition is now available.

St. John, Ronald. *Revolution, Reform, and Regionalism in Southeast Asia: Cambodia, Laos and Việt Nam*. London; New York: Routledge, 2006.

The book surveys sustained economic progress in Cambodia, Laos, and Việt Nam over the past three decades from centrally planned to market economies. The author discusses in detail economic challenges and prospects, as well as domestic reforms and foreign relations for each of the three countries. Special attention is paid to regionalism within ASEAN and subregional development within the greater Mekong subregion. The book is particularly helpful in preparing students and scholars of Southeast Asia in understanding how economic liberalization is essential to the success of regional integration and the growth of the global economy.

Weatherbee, Donald E. *International Relations in Southeast Asia: The Struggle For Autonomy*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009.

Weatherbee provides the reader with an in-depth examination of current issues facing Southeast Asian nations today. The author highlights the importance of understanding the nations of the Southeast Asian region; he traces Southeast Asian nations' relations during the Cold War and post-Cold War regionalization efforts, and then examines various aspects of conflict, terrorism, regionalism, human security, and environmental protection through organizations such as ASEAN.

SELECTED ARTICLES

Jones, Lee. "ASEAN's Unchanged Melody? The Theory and Practice of Non-Interference in Southeast Asia." *Pacific Review* 23, no. 3 (2010): 479–502.

This article critiques ASEAN's principle of absolute noninterference in the internal affairs as it has constrained the organization from taking meaningful action over economic crises, problematic members (eg Myanmar), and transnational security threats. It argues that the norm of consensual decision-making remains in place but has been subject to competing demands and contestation.

Jones, David Martin, and M. L. R. Smith. "Making Process, Not Progress: ASEAN and the Evolving East Asian Regional Order." *International Security* 32, no. 1 (2007): 148–184. The authors argue that, since its inception, at the level of policy formulation and implementation, ASEAN has effectively remained an association of states created to achieve the limited purpose of maintaining regional order by dealing primarily with trade and economic issues. As a result, the organization is dominated by member state bureaucracies and possesses very limited institutional infrastructures to establish a common identity and transform itself into a mature security community.

Portela, Clara. (2013). "ASEAN: Integration, Internal Dynamics, and External Relations. Brussels, Belgium: Directorate-General for External Policies of the Union," also available online at <http://tinyurl.com/5ttyggu>.

Portela notes that the persistence of consensual decision-making and nonconfrontational habits has slowed ASEAN's integration and hindered the development of a human rights mechanism. Regional integration in Southeast Asia is further constrained by China's divisive influence in the areas of economic and security cooperation.

VIDEO

"The ASEAN Community by 2015," YouTube video, 6:21, from a 2007 presentation by the ASEAN Secretariat, posted by "ellekuruda," January 12, 2010, <http://tinyurl.com/l9h-prb8>.

This six-minute informational video introduces the members of the organization, the idea of the ASEAN community, and the organization's key pillars that include peace, prosperity, and its focus on the people. It further highlights the importance of person-to-person cooperation and the building of common regional identity.

SELECTED INTERNET RESOURCES

Association for Southeast Asian Nations: <http://www.asean.org/>

Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC): <http://www.apec.org/>

Asia Society Asia Source Home Page: <http://asiasociety.org/policy>

Asian Studies web portal at the Australian National University: <http://asiapacific.anu.edu.au/>

Channel News Asia: <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/>

China Daily: <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/>

Internet Guide for China Studies—Politics: <http://tinyurl.com/lp8br9h>

Comparative Connections (Center for Strategic and International Studies): <http://tinyurl.com/nvm576o>

Education About Asia: www.asian-studies.org/EAA

International Foundation for Electoral Systems: <http://tinyurl.com/nwaned3>

Embassy, the Electronic Embassy: <http://www.embassy.org/> (browse for embassies in Washington, DC, and their contact information)

Human Rights Watch/Division in Asia: <http://www.hrw.org/asia>

The Jakarta Post: <http://www.thejakartapost.com/>

International Affairs WWW Virtual Library on Asia: <http://tinyurl.com/nsg5vno>

Japan Embassy Washington, DC: <http://www.embjapan.org/>

Japan Guide from Stanford: <http://jguide.stanford.edu/>

Japan *Mainichi Shinbun*: <http://mainichi.jp/english/>

Malaysia Ministry of Foreign Affairs: <http://tinyurl.com/6m47qsl>

Malaysia Prime Minister's Office: <https://www.pmo.gov.my/>

Portal to the UN Peacekeeping Missions (with links to past and current missions' websites): <http://tinyurl.com/cj2d5tg>

Philippines Department of Foreign Affairs: <http://www.dfa.gov.ph/>

Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs: <http://tinyurl.com/7u97unx>

Singapore *Straits Times*: <http://www.straitstimes.com/>

The South China Sea web portal: <http://www.southchinesea.org/>

Taiwan Government Information Office: <http://www.taiwan.gov.tw/>

Thailand Ministry of Foreign Affairs: <http://tinyurl.com/pf3jjkh>

Thailand *Bangkok Post*: <http://www.bangkokpost.com/>

Thailand Nation: <http://tinyurl.com/p9bg9gx>

Tibet Government in Exile: <http://tinyurl.com/p6ws2k5>

Việt Nam News Agency: <http://vietnamnews.vn/>

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