

Internet and Case Study Resources on Asian Economic Issues

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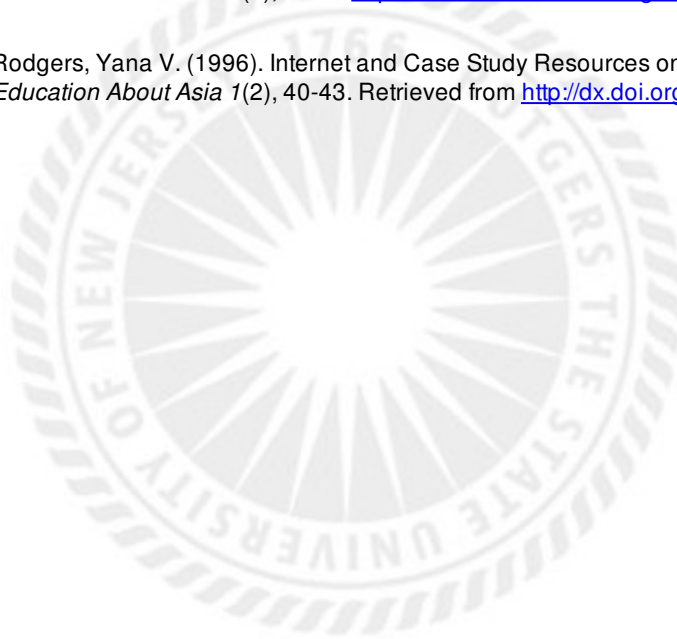
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ESSAYS

It is clear that training in cross-cultural learning skills increases the learning that takes place and should be implemented whenever possible. The following resources will provide an introduction to the growing literature on cross-cultural learning. ■

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books which deal with both the theoretical and/or practical aspects of cross-cultural learning:

Grove, Cornelius. *Orientation Handbook for Youth Exchange Programs*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1989. A comprehensive resource on how to plan and execute orientation programs for students and families.

Kohls, L. Robert and John M. Knight. *Developing Intercultural Awareness: A Cross-Cultural Training Handbook*. Second edition. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1994. A collection of activities to develop intercultural awareness.

Paige, R. Michael, ed. *Education for the Intercultural Experience*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1993. An excellent introduction to the theoretical and practical aspects of cross-cultural learning. Each chapter has an extensive bibliography.

Living abroad:

Kohls, L. Robert. *Survival Kit for Overseas Living*. Second Edition. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1984. Covers a wide range of issues involved in living abroad and is an excellent general resource for students.

Books on single cultures:

Condon, John C. *With Respect to the Japanese: A Guide for Americans*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1984.

Council on International Education Exchange. *The High-School Student's Guide to Study, Travel & Adventure Abroad*. Fifth Edition. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995.

Fieg, John Paul. *A Common Core: Thais and Americans*. Revised by Elizabeth Mortlock. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1989.

Gochenour, Theodore. *Considering Filipinos*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1990.

Jamieson, Neil. *Understanding Vietnam*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

Wenzhong, Hu and Cornelius L. Grove. *Encountering the Chinese: A Guide for Americans*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1991.

Resources to help find study abroad programs:

Institute of International Education. *Academic Year Abroad*. New York: Institute of International Education, published yearly.

Peterson. *Peterson's Study Abroad: A Guide to Semester, Summer & Year Abroad Programs*. Princeton, NJ: Peterson, published yearly.

Publishers

Intercultural Press publishes books on all aspects of cross-cultural and multicultural experiences. Their catalog also includes books on similar topics by other publishers. Intercultural Press, P.O. Box 700, Yarmouth, ME 04096.

Internet and Case Study Resources on Asian Economic Issues

By Yana Rodgers



Professor Rodgers and her William and Mary undergraduates.

In a keynote address to Asian Studies instructors, economist Linda Lim suggested that too many Asian Studies courses are not relevant to contemporary Asian issues.¹ Students often leave an Asian Studies course with a thorough understanding of traditional cultures, but little grasp on the driving force behind the tremendous changes in Asian societies in recent years. To help instructors address Lim's critique, this article examines how Internet resources and the case study method can be used in Asian Studies courses. These practical tools serve as excellent vehicles for students to develop their understanding of the social, institutional, and political aspects of rapid Asian economic development in recent years. These methods have been applied in an undergraduate economics seminar specific to the East and Southeast Asian economies and the role of government intervention in their structural transformations.² Although the article utilizes examples that focus on economics, the instructional resources have other fruitful applications in

Asian Studies courses, at both the secondary and university levels.

ASIAN ECONOMIC RESOURCES ON THE INTERNET

Combining Internet resources with other materials can make classroom teaching and research more interesting and effective. Internet-based instruction strengthens students' perceptions that the course material is relevant to real-world issues, refines their analytical abilities, and develops their computer skills. The Internet, through the Gopher and World Wide Web, offers a rapidly expanding source of Asia-related data sites, some of which are reported in Table 1. These sites provide economic analyses and a battery of descriptive statistics on Asian income, trade, finance, government budgets, investment, and other useful macroeconomic indicators.³ The table classifies the Gopher and World Wide Web locations according to three categories, and includes directions for how to work through the indices. To maintain focus, I have limit-

ed Table 1 to economics resources. Additional Asia-related information may be obtained by exploring other Gophers at Asian sites, found in a search of international Gophers, or by utilizing the net search tools for Gophers and the Web.

The first category, Asian Studies Internet Sites Abroad, includes locations for extensive information specifically on Asia. For example, one can find links to Korean universities and libraries, corporate home pages, and news clippings within the Korean index of the Australian National University's (ANU) Asian Studies virtual library server. The ANU also has virtual library servers for Demography and Population Studies, Pacific Studies, and Social Sciences, which one can access using the same Gopher and Web addresses (with the final index choice differing from "Asian Studies Facility" as indicated in Table 1).⁴ In addition, the ANU's "What's New in WWW Asian Studies Newsletter" provides valuable tips for locating Asian Studies information on the Web, and it offers regular updates on new servers and materials.

A search using Gophers at universities in the United States, the second category of Table 1, results in comprehensive international economics indicators that are not limited to Asia. Here one will find cross-country data and reports in the *CIA World Factbook*, the State Department's *Country Reports on Economic Policy and Trade Practices*, and the *State Department's Background Notes*. One can also find materials specific to business conditions across countries in the *International Business Practices Guide*, the *Overseas Business Reports*, and the *International Market Insight Reports*. These Gophers also contain annual issues of the *Economic Report of the President*, which offer useful information on U.S. economic relations with other countries. Finally, most of these Gophers provide access to the *Army Area Handbook* series, book-length studies for individual countries that currently include China, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines, Singapore, and South Korea. Of the four U.S. university Gophers listed, I have found the Gopher at Rice University most helpful in providing the largest range of international resources.⁵

The last category of Table 1 contains several specialized information sources. One can access the National Trade Data Bank for a host of international data and reports, on

TABLE 1

INTERNET SITES FOR ASIAN ECONOMIC INDICATORS

I. ASIAN STUDIES INTERNET SITES ABROAD

Australian National University, COOMBSQUEST Social Sciences and Humanities Information Facility	gopher://coombs.anu.edu.au/Soc.Sci.Inf. Resources-Coombsquest Networked Facilities/Asian Studies Facility http://coombs.anu.edu.au
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Australian National University, What's New in WWW Asian Studies Newsletter	http://coombs.anu.edu.au/WWWVLPages/WhatsNewWWW/asian-www-news.html
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National University of Singapore, SunSITE Singapore	http://sunsite.nus.sg
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II. GOPHERS AT U.S. UNIVERSITIES

Rice University	gopher://riceinfo.rice.edu/Information by Subject Area/Economics and Business/International Economic Information Resources or/Asia Pacific Business & Marketing Resources
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Sam Houston State University	gopher://niord.shsu.edu/Economics
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University of Michigan	gopher://una.hh.lib.umich.edu/socsci/Business and Economics/Dept. of Commerce Economics Data (UMich)
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University of Missouri St. Louis	gopher://umslvma.umsl.edu/The Library/Government Information
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III. SPECIALIZED INFORMATION SOURCES

National Trade Data Bank	http://www.stat-usa.gov
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United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service	gopher://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/USDA Data Sets/International Agriculture
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Research Service	http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/catalog
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The World Bank	gopher://gopher.worldbank.org/Public Information Center/Economic and Sector Reports http://www.worldbank.org
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such topics as exchange rates, international trade agreements, and overseas industries, while the USDA site includes a wide range of agricultural statistics for China. The Public Information Center at the World Bank site offers numerous abstracts of World Bank research reports across countries, plus information on how to obtain the full-length papers.

An effective way to incorporate Internet resources into the curriculum is to progressively increase the complexity of the information collection and analysis. In the first stage, students could follow detailed instructions and examine one of the Internet's international reports, finding specific statistics in tables assigned by the instructor. For

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ESSAYS

TABLE 2

INFORMATION ON CASE STUDY MATERIALS

I. PEW CASE STUDIES IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Institute for the Study of Diplomacy: Publications
 Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service
 Georgetown University
 Washington, DC 20057-1052
 Phone: 202-965-5735
 Fax: 202-965-5811
 Email: dolgasc@gunet.georgetown.edu
[gopher://csf.colorado.edu/CSF Discussion Lists/Casenet](http://gopher://csf.colorado.edu/CSF%20Discussion%20Lists/Casenet) (a)
<http://csf.colorado.edu/CaseNet/index.html> (a)
<http://sfswww.georgetown.edu/sfs/programs/isd/isd.htm> (b)

II. JOHN F. KENNEDY SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT CASE STUDIES

Harvard University
 Case Program Sales Office
 Kennedy School of Government
 79 JFK Street
 Cambridge, MA 02138
 Phone: 617-495-9523
 Fax: 617-495-8878
[gopher://ksggopher.harvard.edu/JFK School of Government /Kennedy School Case Studies](mailto:gopher://ksggopher.harvard.edu/JFK%20School%20of%20Government/Kennedy%20School%20Case%20Studies)
<http://ksgwww.harvard.edu/~ksgpress/rsrchpub.htm>

III. HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL CASE STUDIES

Harvard Business School Publishing
 Customer Service Department
 60 Harvard Way
 Boston, MA 02163
 Phone: 1-800-545-7685, 617-495-6117 or 6192
 Fax: 617-495-6985
 Email: custserv@cchbsp.harvard.edu
gopher://hbocat.harvard.edu
<http://www.hbsp.harvard.edu>

(a) For faculty development only. (b) For general information.

example, the instructor can prompt a well-informed class discussion on U.S.-Japanese economic relations by having students use the Internet to locate relevant statistics before the discussion. Students can use one of the Gophers listed to access the 1994 *Economic Report of the President* and locate figures on the U.S. merchandise trade balance with Japan, the import share of domestic consumption of manufactures in the U.S. and Japan, and foreign firms' share of domestic sales in both countries.

The next stage in combining Internet resources with more conventional teaching techniques could involve having students use the Internet to construct and analyze a small data set in order to complete a routine

Students can turn to the Internet's *Army Area Handbook* series and the *Country Reports on Economic Policy and Trade Practices* to obtain information on historical and current trade policies and trends. They can also find time series data on import and export quantities and prices in readily available published sources.⁶ Analysis may be as simple as plotting the time series in graphs and discussing patterns, or as complex as performing a formal regression analysis of the determinants of trade behavior.

CASE STUDY OPPORTUNITIES

Teaching case studies helps students to examine theoretical concepts in the context of real-world problems, pay closer attention

problem set or short paper assignment. For example, students can use the *CIA World Factbook* series to construct a simple table of descriptive statistics on income, debt, prices, population, and trade for the South, East, and Southeast Asian economies. They can then analyze interregional differences in levels and growth rates of these variables, and interpret their findings in the context of principles from other course material.

The last stage of incorporating the Internet into the Asian Studies curriculum could involve a more complex empirical assignment as a final course project. This project would entail less structure, yet clear guidance from the instructor on reliable data sources and methodologies. One possible paper topic is the relationship between trade policy and trade performance in an Asian country.

to the reading material, and participate more actively in class. Students gain a more vivid and lasting impression of the relevance of their course material. Supporters of the case study method also argue that students learn such skills as constructing persuasive arguments, accepting alternative solutions, and making judgements under pressure. Several institutions have developed case studies on contemporary Asian issues. The Pew Case Studies in International Affairs offer the largest variety of choices covering economic, political, and social issues in South, East, and Southeast Asia. Examples of cases include the Khmer Rouge dilemma, the Philippine debt crisis, the 1991 Thailand Coup, U.S.-China relations, and trade negotiations over Korean jogging shoes. The John F. Kennedy School of Government and the Harvard Business School case study programs also have a series of Asian-related case studies on development, trade and finance, international affairs, and business. Table 2 offers more detailed information, including Gopher and World Wide Web sites, for obtaining materials relating to these potentially useful cases.⁷

To promote active learning and participation, group discussion rather than lecture forms the basis of many case studies, with the instructor assigning discussion questions to guide students in their reading. Another way to incorporate a case study into the curriculum is to utilize a role play simulation. For example, Rodgers (1996) describes an exercise in which students play the roles of various ministers and advise the Indonesian president on how to resolve the macroeconomic problems associated with an oil boom. While the particular topic may interest a limited number of instructors, the framework may be applied to a host of Asian Studies topics that lend themselves to debate. Table 3 offers a summary of the scenario, ground rules, and sample discussion questions.

Before the exercise begins, the instructor describes to students the following scenario. In response to an OPEC agreement to restrict oil production and double the oil price, the Indonesian president has convened a cabinet-level meeting to discuss the oil boom's potential economic impact and possible policy responses. Each student plays the role of an Indonesian minister who must advise the president on sensible policy changes and how to allocate the additional revenues that the state-owned oil company, PERTAMINA,

TABLE 3
ROLE PLAY FRAMEWORK

THE SCENARIO

Meeting between the Indonesian President and various ministers

THE OBJECTIVE

Decide on oil boom revenue allocation and policy changes to prevent macroeconomic problems

PREPARATION

Assign roles and discuss instructions
Ask students to prepare opening statements
Assign Roemer (1985) and Gillis et al. (1992)

STUDENTS' ROLES

Make effective arguments that favor the respective constituents of the Finance, Industry, Agriculture, Oil, Health and Education, or Planning Ministries

GROUND RULES

One to two minute opening statement per student
Open discussion, facilitated by the President (instructor)

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

- 1) What macroeconomic problems could result from the oil boom, and how may exchange rate devaluation help?
- 2) What share of the windfall should the government save and what share should it allocate toward vital development projects?
- 3) Have other countries experienced similar problems with other forms of foreign exchange inflows?

NOTES

1. Linda Lim, "Between Asian Reality and Asian Myth: Some Challenges Facing Asian Studies Today," (paper presented at the ASIANetwork Conference, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 1994). Lim has written extensively on foreign investment, industrial policy, and workers in Asian countries, and she is editor of the *Journal of Asian Business*.
2. I have taught the course three times as a sophomore tutorial at Harvard University and twice as an undergraduate seminar at the College of William and Mary.
3. See William Goffe, "Computer Network Resources for Economists," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 8, no. 3 (1994): 97-119 for more extensive economic resources on the Internet.
4. An alternative Gopher address for the ANU is [gopher://info.anu.edu.au/The Electronic Library-Internet Resources by Subject/Country and Region-specific Information/Asian Studies Facility](http://gopher://info.anu.edu.au/The%20Electronic%20Library-Internet%20Resources%20by%20Subject/Country%20and%20Region-specific%20Information/Asian%20Studies%20Facility).
5. Because the universities' World Wide Web sites proved less helpful in locating international economics resources, Table 1 does not list Web sites for this category.
6. See the International Monetary Fund, *International Financial Statistics* (Washington, D.C.: International Monetary Fund, various issues), and the *United Nations International Trade Statistics Yearbook* (New York; United Nations, various issues).
7. My home page contains links to all Web sites listed in Tables 1 and 2. Simply go to: <http://morton.wm.edu/economics/faculty.html> and select Yana Rodgers from the list of faculty members.

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- . *International Trade Statistics Yearbook*. New York: United Nations, various issues.
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will generate. During the exercise, the instructor assumes the role of president and facilitates discussion using the assigned questions. Following the exercise, students evaluate the role play and discuss the key economic principles. Data presented in the Rodgers study indicate that the exercise encouraged the majority of students to participate more than they would with the regular discussion format and to pay closer attention to all or parts of the reading assignment.

A role playing exercise can serve as a well-timed break from the usual class routine to maintain and even raise student interest in the material. Even very simple role playing and simulation ideas work to sharpen student awareness of Asian cultures and socioeconomic issues. Instructors could also supplement the pre-exercise reading assignment with one of the international briefings described in section 2 in order to provide a basis for more informed discussion.

Alternative simulation ideas include a debate on development and the environment; an economic summit on the benefits and costs of liberalizing trade and financial restrictions; and a mock meeting among female workers and employers to discuss employment conditions at a textiles factory.

In closing, this article has discussed several pedagogical resources to facilitate classroom examination of current Asian economic issues. My fairly brief treatment of the Internet and case study resources does invite further articles. In particular, the information on the Internet is so rich that Asian Studies instructors badly need a more detailed presentation (with regular updates on the Internet) such as Goffe (1994) has done for economists. Hopefully, including Internet resources in Asian Studies courses will lead to the development of exciting case studies for students. ■