

考試科目	英文閱讀與寫作	系所別	東南亞語言與文化 學士學位學程 二年級	考試時間	7月8日(三) 第二節
------	---------	-----	---------------------------	------	-------------

**Please read the following passage and answer the three questions.**

In year 2019, the government of Brunei, the tiny state on the island of Borneo and has grown rich on oil and gas exports, intended to introduce Syariah Penal Code Order (SPCO) and sparked contention internationally.

1. What exactly is the new SPCO? Has it been completely exercised today? (20%)
2. What were the opposing arguments? How did Brunei government and the supporters defend SPCO? (30%)
3. Some claimed that “SPCO is a violation of human rights” while some argued “outsiders don’t have a say in this issue”. Please write an essay of about 400 words to state your thought. (50%)

Brunei implemented part of a harsh new criminal code based on Islamic law that stipulates, among other things, a potential sentence of death by stoning for those convicted of gay sex and adultery. The move drew swift condemnation from LGBT rights groups as well as the broader international community. However, Bruneian laws have long carried heavy punishments on paper. Brunei already adheres to a stronger form of Islamic law than neighboring Malaysia and Indonesia, banning the sale and consumption of alcohol. Almost three-quarters of those who live there are Muslims, but there are sizeable Buddhist and Christian communities.

The new Sharia punishments, or SPCO, will be introduced over three years, with offences in the first phase covered by fines and prison sentences. Amputations (cutting off limbs for theft) come under the second phase, and stoning, for crimes including adultery and homosexual acts, under the third phase. Government representatives claim that authorities will avoid using the SPCO, and if they do, they would avoid its harshest punishments. Still, even if its implementation is unlikely, having the death penalty for homosexual intercourse does intensify a climate of fear among LGBT Bruneians. The UN voiced deep concern about the planned change and urged Brunei to delay the changes so they could be reviewed to make sure they complied with international human rights standards. "Under international law, stoning people to death constitutes torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and is thus clearly prohibited," spokesman for UN High Commissioner for Human Rights told a news conference. He added that the revised penal code "may encourage further violence and discrimination against women" due to "deeply entrenched" stereotypes. Many Bruneians know somebody who is gay, and insist that LGBT people can live peacefully as long as they don't turn their sexual orientation into a rights-claiming public cause. Seeing transgender people in the capital, Bandar Seri Begawan, has never been unusual.

It is difficult to tell what a majority of Bruneians actually think, because those with critical views cannot openly express them. Some criticism occurs anonymously in digital spaces, but more visible are the defensive reactions against international criticism. Many in Brunei see the country as “under attack” and defend it on intertwined religious and nationalist grounds. Some even frame the criticism as “Islamophobia” or “white supremacy.”

考試科目	英文閱讀與寫作	系所別	東南亞語言與文化 學士學位學程 二年級	考試時間	7月8日(三) 第二節
------	---------	-----	---------------------------	------	-------------

Part of the issue is that many international media reports on Brunei are lacking in basic local knowledge and local voices. Some claim that Brunei “decided to implement Sharia law,” as if no Sharia judiciary had existed before. There is also a frequent and inaccurate conflation of the concept of “the Sharia” with codified Sharia law, which similarly undermines the international media’s credibility in the eyes of many Bruneians. The concept of Sharia, in Islamic understanding, guides all Muslim norms pertaining to one’s personal behavior, prayer rituals, fasting, ethical reasoning, and more.

In 2014, when the first phase of the SPCO was implemented, there were international protests, but many of them were short-lived. Brunei’s diplomats and business community had convinced international partners that the SPCO would never be fully implemented. Meanwhile, the European Parliament has called for sanctions to be considered, but many Bruneians wonder why this is not the case for Saudi Arabia or China, which actually carry out frequent brutal punishments and death sentences, not to mention alleged political assassinations, forced disappearances and detentions in internment camps. That leads Bruneians to question why Hollywood celebrities are not passionately calling upon Western publics to boycott those countries. In Brunei, such brutalities are unheard of, and while the death penalty exists on paper, it has not been carried out in decades.

*(Adapted from “What International Criticism of Brunei’s Harsh New Penal Code Overlooks”, World Politics Review, 2019)*

備註	一、作答於試題上者，不予計分。 二、試題請隨卷繳交。
----	-------------------------------