Letter from the Director

Hello CSEAS faculty, students, staff, and affiliates! I’m Mike McGovern, Professor of Anthropology, and the Interim Director of the Center for this academic year. I am delighted to have an opportunity to serve all of you and the Center, which has supported my research in Myanmar over the past six years.

We ended the summer with some very tough news; first the departure of CSEAS Director Laura Rusek, and then the news that we were not selected to renew our FLAS or Title VI grants. These two grants fund the majority of the Center’s activities, so we are now working overtime to patch in other sources of funding to make up the difference. Happily, we had enough left over FLAS money to cover our FLAS recipients for the upcoming academic year. The College and the International Institute are also committed to supporting the Center, so our programs should continue as planned during this academic year.

If you have ever donated to the Center’s Strategic Fund, but have not yet done so this year, we would be most grateful for your gift this year, which will allow us to continue supporting the intellectual life of the Center, local Southeast Asian communities, and our student and faculty researchers. We are in the final stages of negotiating several large gifts from CSEAS alumni that will make a major impact in our financial situation. We hope you will consider joining them!

Alongside this difficult news, there are some really exciting developments this year for the Center. Many faculty and students have been able to resume travel to the region, in many cases for the first time since 2019. Our superb PhD students, in particular, are no longer “stuck” in a limbo where they were unable to conduct research, but did not yet have the materials to begin writing dissertations.

On August 26th, we welcomed our new cohort of Southeast Asia-focused Master’s students. In the MIRS (Masters in International and Regional Studies) program, Shimon Lichtman and Donna Hoang plan to do work in Cambodia, Ian Kennedy plans to work in Indonesia, and Ruah Zhang in Malaysia.

One of our faculty members, Webb Keane, of the anthropology department, was named a Distinguished University Professor over the summer. We will keep you posted with information about his inaugural address. In November, we were also delighted to receive a generous gift of nearly $50,000 (5 million Philippine Pesos) from the government of the Philippines, represented by General Consul Susana Paez of the Chicago Consulate. That money will support research, travel, and programming in the Philippines. It has allowed us to offer a course in Filipino Rondalla and Kulintang music this semester. Next semester these funds will allow us to bring Professor Ambeth Ocampo, a world-renowned historian and public intellectual, who will teach two courses to our undergraduate and graduate students. Meanwhile he himself will be conducting research, developing a library collection of Philippine material, unparalleled in North America.

Lastly, we have a fabulous series of speakers, films, and of course our gamelan performances slated for the year. They began on September 2nd with our own U-M alumnus, Professor Miriam Stark. She is an anthropologist working in Cambodia and the Director of the Center for the Study of Southeast Asia at the University of Hawaii, Manoa. We continued with a well-attended potluck reception on September 15th. Other talks have focused on policies on the aging in Cambodia, the biographies of Muslim teachers in Indonesia, the Rondalla and Kulintang concert took place on December 8th in the Keene Theatre (East Campus), while the Gamelan Kyai Telaga Madu band concert was on December 9th in Hankinson Rehearsal Hall. The Gamelan Recital also featured the debut of Gamelan Madu Briu. Very best,

Webb Keane

Inaugural Gosling-Lim Fellow Announced

Canvass Darathea Masardi of Universitas Gajah Mada was announced as the inaugural Gosling-Lim Fellow in Southeast Asian Studies.

During the course of the fellowship, Dr. Masardi will be based at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies and the Department of Anthropology at the University of Michigan. While in Ann Arbor, she will be working on a manuscript project Independent Refugee Youth in Waiting: Social Navigations while Transiting in Indonesia. Dr. Masardi explores the many ways in which these young refugees “exercise active waiting while transiting in Indonesia.”

The Gosling-Lim Postdoctoral Fellow in Southeast Asian Studies was made possible thanks to a generous gift from L.A. Peter Gosling and Linda Yuen-Ching Lim to the Association of Asian Studies. This fellowship is funded on capability-building in Southeast Asian Studies among scholars who are Southeast Asian nationals based in Southeast Asia and at Southeast Asian institutions. Its goal is to enable such scholars to concentrate on publishing their dissertation research, and/ or embark on new post-dissertation research, without the distraction of having to teach, consult, or should administrative burdens, and with the opportunity to expand their scholarly networks and expertise.

The intent is that fellowship recipients will develop their careers in the region, helping to advance the field of Southeast Asian Studies within the region. According to Pete Gosling and Linda Lim, “We are pleased that the fellowship attracted many competitive applicants from across the region, and look forward to its continuation and growing impact in the years ahead.”

Webb Keane was one of five U-M professors honored as Distinguished University Professors for their outstanding teaching and service. He was appointed by the Board of Regents as George Herbert Mead Distinguished University Professor of Anthropology. His previous title was the George Herbert Mead Collegiate Professor of Anthropology and professor of anthropology in LSA.

Highlights

Anocha Aribarg was promoted to professor of marketing, with tenure, in the Stephen M. Ross School of Business.

Daniel A. Birchok, associate professor of anthropology, with tenure, in the College of Arts and Sciences at the UM-Flint campus.

John Ciociari was promoted to Professor of Public Policy, with tenure, in the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy.

Allen Hicken was a visiting professor at Singapore Management University.

Alyssa Paredes was promoted to Assistant Professor of Anthropology in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Dan Slater was announced as the James Orrin Martin Professor of Political Science. He also recently published a new book with Professor Joseph Wong of the University of Toronto, From Development to Democracy: The Transformation of Modern Asia, with Princeton University Press.

Scott Stoneington was promoted to Associate Professor in Anthropology, with tenure in the College of Literature.

Joline Ann Uichanco, associate professor of business, with tenure, developed a new Model to predict relief distribution for hurricanes in the Philippines.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN CENTER FOR SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES | FALL 2022

FACULTY NEWS
Syamsul Bahri obtained his Masters in International and Regional Studies (MIRS) with a focus on Southeast Asian Studies in May 2022. His thesis, “Minority Governments and the Promise of Order: a Study of Indonesian Politics under Flames and Ashes, 1945–1947,” examines the professional background of political elites in Indonesian parliament and cabinets from 1945 to 1957. This thesis connects political sociology and game theory literature to explain why in the first two years after the declaration of independence from colonialism, Indonesian government cabinets were mainly occupied by non-partisan professionals—also known as technocrats—while the presence of parties was minor. The existence of technocrats, however, tends to be insignificant in the cabinets that were formed from 1947 onward. Syamsul argues that the presence of chaos, due to the anti-colonial wars, and the promise of Sjahrir—the first Indonesian prime minister—for enacting political order, had given birth to the minority governments with unanimous consent from most of the parties in the parliament. Nevertheless, the failure to accomplish that promise brought the Sjahrir’ s minority cabinets down in 1947 and yielded the type of cabinets that consisted of over-majority parties in parliament, which has characterized Indonesian politics up to this day. This fall, Syamsul will continue his education at U-M and pursue his doctoral degree in political science.

Congratulations to Trevor Orginski on receiving a Boren Fellowship! Trevor is a second-year masters student in the interdisciplinary International and Regional Studies (MIRS) program pursuing a dual degree in Southeast Asian Studies and Public Policy. After completing his current summer internship with the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor at the U.S. Department of State in August, Trevor will travel to Bangkok, Thailand, to study the Thai language at Chulalongkorn University. In addition to his language studies, Trevor will simultaneously intern at an international NGO with a focus on human rights and democracy. After completing his nine-month fellowship period, Trevor will return to Ann Arbor for another two years to complete his dual masters before embarking on his federal service requirement post-graduation. For his service, he hopes to work with either the Department of State or USAID and is excited to explore the option of building his career in the federal government, while also considering other career opportunities centered on human rights or development. Trevor is grateful for the guidance and encouragement he has received from his peers, mentors, and faculty at U-M who supported him in obtaining the fellowship!

We are delighted to celebrate the research of both our 2021 and 2022 co-winners of the Judith Becker Award for their exemplary graduate papers.

The 2022 winners were Jasmine An (PhD candidate, English & Women’s and Gender Studies) and Khanh Linh Trinh (PhD student, Asian Languages and Cultures).

Jasmine An is a poet, Rackham Predoctoral Fellow recipient, and current Visiting Researcher at Chiang Mai University’s Center for Humanities Innovation in Thailand. Jasmine’s paper, “‘the blue ink runs out’: the Aesthetics of Opacity in Southeast Asian Diasporic Poetry”

Khanh Linh Trinh (Doctoral student in Asian Languages and Culture) “Dining at the Horizon - Cultivating Modern Vietnamese Table through The Legacy of the Operation Passage to Freedom”

The 2021 Judith Becker Award winners were Chantal Croteau (PhD in Department of Anthropology), “Contentious Histories: Intercommunal Relations and Phang Nga’s Multiple Pasts” and Lisa Decenteceo (PhD in Ethnomusicology), “From Being to Becoming: Protests, Festivals, and Musical Mediations of Igorot Self-Representation.”

2021 First Year Language Scholarship

FILIPINO
Jessica Azucena
Frances-Denise Alcantara Fajardo

BAHASA INDONESIA
Tyler Rongxuan Chen

THAI
Austin Killam
Say Meh
Iris Derry

VIETNAMESE
Ngan Vo

2022 ALC Outstanding Language Award Recipients

FILIPINO
Kate Sullivan

BAHASA INDONESIA
Patrick Halim

THAI
Jacob Longmeyer

VIETNAMESE
Christina Thieu

Judith Becker Award Winners

By Moniek van Rheenen
I attended webinars about Southeast Asia from Australia, Norway, and the Netherlands and Singapore. The wonders of zoom!!!

Part of the Humanities Collaborative Project: ReConnect/ReCollect: Reparative Connections to Southeast Asia through Filipinx artists is coming to U-M and use its Philippine Collections. Bentley Historical Collections, the Museum of Anthropology, Special Research Collections of the Library and Clements Library were invited to share their collections. Besides the already digitized Worcester Collection, I showed the artists and participants of the project what we have collected from the different periods of Philippine history. The strongest collection are the photo collections and postcards during the period of 1838–1900; mainly from American soldiers and administrators.

The gap that is strongly felt is during the Japanese occupation of the Philippines where the newspaper collection printed in the Philippines is fragile for the participants to see and handle.

As the Librarian for Southeast Asia I attended the AAS conference in Hawaii. In this conference I not only led library meetings—Southeast Asia Microform Program (SEAM) with the Center for Research in Chicago (CRL) and the Committee for Technical Services under the Committee on Research Materials for Southeast Asia (CORMOSEA). For SEAM, we are now embarking on a digitization project for Southeast Asian newspapers as well as preserving through microfilming old materials from SEA. For CORMOSEA technical services we tackled representation of Khmer language with the possibility of creating a Khmer language transliteration system. Matt Schlesher, a specialist in Myanmar, Thailand and Lao, was our lead cataloger for Thai, Lao, and Burmese.

Buddakseeranc samphalayati kunng bhink khmarr damno = Glossary of relative word in modern Khmer language / author: Jhin SHA Published by Lim & Leow in 2018.

LAO BOOKS


Lao postcards by La Pagote, L. L. (L. L. Laos) L. N. (N. Farnand Nathan), and others / author: Dietlind Ande. Published by White Lotus Press in 2022.

LAO BOOKS

Les bons de vie et de commerce en Chine / author: Bernard Fall. Published by Livre d’Asie in 2020.

BÂBÎNHAMI NHÂM THÔNG / author:研讨会. Published by NUS Press in 2020.

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BÂBÎNHAMI NHÂM THÔNG / author:研讨会. Published by NUS Press in 2020.
A 5 Million Philippine Peso gift ($91,000.00) from the Republic of the Philippines will be dedicated to enhancing the Philippine Studies program at the University of Michigan, i.e., funding course offerings, community lectures, and research support for faculty and students working in the Philippines.

On November 22, 2022, at a formal signing ceremony, the representatives from the Philippine Consulate General in Chicago led by Consul General Susana V. Paez, along with Consul Ryan Francis D. Gener, and Consul Melvin C. Almonguera presented the gift to the University of Michigan officials from University Development, Tom Baird (vice president); University of Michigan, i.e., funding course offerings, community lectures, and research support for faculty and students working in the Philippines.

The event culminated with a signing of the gift by Consul General J. Susana V. Paez (left) and U-M Vice President for Development Tom Baird signing the Deed of Donation for PHL Studies Program.

Consul General Paez reiterated the importance of this gift to the University of Michigan, saying, “This generous gift will allow the center to pursue all of these wonderful activities in this academic year” said Dean Curzan.

The event culminated with a signing of the gift by Consul General J. Susana V. Paez (left) and U-M Vice President for Development Tom Baird signing the Deed of Donation for PHL Studies Program.

The University of Michigan, alongside New York University, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) — University College of London in the United Kingdom, York University in Canada, and Humboldt University in Germany received gifts supporting Philippine Studies supported by the office of Senator Pro Tempore Loren Legarda.

The event began with a conversation with Vice President Tom Baird and Consul General Paez.

The University of Michigan is happy to announce that it will be bringing the Philippine Consulate General of Chicago with Philippine Fulbright LLM graduate, student Andrea Leycano and Librarian Fe Susan Go in front of U-M School of Law’s William W. Cook Legal Research Library.

The University of Michigan receives a 5 million Philippine Peso Philippine Studies Gift

Support for performing arts, a visiting scholar to teach Philippine history and culture, support for research or Filipino language studies, a Philippine studies workshop, and a Philippine studies lecture, in addition to the opportunities that will be available to the Library. And we get their excitement of its implementation.

“Who have a rich history of Philippine Studies here at U-M, and the additional support being provided by the Philippine government will enable us to enhance our curriculum while, importantly, conserving important collections in our libraries,” said McGovern.

Consul General Paez reiterated the importance of building a community amongst Filipinos in the Midwest and the endowment’s intention to promote a greater understanding of Philippine history, culture, and society among students and other stakeholders.

Dean Curzan and Dean Hayward also gave remarks about the importance of this gift and their excitement of its implementation.

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Making a gift to U–M CSEAS supports the programs and research projects that reveal the complexity and uniqueness of Southeast Asia today. It also supports the work of our world-class faculty and students who collaborate in providing new understandings of this increasingly important region.

To help in any way, make a donation to the CSEAS Strategic Fund.

Your gift helps. Any amount helps.

For example:

- An $100 gift supports a U-M student’s registration to present their research at an academic conference.
- A $500 gift supports bringing a national expert on Southeast Asia to present to our students, faculty, and community members.
- An $1,000 gift supports creating a Southeast Asia-specific curriculum module for Michigan K–14 classrooms.

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CSEAS Lecture Series

Lectures can be viewed on U-M CSEAS’ YouTube channel!

FALL 2021

SEPTEMBER 13
How Governments Declare Disasters: Thoughts from Southeast Asia
A. Michael Stern, Foreign Service Officer, USAID

OCTOBER 6
Lost Worlds Film Screenings and Discussion with the Director
Kalyanne Mam, Award-winning Director and Filmmaker

OCTOBER 15
The 1918 Influenza Pandemic in Indonesia and Comparisons with the Ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic
Siddharth Chandra, Michigan State University

OCTOBER 25
The Past, Present, and Future of LGBT Activism in Singapore: A Roundtable on Vertical Disintegration After Empire
MacMillan Center for Southeast Asian Studies

NOVEMBER 5
Is the Philippines Asia’s Banana Republic? Vertical Disintegration After Empire
Pavan Mano, Adi Saleem Bharat

NOVEMBER 19
Nhu Quynh’s Stardom: The (Re)making of Indonesian Agrarian Development
Nguyen, Professor of Urban Planning, School of Geographical Sciences and Urban Planning, Arizona State University

DECEMBER 3
The Role of Strategic Ignorance in Indonesian Agrarian Development
Jenny Goldstein, Assistant Professor, Cornell University

WINTER 2022

JANUARY 21
Roundtable: The Place of Waste in Southeast Asia
Panellists: David R. Boggs, University of California Riverside; Von Hernandez, Break Free From Plastic; Tammanon Soma, Simon Fraser University; Leash Zani, Oakland, California; Alyssa Pareades (moderator), University of Michigan

FEBRUARY 11
Music and Incitement to Violence: Anti-Muslim Hate Music in Burma/Myanmar
Heather MacLachlan, Associate Professor of Ethnomusicology and Interim Director of Women’s and Gender Studies, University of Dayton

MARCH 18
Pedagogies of Transemininity in the Spanish Colonial Philippines 1589-1864
Jayda Jacobs, Assistant Professor of Gender, Equality, and Diversity, Institute of Education, Coventry University

MARCH 4
Racial Capitalism and Interspecies Empire in Colonial Myanmar
Jonathan Saha, Associate Professor of South Asian History, Department of History, University of Durham

APRIL 15
From Informal to Digital Spaces: How to Shape the Lived Experience of Networked Transformations in Southeast Asia?
Hein T. H. Jamme, Assistant Professor of Urban Planning, School of Geographical Sciences and Urban Planning, Arizona State University

CSEAS Events

FILM SCREENINGS

SEAS partnered with the Michigan Theater to screen two documentaries with discussion on the film offered by U-M scholars. The first was The Donut King which told the story of Cambodian refugee Ted Ngoy’s rise as an American donut entrepreneur with commentary and discussion led by professor Melissa Borja. And the second was Bitter Honey an Indonesian documentary on polygamy in Bali with commentary and discussion by U-M doctoral candidate Moniek van Rheenen.

CSEAS also co-sponsored two film screenings with the Global Islamic Studies Center: the Indonesian paranormal suspense film Impetigore and the Malaysian zombie comedy flick KL24: Zombies.

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During the past Spring semester, CSEAS partnered with the historic State Theater in downtown Ann Arbor to present two significant films focused on the Southeast Asian experience. The first of these films was the documentary The Donut King directed by Alice Gu, which focused on Cambodian refugee Ted Ngoy who built a multi-million-dollar empire baking America’s favorite pastry. The Donut King is also about how the American Dream is handed down and evolves from one generation to the next, and includes the current generation of Cambodian donut shop owners and the ways they have been inspired by, and diverged from, their parents before them. DJ’s Bakery, a local Ann Arbor donut shop owned by proteges of Ngoy, provided homemade donuts for viewers to enjoy during the film.

Dr. Melissa Borja, an Assistant Professor in the Asian/Pacific Islander American Studies Program at the University of Michigan, attended the screening and led a fascinating post-film discussion about the history of the Cambodian refugee situation in America, particularly in the 1970’s during the Cambodian genocide, and the influence of these refugees not only on America, but on the cuisine in these areas where refugees resettled. Audience members asked a variety of questions, from the role of religious organizations in resettlement to specific inquiries into Ted Ngoy’s business and family life.

The second of these films was Bitter Honey, a documentary focused on polygamy in Bali, which illustrates how kinship organization, gendered systems of power, social norms, and spiritual beliefs reflect and inform the romantic relationships and domestic affairs of families in Indonesia. In a society where women have very little voice, Bitter Honey draws attention to their struggle and aims to trigger a wider conversation about contemporary polygamy and women’s rights in Indonesia.

The post-film discussion was led by Moniek van Rheenen, a Doctoral Candidate in Linguistic Anthropology at the University of Michigan. Moniek began her discussion with the notable themes of the film, including Bali and its appeal to Westerners, the high domestic violence rate, and the role of the relationships discussed in the film. Audience members had many questions not only about polygamy and its role in modern-day Indonesia, but also about the filmmaker’s process and their seemingly unfettered access to the individuals featured. A discussion about the younger Indonesian generations and their views of polygamy also occurred.

Both films were well-attended, indicating a great local interest in not only Southeast Asian culture, but also in discussing this culture further with the brilliant academics at the University of Michigan Center for Southeast Asian Studies.

Donuts & Honey: Film Screenings at the Michigan Theater
By Ellen PutneyMoore, Director of Marketing and Community Partnerships, Michigan Theater Foundation

Under the direction of Steven Laronga, the U-M Gamelan Ensemble, Kayi Telaga Madu (Venerable Lake of Honey) had two recitals. The December 2021 recital marked the return of in-person performance for the gamelan, while the April 2022 recital featured guest performances by two guest dancers, Zoe McLaughlin (Michigan State University) and Professor Christina Sunardi (University of Washington).

We hope you will join Kayi Telaga Madu for performances in December 2022 and April 2023 under incoming Gamelan Ensemble Director, Gavin Ryan.

Gamelan
A SINCERE THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS FOR THEIR CONTINUED SUPPORT

Without you, our work would not be possible.