Southeast Asian Studies Symposium

November 10, 2018
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Dear 2018 Southeast Asian Studies Symposium Participants,

Southeast Asian Studies Initiative (SEASI) is an academic organization at Brown dedicated to increasing academic representation of the Southeast Asian region and its diasporas. We organized and hosted this Southeast Asian Studies Symposium in collaboration with the Vietnamese Students Association (VSA), Brown University Singaporean Society (BUSS) and Filipino Alliance (FA).

As the first major event regarding Southeast Asian Studies at Brown, this one-day conference will focus on the state of Southeast Asian/American studies in the New England area, and the relationship between the academic study of Southeast Asia and local Southeast Asian American organizations, activists and practitioners. Drawing inspiration from the 2017 Southeast Asian American Conference held at UMass Lowell and Brown University Strait Talk 2017, the aim of the event is to engage not only faculty, but also local university students and larger publics in the Providence area to discuss the above topics. In addition, we hope this event can launch a public discussion on the current and future state of academic representation of Southeast Asia at Brown, examine the importance of the region as an area for critical study, create a platform for students, scholars and practitioners at Brown and in the local community to begin to work together on common goals, and to bring together and celebrate the great and many Southeast Asian/American groups at Brown and in the wider Providence community.

On behalf of the Southeast Asian Studies Symposium Organizing Committee, we would like to welcome our speakers, panelists, moderators and participants to the 2018 Southeast Asian Studies Symposium at Brown University.

Sincerely,
Taing Nandi Aung ‘19 and Andrew Ton ‘20
Co-Presidents, Southeast Asian Studies Initiative (SEASI)
Acknowledgements

We would like to thank our generous sponsors, listed below in alphabetical order, who made this Symposium possible. As ever, we are grateful for their support and time.

- Cogut Institute for the Humanities
- Community Building Fund
- History Department
- International Relations Program
- UCS New Initiatives Fund
- Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs

Funding for this Symposium allowed us to subsidize transportation costs, provide food and conference materials for participants and honoraria for our distinguished speakers. Furthermore, this funding allows us to make this event public to not only the Brown community but also to the local Providence community.

We would like to thank Professor Kevin Escudero for his participation as a moderator.

We would like to thank all our speakers and participants for making this event possible.

Symposium Organizing Committee

_Southeast Asian Studies Initiative (SEASI)_:
- Taing Nandi Aung ’19
- Andrew Ton ’20
- Tzuwan Seet ’22

_Vietnamese Student’s Association (VSA)_:
- Malery Nguyen ’21
- Huy Tran ’21

_Filipino Alliance (FA)_:
- Vanessa Garcia ’21
- Isabel Acevedo ’19

_Brown University Singaporean Society_:
- Christopher Chiah ’21
- Nicole Yow Wei ’21
Program Overview

**Building and Engaging Southeast Asian (American) Studies**
This panel invites academics from the New England area to discuss their experiences and visions with regards to establishing projects, initiatives or institutions related to Southeast Asian/American Studies, or about their experience teaching and researching Southeast Asia/America in a US institution and where they see the future of SEA/A studies for the Northeast. We further invite panelists to comment on how their insights at their home communities and institutions might have implications for Brown and the Providence community.

**Rising Scholars Exhibition**
Rising scholars (Ph.D. candidates and postdoctoral fellows) in the New England area are invited to talk about their research and its connections with Southeast Asian/American Studies. The speakers are further invited to comment on how their involvement in building or participating in SEA/A institutions has impacted their trajectory as both individuals and scholars.

**Southeast Asian Communities and Activism in Rhode Island**
This panel invites organizations that serve the Providence Southeast Asian community to share the work they do and how it relates to Southeast Asian communities and identity. We further invite organizations to talk about their relationship with Brown and what kinds of help from Brown students and institutions would be helpful for the work that they do, and how a Southeast Asian/American Studies initiative at Brown could be designed to benefit the local SEAA community.

**Community Conversation**
This community conversation is envisioned as a space for Brown community members, Providence community members and invited guests to reflect upon the insights shared and gleaned during the symposium, and to share visions of priorities and next steps for building SEA/A Studies at Brown, Providence and the New England area.
Phitsamay Sychitkokhong Uy is Associate Professor in the College of Education and Co-director of the Center for Asian American Studies at University of Massachusetts-Lowell. She has over 20 years of teaching experience ranging from kindergarten to doctoral students. Dr. Uy has also worked as a diversity trainer for the Anti-Defamation League, professional development facilitator for school districts, community organizer and research and evaluation consultant for colleges and universities. She is the current associate editor of Journal of Southeast Asian American Education and Advancement. Her research focuses on immigrant and refugee students’ experiences especially the Southeast Asian American communities. Her current research projects examine how Asian American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs) support the academic success of their Southeast Asian American students. Purdue University’s online publishing segment has reported that three of her Purdue publications have 736 total downloads across 134 institutions in 44 different countries. Dr. Uy is the first Lao American refugee to receive her doctorate from Harvard Graduate School of Education and the first tenured Lao American faculty member in a College of Education in the United States. She currently serves on several community board of directors (i.e., SEARAC (Southeast Asia Resource Action Center), Nisei Student Relocation Commemorative Fund (NSRCF), and the Institute for Asian American Studies at UMass-Boston). Dr. Uy is the current president of the National Association for the Education and Advancement of the Cambodian, Laotian, and Vietnamese Americans (NAFEA) and secretary of the Research on Asian Pacific Americans (REAPA) Special Interest Group of the American Education Research Association (AERA).
Dr. George Chigas is a Associate Teaching Professor in Cambodian Studies at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. He is also UMass Lowell’s Director of International Partnerships for Cambodia and a core faculty member of the Center for Asian American Studies (CAAS). He teaches courses in Cambodian language, literature and culture and is the author of Tum Teav, A Translation and Literary Analysis of a Cambodian Classic.

Quan T. Tran is a lecturer in the Ethnicity, Race, and Migration and American Studies programs at Yale University. She is also ER&M’s senior essay coordinator. She earned her PhD in American Studies from Yale University. Her research and teaching interests include critical refugee studies; Vietnamese boat people; Asian American studies; diaspora and transnational studies; comparative ethnic studies; migration studies; memory studies; and food studies. Her scholarly publications appear in the Journal of Vietnamese Studies; Amerasia Journal; the Journal of Southeast Asian American Education & Advancement; and in edited volumes including Looking Back on the Vietnam War: Twenty-first Century Perspectives; and Asian America: A Primary Source Reader. Her book manuscript, Anchoring Vietnamese Boat People’s History and Memory, examines refugee identity, community, and cultural formations in the Vietnamese diaspora by tracing the late twentieth century Vietnamese boat refugee exodus and contemporary efforts in commemorating that mass migration in Southeast Asia, Western Europe, Australia, North America and cyberspace. Dr. Tran is also a published poet and translator. Her poetry and translations appear in Troubling Borders: An Anthology of Art and Literature by Southeast Asian Women in the Diaspora; Thế Kỷ 21; and www.damau.org. Talk title: “Vietnamese Boat People’s Memorials: A Diasporic Constellation of Belonging”
Elsa Clavé is an assistant professor of Southeast Asian studies at Goethe University, Frankfurt, and an associate researcher at the Centre Asie du Sud-Est (EHESS-CNRS), Paris. She is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the Harvard Asia Center.

She specializes in the modern and contemporary history of Indonesia, Philippines, and Malaysia, with a focus on the cultural history of Islam which was the topic of her first book (to be published in 2019 at the EFEO, Paris). Her second interest concerns the usage of history, and the recording of the past, in the production of identity in Southeast Asia. She has published on women fighters in Aceh, Islam in the Philippines and historiography in the Malay world.

At the Harvard Asia Center, she is currently working on her second book project which concerns the political culture of the sultanates through a close reading of materials related to Euro-Asian encounters and inter-Asian diplomatic relations in the Malay speaking (17th-20th century). Besides this, she started a 3-year collective project on memory and mobility in the global Asian space. Through the analysis of literary production, she investigates the memory of the 1965-66 violence in Indonesia, especially the emergence of pain and the transmission/ transformation of emotions among Indonesians in Europe.

For the 10-min presentation, I will give a short explanation of scholarships in the US and Europe, what it has brought and why the “old” approach of area studies is less relevant now, with some ideas to explore to reinvent the field, or, at least make it evolve to catch up with the contemporary condition. Title: “On the need to reinvent Southeast Asian studies: some thoughts on domination, cooperation, and relation”.
Jennifer Nazareno is a new Assistant Professor at the School of Public Health, Department of Behavioral and Social Sciences and at the Jonathan M. Nelson Center for Entrepreneurship. She was previously a National Institute of Health (NRSA T32) and Presidential Diversity Postdoctoral Fellow here at Brown. Her research centers on the impacts of economic globalization on the organizational structure of the U.S. long-term care and mental health care systems. She examines how such structures arrange and shape the public-private divide, immigrant entrepreneurship, reimbursement schemes and care provider-care recipient relationships. Professor Nazareno’s dissertation won the UCSF Anselm Strauss Award for Most Distinguished Qualitative Dissertation and was the first study to examine the lived experiences of immigrant Filipino women who emerged as owners of health and long-term service related businesses in the United States. She currently teaches the following courses: Intersectionality and Health Inequalities; Global Dynamics and Critical Perspectives on Immigrant Entrepreneurship in the United States, and Qualitative Research Methods. Professor Nazareno received her Ph.D. in Medical Sociology from University of California, San Francisco Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences and her Master’s degree in Social Welfare from the UCLA School of Public Affairs.

Christy Bae self identifies as Korean/Asian American and is a senior Psychology major at Wellesley College with an intention of adding an Asian American Studies minor. She has been involved in many different pan-Asian spaces on campus, starting with Wellesley Asian Alliance (WAA), a student organization dedicated to creating institutional change, and Asian Awareness Month planning committee in her first year, and WAA again in her second year. In her junior year, Christy studied abroad at UCL in London and also took a break from organizing. In her senior year, Christy is serving as Pan Asian Council (PAC) chair, coordinating the fifteen different Asian organizations on campus. Christy was involved in the Asian American Studies Initiative (AAS-I) in her sophomore year (2016-2017).
Kiran Saili is a PhD student in the English Department at Brown University. Her work is interested in the diasporic condition: of the psychic life and aesthetic/literary works of second generation subjects and how we might engage with such works to approach questions of identity, community-making, and futurity in the diaspora. Kiran is involved in the graduate-worker unionization effort at Brown (SUGSE) and finishing a short film in collaboration with Lynn Ly on queer diasporic girlhood and psychic inheritances of the Vietnam War.
Tri Phuong is a PhD Candidate at Yale University’s Department of Anthropology. He was a Fulbright-in-Vietnam grantee (2015-2016) studying new media technologies, urban youth cultures, and creative communities in Ho Chi Minh City. Prior to graduate studies, Tri has worked in the areas of community development, journalism, and education consulting. He is an alumnus of Harvard College and the Harvard Kennedy School of Government (Social Studies 2003, Master of Public Policy 2007).

Cresa Pugh, Doctoral Student, Harvard University

Cresa Pugh is a doctoral student in Sociology & Social Policy at Harvard University. Her research interests include the social legacies of colonization, ethnic and religious conflict in Southeast Asia, and the role of collective memory and identity in shaping peacebuilding efforts in post-conflict societies. Pugh is currently working on a project that examines the effects of British imperial capitalism on the formation of ethnoreligious tensions in colonial Burma. She holds a B.A. in Anthropology and Religion from Bates College and a Masters of Science in Migration Studies from the University of Oxford.

“The Historical Origins and Contemporary Manifestations of the Rohingya Genocide”

Tri Phuong, Ph.D Candidate, Yale University

“The Historical Origins and Contemporary Manifestations of the Rohingya Genocide”
Courtney Wittekind, Ph.D Candidate, Harvard University

Courtney T. Wittekind is a PhD candidate in Social Anthropology at Harvard University. Previously, she completed an MPhil at the University of Oxford where she studied as a Rhodes Scholar. There, as a member of St Antony’s College, she co-founded Tea Circle, a forum for new and emerging perspectives on Burma/Myanmar, with Matthew J. Walton in 2015. Her current doctoral research centers on questions of transition, imaginaries of social change, and spatial politics in urban and peri-urban Burma/Myanmar.

Title: “Transition” as Frame and Claim: Studying Burma/Myanmar in 2018

Southeast Asian Communities and Activism in Rhode Island

Linda Heng, 2018 Soros Justice Youth Fellow, PrYSM

For five years, Heng served as a youth leader with Providence Youth Student Movement (PrYSM) in its work to gain passage of the Providence Community–Police Relations Act. She also helped found and currently coordinates PrYSM’s Rising Sisters gender justice program. She has mentored other Southeast Asian youth, conducted outreach and event promotion, designed and facilitated workshops, and participated in a range of issue-based campaigns—all in an effort to amplify Southeast Asian youth voices and raise awareness of how these young people are harmed by the criminal justice and immigration enforcement systems. Heng is a 2017 graduate of Cranston East High School in Cranston, Rhode Island. Linda Heng recently transitioned out of PrYSM and now is currently a 2018 Soros Justice Youth Fellow where her work will document the experiences of Southeast Asian youth affected by deportation and the criminal justice system and help promote their leadership in the broader movement for social justice.
Chanda Womack is the Founding Executive Director of the Alliance of Rhode Island Southeast Asians for Education (ARISE.) Chanda is a fearless and tireless advocate for equity and social justice. Chanda provided the inspiration and vision for the creation of ARISE as a non-profit devoted to educational access, equity and success. She is unapologetic for what she stands and how she carries out her work. Her passionate, positive and proven leadership in the various organizations she serves is universally evident. Chanda has over a decade of experience in grassroots community advocacy and educational justice work. Her leadership and movement building has garnered local and national recognition for ARISE and Rhode Island. In 2017, Chanda was the recipient of NAACP Thurgood Marshall, the YWCA’s Women in Achievement Award and the Providence Youth Student Movement POWER Award.

Chanda was conceived and born in a refugee camp in Thailand, immigrating to the United States in January of 1981 with her family. Chanda is married to Tiger Womack her husband of over 10 years and has a daughter Amaya. She is a product of the Providence Public Schools and earned a B.A. degree from the University of Rhode Island in 2004. She has a Masters of Public Administration also from the University of Rhode Island as well as a graduate certificate in Non-Profit Leadership from Rhode Island College.

Sarath Suong is a co-founder and Executive Director of Providence Youth Student Movement (PrYSM). Born in the Thai refugee camp Khao I Dang, Suong and his family fled Cambodia during the civil war and immigrated to his hometown of Revere, Massachusetts. He moved to Providence, Rhode Island, in 1998 to attend Brown University, majoring in Ethnic Studies with a specific focus on Southeast Asian American immigration and resistance. To cope with the violence, pain, and injustices facing Southeast Asians, he became a community organizer, centered around the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality.

Sarath Suong, Executive Director, PrYSM

Chanda Womack, MPA, Executive Director, ARISE, she/her/hers
Brian Aun, Junior Facilitator, ARISE, he/him/his

For some time, Brian Aun struggled with his identity as a Khmer American. But that soon changed when he started working with ARISE. Brian Aun grew up in Providence, Rhode Island. He constantly works hard to change his community by challenging the public schools’ injustices. He embraces his Southeast Asian, queer, musician self and wants everyone to feel comfortable in their own skin.

Ngan Nguyen, MAT, Director of Instruction and Curriculum Development, ARISE, she/her/hers

Ngan Nguyen serves as the Director of Instruction and Curriculum Development for Alliance of Rhode Island Southeast Asian for Education (ARISE). She provides instruction, coordinates administrative and curriculum components. Ngan was born in Vietnam and immigrated to Minnesota when she was eight years old. She graduated from Macalester College in May 2017 with a Bachelor of Arts in American Studies and Educational Studies. She went on to receive a Masters of Arts in Teaching (MAT) in History/Social Studies at Brown University. She is certified in 7-12th Secondary History/Social Studies by the state of Rhode Island. Throughout her time as an undergraduate, she taught math & social studies at LearningWorks at Blake, served as a College Bound coach for Breakthrough Twin Cities, and founded the Asian Pacific Islander Americans in Coalition (APIAC) at Macalester. As a graduate student and a new community member in Rhode Island, she student-taught at Dr. Jorge Alvarez High School, worked as part of the Ethnic Studies curriculum revision team for Providence Public Schools, and served as an instructor of SAT Prep, and curriculum developer/instructor of Ethnic Studies for ARISE. Her curriculum is community-based, healing centered, and practice is informed by culturally responsive and culturally relevant pedagogy.
Schedule

The symposium will be held in the Kasper Multipurpose Room of the Stephen Roberts ‘62 Campus Center (Faunce Arch) at 75 Waterman Street, Providence, RI 02912 (see page 7).

8:30 - 9:00 AM  Registration & breakfast
9:00 - 9:15 AM  Welcoming remarks
9:15 - 10:00 AM  **Keynote: Prof. Phitsamay Uy, UMass Lowell (Education Studies)**

On the importance and relevance of studying Southeast Asia and its diasporas, specifically pertaining but not limited to American universities.

10:00 - 10:15 AM  Break (Light Refreshments)
10:15 - 12:30 PM  **Building and Engaging Southeast Asian (American) Studies**

*Moderator: Prof. Kevin Escudero, Brown*

*Panelists:*
- Prof. George Chigas, UMass Lowell (Asian Studies)
- Prof. Quan Tran, Yale (American Studies)
- Prof. Elsa Clavé, Goethe, Harvard (Southeast Asian Studies)
- Prof. Jennifer Nazareno, Brown (Public Health)
- Asian American Studies Initiative (AAS-I), Wellesley

12:30 - 1:30 PM  Lunch served
1:30 - 3:15 PM  **Rising Scholars Exhibition**

Speakers:
- Kiran Saily, Brown (Ph.D. candidate in English)
- Cresa Pugh, Harvard (Ph.D. candidate in Sociology)
- Tri Phuong, Yale (Ph.D. candidate in Anthropology)
- Courtney Wittekind, Harvard (Ph.D. candidate in Anthropology)

3:15 - 3:30 PM  **Break (Light Refreshments)**

3:30 - 4:30 PM  **Southeast Asian Communities and Activism in Rhode Island**

Panelists:
- Providence Youth Student Movement (PrYSM) – Sarath Suong and Linda Heng
- ARISE (Alliance of Rhode Island Southeast Asians for Education) – Chanda Womack, Brian Aun, Ngan Nguyen

4:30 - 4:45 PM  **Dinner served & break**

4:45 - 6:00 PM  **Community Conversation & Dinner: Engaging SEA at Brown**

Bringing together students, student organizations, faculty, staff and local community members for a discussion on what SEA Studies at Brown would look like.
The symposium will be held at Stephen Roberts ’62 Campus Center (Faunce Arch) at 75 Waterman Street, Providence, RI 02912

in Kasper Multipurpose Room (Room 040), on the ground floor.
EAST TIMOR, Cristo Rei of Dili
VIETNAM, Ha Long Bay
CAMBODIA, Bayon
PHILIPPINES, San Agustin Church
MYANMAR, Shwedagon Pagoda
SINGAPORE, cuisine