# 2021 WISLI Student Conference

**Saturday, June 26, via Zoom**

Please email conference coordinators (seassi@seasia.wisc.edu) for questions

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<td><strong>Moderator</strong></td>
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"Fluid Temporalities: Water Rights, Infrastructure, and Dispossession in Mandate Palestine"

**Abstract**: My research builds on current scholarship on water in Mandate Palestine by illuminating customary Palestinian practices of time-based water sharing. Palestinian communities typically distributed their water sources in time-based rotations. Zionist settlers and the British administration, on the other hand, measured water rights in terms of volume—claims to a given amount of water. What does it mean to conceive of one’s claims to water in terms of time, as opposed to volume? I argue that measuring water in volume divorces it from the social relations in which it is embedded, and, in turn, makes it more commodity-like. Time-based water sharing presented an obstacle to outside investors—both Zionist settlers and the British administration alike—who wanted to invest in and develop water infrastructure. Such investment was particularly crucial to the Zionist project, which sought to appropriate water as the means of creating a viable economic program. Through illuminating the significance of time-based water sharing, my paper foregrounds the temporal features of infrastructure (Mitchell 2018). For farmers who measured their share of water in hours or days, water-use functioned as a temporal marker, comprising part of the tempo of daily life—a contrast to colonial temporalities introduced to Palestine during this period (Seikaly 2019). The imposition of a new property regime that used volume-based measures was one of the most basic means of dispossessing Palestinian water, making possible the financing and construction of colonial infrastructure, and, in the process, disrupting temporal rhythms and restructuring social relations.

**Cristina Violante** (UC-Berkeley)
Cristina Violante is a PhD/JD student at the University of California, Berkeley, in the Jurisprudence and Social Policy program. She studies the history of water law in the Middle East and western United States, with a special focus on water appropriation, environmental commodification, and settler colonialism. She is attending the Arabic, Persian, and Turkish Language Institute.
"Whoever Sows the Land Shall Reap the Harvest"

Abstract: In light of recent calls for food and land sovereignty, and the push to create more communally sovereign systems, it is urgent that one begins to analyze these movements, both as individual and collective entities. Understanding and studying these geographically distinct movements may elucidate the construction of a conceptual framework for food and land sovereignty. The Anjuman Muzareen Punjab (AMP) is one of these groups, currently fighting for their land. How might colonial infrastructures, remnants of the British Raj and the current Pakistani state affect land rights, peasant struggles, and sovereignty today? What might AMP’s framework offer by way of a food sovereignty framework that other groups, such as La Via Campesina, do not? How might food and land sovereignty serve as a framework for collective action against the state-backed land dispossession in Pakistan? What correlations are there for this work in distinct locations? The struggle against land dispossession is one felt across geographies, systems of marginalization, and ethnic ties; however, little research has been conducted to conceptualize a transmutable framework for land sovereignty. I anticipate that there remains similar and related frameworks that connect peasant and anti-oppression structures, from Pakistan’s AMP and elsewhere. This research will be a preliminary, exploratory foray to provide a deeper understanding of the architecture; colonial and decolonizing, that are tied to land, ownership, and the subaltern struggle. This research paper will continuously evolve, with a constructivist approach, and will pave the way for my capstone project and beyond.

Samiha Hamdi (Cornell University)
I am an MPS Student at Cornell University on Gayogohono Lands, studying International Agriculture, Rural Development, and Indigenous Studies. Prior to coming to Cornell, I served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Panamá. My research focuses on the colonization of lands and beings, land sovereignty as a means of both communal sovereignty and ecological restoration, transnational communal sovereignty projects, and frameworks to dismantle oppressive systems while working towards next systems. I currently focus on the practices of the Anjuman Muzareen Punjab, as well as the Ohlone peoples in Huichin lands (Bay Area). Ultimately, I hope that this work can be applicable towards understanding many forms of oppression, and can support a restorative justice framework focused on healing and connection to land.
"Troubling the Notion of ‘Plastic Addicted’ Subjects: Power, Essentialized Identities, and Subjectivity in Thailand"

Abstract: Thailand is considered one of the six most significant contributors to marine plastic pollution in the world. This has led to widespread media attention and condemnation of Thai people as “addicted to plastic,” with little attention paid to how such discourses actually take shape. Drawing from semi-structured interviews with grassroots environmental organizers and plastic industry representatives in Bangkok, I propose a political ecology of plastic waste that attends to waste actors’ lived experiences, perspectives on the sources of plastic waste, and the power relationships underlying discourses that inform the issue. Following critical Thai studies and feminist ethnographic scholarship on the importance of situated knowledges that challenge dominant forms of expertise, my research demonstrates how current understandings of the plastic waste issue misleadingly paint prolific consumption as an attribute of Thai culture. I argue that both plastic industry players and grassroots environmental activists are framing the issue as Thai-produced, underpinned by multifaceted representations of Thai subjectivities and environmental tropes. These actors, positioned in seemingly contradictory positions, are constituting Thai subjectivity as a means of explaining their actions and framing the plastic pileup. Drawing on Thai tropes to explain shortcomings of the anti-plastic waste movement misapprehends the full complexity of the plastic waste issue – such as waste imports and industrial waste – and suggests that those in power are reticent to alleviate the plastic pileup through measures that would challenge plastic production as opposed to consumption. As a result, grassroots demands for regulation struggle to find a voice in large-scale environmental improvement schemes.

Olivia Meyer (University of Hawai‘i - Mānoa)

Olivia Meyer (she/her) is an incoming Geography and Environment Ph.D. student at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa who just completed her M.A. in Geography at the University of Kentucky. She is attending SEASSI this summer to study Thai. Her research centers on power and environmental discourses as they relate to plastic waste in Thailand. As such, she is particularly interested in feminist political ecologies, feminist and Marxist critiques of ‘expertise,’ environmental subjectivity, and critical Thai studies. She served as Conference Chair of the 10th Annual Dimensions of Political Ecology Conference and has master’s research and horticulture work experience in Bangkok, Thailand.
Abstract: In this paper, I explore a short-lived policy in late Qing East Turkestan that saw thousands of Musulmans (known today as Uyghurs) drafted into the Qing military. Between 1903 and 1906, the Xinjiang provincial government that administered East Turkestan implemented a new “Hereditary Military Household System” (Ch: 世襲兵) that sought to reduce expenses by enrolling local Musulmans into the army rather than relying on recruits from inner China. By drawing upon Chinese and Chaghatay language documents from the local archives of Turpan Prefecture, I attempt to show how these conscriptions were carried out at the local level. Local Musulmans feared conscription, and corruption, desertion, and mismanagement impeded the system at level. Despite these obstacles, hundreds of Musulmans in Turpan were ultimately conscripted into the army where they served alongside professional Han recruits. Because Musulmans conscripts were expected to rely on the material support from their families, however, military service sometimes set household members against one another in disputes over support obligations. By 1905, the Qing governor of Xinjiang expressed disappointment at the performance of the new Musulman conscripts, and his successor ultimately abandoned the system and disenrolled all Musulmans from the army in 1906. Yet despite its short existence, I argue that Musulman conscription in the Qing army contributed to the emergence of a “cowardly Muslim” stereotype among Chinese officials that persisted at least until the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949.

Kevin Kind (Johns Hopkins University)
I am a PhD Candidate in the Department of History at Johns Hopkins University. My dissertation project, “Occupying Xinjiang: Military Rule, Forced Labor, and Local Security in Late Qing Turpan, 1877-1912” examines the place of Muslims in Xinjiang’s turn of the century security institutions. My other projects focus on the history of public health and empire in late Qing East Turkestan.
"Sino-Shan Encounters along the Yuan-Ming Southwestern Frontier (1250-1450)"

**Abstract**: Following the Mongol invasion of the kingdom of Dali in the mid 13th century, the area of what is today Yunnan became integrated for the first time into a trans-Eurasian empire. This brought Shan kingdoms such as Hsenwi, Mong Mao, and others into direct contact with Mongol and Chinese imperial agents. These interactions have received relatively little scholarly attention, largely being overshadowed by studies of the integration of Yunnan as a province of the Yuan (1279-1368) and Ming (1368-1644) Empires. This paper surveys Shan and Tai sources, namely the Hsenwi Chronicle (Phun Mueang Saenwi), as well as official and unofficial sources in Chinese to examine these encounters. Chinese administrators, generals, and even fortune tellers engaged with Shan leaders, acting sometimes as brokers between various factions or states, and at other times as facilitators of diplomatic contact with the Ming court. Where previous scholarship on Sino-Southeast diplomacy and conflict emphasizes classic theories such as the “tributary system” and the “local headman system,” this paper attempts to take Sino-Shan encounters on their own terms: it aims to reassess the extent of Ming hegemony in the region, paying attention to how these encounters were represented by Shan chronicles to understand how local leaders attempted to take advantage of Ming diplomatic and administrative institutions to achieve specific goals in what is today Northeast Myanmar and Southwestern Yunnan.

**Sean Cronan** (UC-Berkeley)

Sean Cronan is currently a PhD student in History at the University of California Berkeley. He focuses on diplomatic and commercial encounters between China, Southeast Asia, and Japan in the second millennium, with a special focus on the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing Dynasties (1644-1911). Specifically, he traces the development of new shared diplomatic norms expressed through literary Sinitic (“Classical Chinese”) beginning in the fourteenth century, looking at how ideas of multipolarity and regime legitimacy came under debate throughout Ming China, Chosŏn Korea, Muromachi Japan, Ayutthaya (Thailand), and beyond.

"Foreigner's Sabbath, Chinese and Aboriginal agency in defining Australian gold-rush religiosity"

**Abstract**: Modern Australian historiography has done much to complicate the history of its gold rush era in the mid 19th century, detaching it from its conventional place in national myth and story. Despite this, one area where progress is still young is that of religious history, in particular the conflict over public morality contested by the traditionalist Sabbatarians and reformist Chartists. The present writing on this conflict tends to focus almost exclusively on white actors, with nonwhite communities only appearing as rhetorical devices used by editorial writers. A study of newspapers, monographs, and meeting records reveal though that far from being passive props, Chinese and Aboriginal groups on the goldfields played an active role in defining this Sabbatarian discourse, shaping it to provide protection and authority to marginalized communities in a time when morality was base for communal legitimacy. What more, these Sabbatarian alliances offer new spaces for the reimagination and preservation of cultural practices, ranging from Guangdong religious processions to the political ceremony of the Aboriginal Kulin Alliance. The results of this hope to both properly center the intersection between indigenous studies and Southeast Asian cultural diaspora and religion in Australia while also complicating Sabbatarian/Chartist stereotypes as Australia shifted from a morality-based nationality to the White race-based identity which would dominate the era of oppressive policy and repression known as White Australia.
Hello! I am Gordon Goodwin from Youngstown, Ohio, and I am an incoming graduate student at the Near Eastern Languages & Cultures program at Ohio State University. This summer I am excited to be studying in an intensive Arabic course with APTLI. I’m a fan of mandolin and amphibian conservation, with a personal research focus on how local governments and communities make history in an international focus.

10:30AM-10:45AM  COFFEE/TEA BREAK

10:45AM-11:45AM  Colonialism and its Shadows: Shifting Identities

Moderator  Philip Cerepak, PhD Candidate, History (UW-Madison)

Zoom Link  https://uwmadison.zoom.us/j/91068716961

"'Our Strength is in Loyalty': Identity Formation within America's Colonial Army, the Philippine Scouts"

Abstract: During the age of “high imperialism” (1850-1940), European empires frequently enlisted indigenous peoples in their colonial militaries as they fought to control territories that covered nearly half of the globe. This paper highlights the processes of identity formation in the colonial militaries of four major imperial powers—Great Britain, France, the Netherlands, and the United States—by comparing the development of two entirely different approaches. British officers used to influence colonial soldiers’ identities. The British indoctrinated their soldiers with ideas, such as ‘martial race’ theory, that made soldiers believe their race was inherently suited for warfare and ultimately fostered loyalty to the colonial state. However, most colonial soldiers abandoned their imperial sympathies by the end of World War II in favor of nationalist movements. In contrast, colonial soldiers in the Philippines remained loyal to the US empire long after the Philippines gained independence. During the Philippine-American War (1898-1902), the United States enlisted Filipinos to create ‘the Philippine Scouts,’ a colonial army tasked with the defense and occupation of the Philippines. The US Army promoted ethnic diversity and socialization between Scouts and US soldiers, which helped Scouts develop Filipino-American identities. In addition, the US Army’s privilege to selectively recruit their colonial soldiers ensured that Scout units comprised only the most staunch supporters of US colonial rule. By the end of World War II, the US Army had much more successfully fostered loyal imperial identities amongst its colonial soldiers than any other imperial army.

Hayden Kolowrat (UW-Madison)
Hayden Kolowrat graduated from the University of Wisconsin–Madison in December 2020 with a BA in History. He is currently a master’s student at UW–Madison majoring in Southeast Asian studies and is an opinion editor of the Badger Herald. His research interests include modern US foreign relations and diplomatic history, post-1890 US imperial history, and US history in a global context.
"Ghostly Images of the (Post)Colonial in Malaysia and Indonesia"

Abstract: Building on what is currently called the anthropology of images, I discuss how Islamic-Malay and Neo-Confucian futurisms cultivate specific ways of cultural belonging in the historically decolonized countries of Malaysia and Indonesia. The emergence of postmodernist architectural projects are developed in cosmopolitan cities such as Kuala Lumpur & Jakarta. In turn, these national landmarks act as nation-building projects which project certain futurities, encapsulated in their architectural designs using Islamic-Malay aesthetics. Engaging in archival research, I analyzed various media forms such as postcard designs and contemporary photos of national landmarks to deploy filmmaker Apichatpong Weerasethakul’s concept of the colonial ghost comparatively across the countries of Malaysia and Indonesia. In terms of hauntology, the ghost (Derrida, 1993 & Weerasethakul, 2016) symbolically represents the traces of an unresolved past which disrupts present temporalities and provides conceptual language for different ethnic groups to cultivate various forms of contested political memory (Good, 2019). The ghost manifests in different aesthetic forms such as hallucinations, trauma, & indirect references, especially illustrated in Director Joshua Oppenheimer’s documentary, the Act of Killing (2012). Overall, the anthropology of images is crucial in discussing how Malaysia (e.g. 2015 Bersih Protests) and Indonesia (e.g. 1965-1966 Mass Killings) address the political violence of historical decolonization. In turn, their nationalistic futurisms facilitate a decolonial language of purification, departing from the 1955 Bandung Conference’s sense of Afro-Asian solidarity and the Tricontinental’s revolutionary spirit.

Kymberley Chu
Kymberley “Kym” Chu recently graduated from the University of California, Davis. Taking a leap year, Kym will be conducting preliminary fieldwork in the countries of Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia. She hopes to write on how national landmarks envision specific futurities in postcolonial Southeast Asia.

"The Father, the Son, and the Aswang: Uncolonial Ontologies in Philippine Literature"

Abstract: This paper proposes the “uncolonial” as an alternative Philippine ontology to the traditionally dualistic terrain of coloniality often associated with the archipelago. While much traditional research has provided insight into the ways in which colonial governance, bolstered by Catholicism introduced by the Spanish upon their arrival on the islands, materially altered Philippine political and economic experiences, this paper articulates a theorization of immateriality and hybridity of uncolonial literature and cultural practices. By offering a triptych framework through which to articulate the uncolonial—an apt metaphor for the immense impact Abrahamic religion and the spiritual have had on the Philippines—this paper argues that the heterogeneity of a Philippine colonial, pre/postcolonial, and uncolonial structure enables an analysis of the historical trajectory of the Philippines without strictly reducing it to a totalizing nationalism. Utilizing Philippine folk creatures and monsters as vehicles through which to articulate an uncolonial indifference to colonial governance, this paper envisions a radical alterity of Philippine cultural and knowledge production, intentionally or not, unintelligible to the archipelago’s historical colonizers. Utilizing the umbrella of the aswang, a cultural figuration of different forms of supernatural creatures, as well as the more conventional spiritual manifestation of the ghost, the construction of an uncolonial Philippine ontology renders Philippine cultural production as something that cannot, and perhaps should not, be totally and completely understood.
Joshua Bender is a graduate student at the University of Washington Jackson School of International Studies, where he is earning his MA in Southeast Asian Studies. Joshua's research focuses on the literary (in the broadest sense of the word) works of the Philippines and its diasporas, particularly the ways in which spirits, ghosts, and specters manifest in fiction. His research hopes to challenge the dominant colonial narratives of Philippine history by Spain and the United States, instead offering an alternative ontology that emphasizes entertaining the ghosts of colonialism in the archipelago.

Rethinking International Relations

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"History for the Purpose of Nationalism in the Islamic Republic of Iran"

Abstract: The Islamic Republic of Iran utilizes history as a means of nationalism in order to further both its foreign and domestic policy goals and to continue building a cohesive identity that manipulates the understanding of the pre-1979 era. Modern Iran is only a little more than forty years old: thus, Iran’s pre-Islamic history is both vast and consists of what would be seen as sacrilegious today, such as shifts in governance and acceptance in differing religions. Since the Islamic Revolution, Supreme Leader Khomeini spearheaded the Iranian Cultural Revolution, which sought to purge institutions in Iran of whatever did not fall in line with his own understanding of political Islam. This is not unlike the earlier Cultural Revolution conducted by the Communist Party of China and the Soviet Union. The Iranian Cultural Revolution was a means to continue providing legitimacy to this new regime as well as begin sowing the seeds to build a cohesive narrative for the burgeoning theocracy. This was done by refurbishing historical sites, enabling censorship in the media, and exerting its revisionist cultural policy through public means such as schools and museums. I propose to examine how Iran has continued tactics from its own cultural revolution to reframe history to further its own political and policy goals in the 21st century. I’ll inspect what has both changed and stayed the same during this forty year time frame while examining if it has helped the country achieve its nationalistic goals of a shared identity within its own citizens and its policy goals domestically and abroad.

Sadaf Dastan (George Washington University)
Sadaf Dastan is a second-year M.A. Candidate at The George Washington University’s Elliott School of International Affairs and a Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellow. Her research interests include studying both modern day Iran and U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. Most recently, she completed a policy fellowship with the John Quincy Adams Society and the Don Lavoie Fellowship with the Mercatus Center. Prior to beginning at The George Washington University, she graduated magna cum laude from George Mason University with a B.S. in International Conflict Analysis and Resolution with a minor in Anthropology, where she worked as both an undergraduate teaching assistant and a research assistant.
"When Hallyu Meets Halal The Problems and Promise of South Korea’s Engagement with the Muslim World"

**Abstract**: The idea of a “Global Korea” has emerged to describe the all but inescapable reality of the Republic of Korea or South Korea as a veritable “Middle Power” engaging in a world beyond Northeast Asia. This has led to the rise of Korean soft-power in the so-called “Hallyu” or “Korean Wave” recognizes this international appetite for Korean film, music, and cuisine across the world. Yet, this image of a global Korea is not without its discontents. The following study explores the limits of domestic Islamophobia on the development of Korea’s trade relations with the Islamic world. Does the rise of Islamophobia in South Korea demonstrate a real tension between the country’s international status and its own domestic national identity? The rejection of the Halal industry by local South Korean civil society presents a serious contradiction with the ROK’s foreign and economic policy as it closes off lucrative foreign markets, particularly with Muslim countries in the Middle East and Southeast Asia. This prevents Korea from pursuing external balancing and disengages contemporary Korea from the international community overall. The study builds upon new literature on South Korean Islamophobia as well as renewed media interest in South Korea’s engagement with Muslims more broadly and data published by the Korean government. Ultimately, this paper demonstrates the limitations of domestic pressure groups on the implementation of Korean foreign and trade policy and discusses more broadly how domestic opposition to foreign policy can undercut the foreign policy interests of nation states.

**Moez Hayat** (Academy of Brunei Studies)

Moez Hayat is a Fulbrighter and Visiting Researcher at the Academy of Brunei Studies, University of Brunei Darussalam. He completed his Master of Arts in Asian Studies at the Edmund A Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. He studies foreign policy and security in the Middle East, South Asia and Southeast Asia and has published in the Diplomat, the East Asia Forum, the National Interest, Modern Diplomacy, and the Australian Outlook.

"China-Friendly? A Brief View of Singapore and Malaysia"

**Abstract**: As a Chinese Muslim researcher who has conducted multiple informal fieldwork sessions and interviews within the region, I chose Malaysia and Singapore, two countries with relatively high ratio of ethnic Chinese descendants and an Islamic culture branch to oppose certain points Professor Mearsheimer made, and come to a conclusion based not merely on Malay Archipelago, but Southeast Asia as a whole, united landmass. I planned to settle on Singapore and Malaysia because of their linguistic and political statuses, and, most importantly, the blood and socioeconomic affinities between China and those two nations. In recent years, Chinese firms and forces have been deep in the waters of the Straits of Malacca. From the Kuala Lumpur railway project concerning $33.8 billion to the China-Singapore Free Trade Agreement upgrade, China has shown its importance in the region, demonstrating its tremendous purchasing power even across the globe. The reason why I based my assertion on the particular region of Southeast Asia, the area of "Monsoon Asia" that has long been considered the neighboring land-masses of Asia and India (King and Wilder, 2003: 1-24), is due to the neglect it has experienced. Even at the end of the twentieth century, “relatively little progress has been made in furthering the understanding of changing South-East Asian societiesM(Evers, 1980a:ix). I would therefore link up my responses with the help of an award-winning film, Wet Season, which concentrates on the cultural recognition of Singaporean and Malaysian communities, to further explain certain particularities within the countries, and, moreover, in the trend all over the world. I plan to reveal the logical errors in Mearsheimer5s deduction, and have an elaborate span on the field of international relations from a sociological perspective concentrating on history, economy, and social stratification within the area.
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"Cosmopolitanisms and Comparisons in the Study of Southeast Asian History"  
John Sidel  
Sir Patrick Gillam Professor of International and Comparative Politics  
London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)  
Zoom Link https://uwmadison.zoom.us/j/94077937311 |
| 1:30PM-2:30PM | Revolution and Empire  
Moderator  
Ei Thin Zar, PhD Candidate, School of Education (UW-Madison)  
Zoom Link https://uwmadison.zoom.us/j/98845185789 |
"Contested Ascendancies: An Analysis of Hegemonic Exertion in the Indonesian Archipelago and Traditional U.S. Spheres of Influence"

Abstract: The U.S.-backed military coup d’état and wholesale liquidation of the Indonesian Left in 1965-66 was followed by a string of similar approaches by right-wing militaries throughout Latin America – a process recently dubbed the “Jakarta Method” by Vincent Bevins. The exportation of these methods is as clear as the notes passed to Argentine Leftists prior to the 1976 coup of the Allende regime, reading merely “Jakarta is coming.” However, similarities in the execution of these U.S.-backed coup d’états have been incorrectly correlated with a resemblance of the foreign policy and domestic political situations in Indonesia and other countries which transitioned to right-wing military governments in the decades following 1965. This paper offers a comparative analysis of events leading to the coups in Indonesia and Brazil in 1964-65 as a corrective to the interpretation of events in Jakarta mirroring those in Latin America. Both countries were the largest, most populous nations in their regions and critical to U.S. foreign policy aims – Brazil by proximity, Indonesia by geopolitical strategy. Subsequently, both nations experienced U.S.-backed right-wing military coup d’états which led to regimes firmly aligned with the anti-communist bloc. However, there is dramatic differentiation in the circumstances leading to, and events following, each coup. Sitting squarely within the traditional U.S. sphere of influence, Brazil’s change of government in 1964 went incredibly smoothly, taking only several months from initial planning to implementation and requiring no direct U.S. assistance. In contrast, the U.S. spent nearly a decade overtly and covertly attempting, and failing, to assert influence over or replace the Sukarno regime. Just weeks before the coup, the U.S. foreign policy establishment had accepted that years of concerted effort had failed and began planning foreign policy under the assumption of Communist control of Indonesia. Unlike in Brazil, Washington was caught off guard by the power struggle that commenced on September 30th in Jakarta – a power struggle which was ultimately the product of internal Indonesian politics and far less influenced by external forces than regime changes that occurred in the traditional U.S. sphere of influence in Latin America.

Chris Hulshof (UW-Madison)
I am a student of history primarily interested in the proliferation of imperial power during the 20th and 21st centuries. In particular, I find the reassertion of peripheral agency and diminishment of Western exceptionalism in transnational contexts quite compelling. But ultimately, I just like history. And it likes me.

"The Revolutionaries: Lenin and Kemal"

Abstract: A comparative study of Vladimir Lenin and Mustafa Kemal and the political philosophies that they created. Both men not only built new countries unique to the Eurasian space, but they also created political and social philosophies individual to them. Although, the social changes that they implemented under their social philosophies where not unique like in the linguistics changes with the 1918 Spelling Act in the Soviet Union and Law on the Adoption and Implementation of the Turkish Alphabet a decade later on November 1, 1928. Most of the changes that were made were not completely unique especially for Kemal who was inspired by the changed enacted by Lenin years earlier. The two men influence, inspired, and worked with one another to solidify their young countries. In 1921, Lenin and Kemal signed the Treaty of Moscow and Treaty of Kars which outlined borders between the Republic of Turkey and the Soviet Union. At the time of signing, the Republic of Turkey was not independent with Kemal acting as a state actor when he was not seen as one on the world stage. Through evaluating these treaties along with the similarities and differences between Leninism and Kemalism, one can greater understand the foundation of the countries that shaped the 20th century.
"Reflections on the Revolution in Burma: Explaining the Leftward Framing of the 1962 Coup d’Etat"

**Abstract**: The first half the 1960’s saw at least thirty-five coups, of which only three took a leftist stance. In 1962 Ne Win seized power from the democratically elected U Nu, himself a socialist, and declared a socialist state led by a revolutionary council. Whilst there are numerous studies on the continued dominance of the military in Burmese politics, few have sought to explain why this coup went against the often conservative trend and framed itself as a leftist revolution. Drawing on contemporary commentators, the publications of those involved in the coup and retrospective scholarship, this paper demonstrates the links between anti-colonial resistance, the experience of the Burmese as part of the global capitalist economy and the ideological origins of the military itself. It ultimately argues that due to the religious, political and economic context of the development of Burmese political thought, socialism was seen as the most attractive, if not the only, ideology that would achieve the post-colonial renaissance of Burma.

**Thomas Edward Kingston**
Thomas Edward Kingston holds an LLB (Hons) in Law and discovered a passion for Southeast Asia whilst working in human rights law in Cambodia. Subsequent studies resulted in an MA in Pacific Asian Studies with Distinction from SOAS, University of London where he wrote his dissertation on the Burmese Way to Socialism under Prof Michael Charney and an MPhil in Chinese Philosophy from Renmin University of China where his thesis on Early Chinese Socialism received the highest grade in the year. He is studying Burmese at SEASSI, and hopes to use the skills he learns to form a foundation for further engagement with Burmese language sources.
"Socio-Political Construction and Constraints of 'Refugee Entrepreneurs' – Syrians in Turkey"

**Abstract**: The topic of this paper is on how restrictions to formal labor market access (LMA) leads to informal refugee entrepreneurship in Turkey. Furthermore, the paper will assess how the current legislation around financial backing and formal LMA for Syrian refugees under temporary protected status (TPS) in Turkey impacts the economic wellbeing of both Syrians under TPS and low-income Turkish nationals. The research for this paper will include a comprehensive literature review, an evaluation of primary source documents (such as international and domestic legislation) and the consolidation and assessment statistical data (collected from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Labor Organization, and the Turkish Statistical institute). There are three key arguments presented in this paper. Firstly, informal microenterprises established by Syrians are in reaction to not being able to adequately access the formal market as employees. Secondly, many small to medium sized enterprises established by Syrians are forced to remain in the informal sector due to lack access to financial backing. Lastly and perhaps most importantly, limiting formal LMA through both restrictive work permits and minimal routes to financial backing for formalizing entrepreneurial businesses is harmful to the economic wellbeing of both Syrians under TPS and low-income Turkish citizens. The paper concludes by recommending some policy changes and areas for future research.

**Gabriella Chamberland (University of Washington - Seattle)**

Gabby, as her friends call her, is a Boren Fellow studying Turkish through the APTLI program in preparation for her time abroad in Baku, Azerbaijan. In Baku, she aims to continue her intensive Turkish language study while researching labor migration and/or interning with a UN organization. Currently Gabby is pursuing both a Master of Social Work and an MA in Applied International Studies at the University of Washington in Seattle. She was awarded a 2020-2021 FLAS for Turkish and a 2018-2019 Fulbright ETA to Turkey. Additionally, Gabby was presented with both the 2019 Alumni Community Service Award and the 2015 Mary Mildred Sullivan Award for “unselfish service” and “nobility of character” from Converse College, where she received a BA in politics. Her internationally focused research interests fall at the intersection of forced migration, social justice, and labor market accessibility. In her free time Gabby enjoys dying her hair crazy colors, traveling, reading, and creating things with her hands.
"Making it work here: a mixed-method research of refugee employment experience in Buffalo"

Abstract: Refugees are among the most vulnerable yet understudied immigrant population in the US. They often leave war-torn countries or other violence in search of safety and socioeconomic opportunities in American cities. Many Burmese refugees, for example, fled the military conflicts in Burma and stayed in camps in Thailand or urban settlements in Malaysia for years. After a long journey, they are finally resettled in American cities and ready to start a new life here, but with many challenges as well. Refugees typically experience varying degrees of unemployment, underemployment, underpayment, informal economy work, and sometimes rely on public assistance, all of which contribute to their downward mobility. Although the current literature provides an analysis of refugees’ employment status and identifies key factors impeding refugees’ economic integration, it tends to focus on individual characteristics, while many refugee families develop coping strategies as a family together. As such, the current literature fails to address the underlying mechanism behind refugees’ family decision on their employment, how refugees cope with the challenges with family decisions, and how their employ in turn influence their family relationships as a gendered outcome. Asian refugees are particularly understudied in the refugee literature. In this study, I analyze refugee’s work and family relationships with a mixed method design. The quantitative data in this study come from American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimate from 2009-2019, and refugee resettlement data from 2009-2019 from Refugee Processing Center (RPC). I will then interview 25-30 Asian refugees living in the Buffalo area, primarily from Burma and Bhutan, to study their perceptions and experiences of employment, how those work experiences influence their family life roles and vice versa, to explain the quantitative results. This study will contribute to the refugee literature by providing a deeper understanding of their employment and family relationships, and theories of migration and integration in general.

Shiyue Cui (University of Buffalo)
Shiyue Cui is a PhD student in the Sociology Department at University at Buffalo, where she researches international migration and immigrant integration as a cultural process. Her study focuses on how migrants make sense of their journey and navigate the urban space in their destination cities. Shiyue will study Burmese at SEASSI this summer.
"Transnational Marriage: Hmong American Men and Hmong Thai/Lao Women"

**Abstract**: Transnational marriage between Hmong American and Hmong Thai/Lao is a new kind of marriage that just started in the last 40 years. But transnational marriage became a controversial topic in the Hmong American community because the Hmong American men that went overseas to marry Hmong Thai/Lao women are often 1) already married, 2) between the age of 50-60, and 3) would try to marry someone as young or even younger than their children. Anecdotally, Hmong Thai/Lao women that married Hmong American men were given two dominant negative narratives by the larger Hmong American community. These women were portrayed as either victims being exploited by old Hmong American men or calculated women taking advantage of old unintelligent Hmong American men. No matter, the goals of the women are material possessions, money, and the opportunity to migrate to America. With the intent to understand Hmong Thai/Lao women about their reasons for marrying Hmong American men, I conducted in-depth interviews with two Hmong Thai women: Ka, who lives in Minnesota, and Pang, who lives in Wisconsin. Ka and Pang (pseudonyms) were originally from Northern Thailand and married Hmong American men. Through these interviews, my preliminary findings revealed that both women expressed different reasons for choosing to marry their husbands: career advancement opportunities, influences from their family, and love. They did not fit the negative narratives of Hmong Thai/Lao women who married Hmong American men.

**Bao Xiong (UW-Madison)**

I’m a first-generation college student. I will be finishing my MA in Southeast Asian Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison this summer and starting the Anthropology PhD program in the fall. I’m interested in researching the Hmong diaspora communities (America, Thailand, Laos, China, etc.) and their relationships with each other. I want to look at how globalization and modern technology may have influence/change these relationships.
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<th>Myths, Texts, and Perceptions: Topics in Philosophy and Religious Studies</th>
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1 "Slippery Births: Paraśurāma and Matricide in the Mahābhārata"

**Abstract**: This paper will examine the myth of Paraśurāma in the Mahābhārata, especially the curious circumstances of his birth and his eventual crime of matricide, in order to demonstrate how relations of kinship and demarcations of caste no longer remain clearly recognizable in the text. By focusing on the deferred birth of Paraśurāma, whereby he is transplanted from one womb to another across a generation, I will examine the ways in which the text not only complicates the demarcations of caste-based dharma (sva-dharma) but also creates a situation where the neat patterns governing kin relations seem to be coming undone. These questions require serious rethinking today when issues such as abortion and parenting rights are fiercely debated, assisted reproductive technologies like artificial insemination, in-vitro fertilization, and surrogacy remain points of contention in several countries, and queer kinships and same-sex parenting are increasingly gaining ground. In analyzing the socio-political anxieties expressed through the myth, I shall then turn to Paraśurāma’s matricide, whose purpose, I shall argue, is to performatively locate himself in a kinship model that has been rendered unintelligible. I shall conclude by arguing that a queer reading of the myth opens up possibilities for politicizing notions of origin and originality, of normative and queer parenting, of what counts as natural birth and what is considered perverse.

**Tuhin Bhattacharjee** (New York University)

Tuhin Bhattacharjee is a PhD candidate in the department of Comparative Literature at New York University (NYU). His research brings together ancient Greek and Sanskrit texts – as well as their reception in (post)colonial Bengali culture, 20th–21st century feminist philosophy, and the German-English socialist tradition – in order to investigate figurations of desiring mothers in antiquity. He is an Educational Ambassador for Save Ancient Studies Alliance (SASA), and his most recent essays on the intersections between feminist philosophy and cultures of antiquity have been accepted for publication in philoSOPHIA: A Journal of transContinental Feminism (SUNY Press) and The Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics.
"Dignāga on Percepts and Causal Accounts of Perception"

Abstract: Dignāga’s Autocommentary to Investigation of the Percept deals with a series of accounts of what might properly be regarded as a perceptual object, or percept. In this paper, I explain Dignāga’s arguments and defend aspects of them that he does not. Dignāga takes for granted that the percept must both cause its perception and feature in the content of that perception, an assumption which I present two reasons for accepting. On the basis of this criteria, he refutes three accounts of perception before defending one of his own. First, he argues that the partless particles which factor into the ontologies of philosophical atomists cannot be percepts since they are not perceptual contents. I argue that this argument can be applied to more popular contemporary conceptions of matter. Second, he argues that collections of partless particles cannot be the objects of perception since collections are not ultimately real. Finally, he argues that collected features supervening on partless particles cannot be percepts either. I argue that his response to last possibility fails to be cross applicable to contemporary conceptions of matter, but that it could be rehabilitated by relying on the problem of causal exclusion. Finally, Dignāga argues that since all sorts of external objects have been exhausted, percepts must be internal objects. I argue that Dignāga’s internal percepts cannot meet his initial assumption either, and connect this to Dignāga’s later philosophy in which he rejects all attempts at creating causal accounts of perception.

Sagar Rao (Swarthmore College)

Sagar Rao (‘22) is a rising senior at Swarthmore College studying Philosophy and Biology with an interest in philosophical and religious literature from all time periods done in the languages of South Asia. He is a current Elementary Hindi student at the South Asian Summer Language Institute.

"'God of the Gaps:' Towards a Theology of Incorporation"

Abstract: The patriarch Abraham has proven to be the most prestigious ancestor one could wish for. The three great Abrahamic faiths all lay claim to him as father, and while that common claim has recently been a rallying call for unity, it has long had just the opposite effect. The story begins in Genesis and quickly becomes complicated when primogeniture—a typical axis of Biblical conflict—is overturned in favor of Isaac, from whom Jews claim descent. Hagar and Abraham’s first born son Ishmael soon walk right off the biblical stage never to be heard from again. That is, until they again appear on stage in the Islamic drama of historical origins. In the Islamic version of history, Hagar and Ishmael are accorded a higher standing as progenetrix and forefather of the Muslims, having been left in Mecca by Abraham as part of a larger divine plan. What we have here then, is a narrative gap which was later filled in by another “interpretive community” (as literary theorist Stanley Fish would coin it) that effectively annexed a vast swath of the human race into the favor of God. By investigating additional narrative gaps brought to light by the Book of Mormon, a purportedly ancient history of another lost branch of the Abrahamic family translated into English by the antebellum American prophet Joseph Smith, in conversation with the more familiar traditions and the recent research of Mohsen Goudarzi on Islamic descent from Ishmael, I hope to contribute to a “theology of the gaps” that problematizes the all-too-easy exercise of excluding the “Other” from the favor of God.
Garrett Maxwell (Brigham Young University)
After first encountering the Qur’an while sheltering under a sheet metal roof during a tropical typhoon, the enchantment cast by the Arabic script still grips him. Garrett now studies Comparative Literature and Middle Eastern Studies & Arabic at Brigham Young University, wherein his personal and academic interests coincide. He is primarily interested in the historical and critical reception of scripture in general, and the Qur’an in particular. He feels deeply about the questions of religion and modernity, the nature of sacred texts, scriptural hermeneutics, religious epistemology, and the metaphysics of revelation. Through engaging with these and other related questions, he hopes to both illuminate humankind’s historical encounter with the sacred, and evoke that encounter in the present.

"Cremation Grounds: Impurity as a Method of Knowing"

Abstract: This paper investigates the problem (and meaning) of pollution and impurity—and within this, the symbolic implications and theoretical entailments of the pure/impure binary. It seeks to interrogate normative understandings about Hindu notions of purity and impurity, as reflected in the soundings of Louis Dumont and Reza Aslan. This involves questioning and unpacking the degree to which religion underpins what we (in the West) mean by “Hinduism”—a term that bears the hermeneutic scars of classificatory “imperial” ways of knowing. Specifically, this paper transvalues the “impure” as a source of self-power that transcends the pure/impure binary and its ideological mechanisms within a Brahmanic hierarchy of purity and pollution. It investigates the infamous “left-handed,” Aghor ascetics who haunt the cremation grounds of north India—especially Varanasi—and engage in “impure” pursuits (e.g. cannibalism, sex with low-caste women, etc.). Since Aghor philosophy views disgust for, as well as fear of, the material world as conceptual obstacles to attaining a perfected state of consciousness, its pollution-embracing practices serve as multivalent exercises that liberate individuals to wholly return to indivisible order embodied by Śiva. Aghor practices thus comprise cognitive methods for overcoming disgust for the material world and, in turn, a discriminatory mind state within the system of social relations we know as “caste” and from which the stigma of untouchability and impurity emerges. The process of destigmatizing the two thereby involves acknowledging and incorporating the very conditions that elicit stigmatization of particular persons and bodies into ways of being and understanding the “self.”

Christine Zheng (University of Chicago)
Christine Zheng studied religion and art history at Wesleyan University, with a historical focus on Hindu, specifically Shaivite, traditions. She is particularly interested in the intersection of critical theory, affect theory, and disability studies, and how it may address questions about relationality, power, and propriety in modern Hindu contexts. Starting Fall 2021, she will pursue an MA in Religion at The University of Chicago’s Divinity School.

| 2:45-3:30PM | Topics in Southeast Asian Culture and Society |
| Moderator | Steve Laronga, Lecturer, University of Michigan |
| Zoom Link | [https://uwmadison.zoom.us/j/93606401173](https://uwmadison.zoom.us/j/93606401173) |
### "The 1893 Gamelan and American Composers"

**Abstract**: In 1893 Chicago was home to the World’s Columbian Exposition. One of the most popular displays at the exposition was the Java Village. It was at the Java Village that Americans first heard the Javanese gamelan. Europeans heard gamelan music five years earlier at the 1889 Exposition Universelle in Paris, France. At the exposition famous French composer Claude Debussy (1862-1918) was captivated by the sounds of the gamelan. As a result, he wrote a piece in 1903 called Pagodes. Many Western classical music composers after Debussy, have also been inspired by the Javanese gamelan. Since gamelan music was on display at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago, I wonder why American composers were not also inspired by gamelan music like Debussy. I argue that the popularity of the Java exhibit in the 1893 Columbian Exposition had only minimal influence on Western classical composers in the United States. A contributing factor to the lack of Javanese influence in the U.S. was a result of the Dutch colonization in Java. The U.S. did not have a direct relationship with Java which resulted in a limited cultural exchange in the late 19th century. Gamelan inspired music did not appear in the United States until the mid-20th century with composers like Lou Harrison (1917-2003). Harrison’s interest in gamelan did not come from the 1893 gamelan. His interest was a result of the raise of gamelan ensembles in higher education that started in 1958, because of ethnomusicologist Mantle Hood (1918-2005).

**Glynnis White** (Northern Illinois University)
Glynnis White is a world music pedagogy graduate student at Northern Illinois University. Her focus is in Southeast Asian music. She taking Indonesian at SEASSI.

### "Burmese Tone Perception in Isolated Words Comparing Confusability of Tone Pairs"

**Abstract**: The purpose of this study was to investigate and compare the four tones in Burmese, the heavy tone (tone 1) and the low tone (tone 2) would be the most confusable tone pair. To test this hypothesis a survey was created using voice recordings of native speakers producing minimal pairs differentiated only by tone. Respondents to the survey were asked to identify the isolated words heard in the recordings and then select from multiple choice options the correct answer. The multiple-choice options were always minimal pairs separated by tone only. In total, 1,942 data points were recorded. The data showed that tones 1 and 2 were the most confusable by native speakers. The most frequent error was incorrectly perceiving tone 1 to be tone 2. In discerning between tones 1 and 2 with isolated words, native speakers were only accurate 60-70% of the time. Accuracy for other pairs such as 2 and 3, or 1 and 4, were much greater. These results were found to be statistically significant with a p value of < .001. Tones 3 and 4 were trending as the second most likely pair to be confused. The data collected showed that the null hypothesis could be rejected. This suggests that native speakers use many tools outside of phonetic information, such as semantic and syntactic context, to disambiguate these minimal pairs in real-world speech.

**Ryan Young** (Brigham Young University)
Ryan Young is a 4th year undergraduate linguistics student at Brigham Young University (BYU) with a focus on Southeast Asian Languages. Ryan speaks Burmese and Thai at a Superior level and Laotian at an Advanced level on the ACTFL scale. He teaches beginning Thai and Burmese at the Missionary Training Center for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He was also the first instructor to teach Burmese at Brigham Young University. He currently teaches 3rd year advanced Burmese for BYU as well as working as an active freelance and volunteer interpreter in Thai and Burmese. Ryan is attending SEASSI 2021 studying the Thai language.