



What is Cultural Studies in Asia?

The Cultural Studies in Asia (CSA) PhD Programme was established in 2009 and is the only such programme taught in English in Asia. It is housed in the Department of Sociology.

Adopting an interdisciplinary approach, the CSA-PhD aims to provide teaching and research skills in the analysis of the flows and exchanges of popular cultural practices in contemporary Asia. The Programme taps the rich pool of over 300 humanities and social science professors in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) to enable candidates to tailor their studies according to their research interests. Students could choose their dissertation supervisors and enroll in relevant modules from all departments in FASS. A number of core modules taught by specialists in the field provide the common grounding in the theory and practice of Cultural Studies. Students therefore benefit from learning with a wide range of theoretical, methodological and substantive experts in a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary manner.



Core Research Areas

The research interests undertaken by our candidates range from politics of pop music, museum and nation building, documentary films of Thailand, political and intellectual biography of Indonesian revolutionary writer Toer, urban imaginaries of Dhaka, heritage spatial politics in Malaysia, community activism and dance in India, and aesthetic engagement with history among Southeast Asian visual artists. In these cases, supervisors for the dissertation research have been drawn from the departments of Southeast Asian Studies, Sociology, Geography, English Literature, Chinese Studies and School of Architecture.

Academic Exchanges

The CSA-PhD Programme is part of the Inter-Asia Cultural Studies (IACS) Society (<http://culturalstudies.asia>). The Society, and its Consortium of institutions offering postgraduate programmes, organises regular events bringing cultural studies scholars and students in Asia and from around the world together in Asian cities to discuss pertinent issues relating to the knowledge conditions of politics, power and practices in the region. Our CSA-PhD students would have the opportunity to attend the

biannual Summer School to take extra courses and the biannual Conference to present their work. Recent IACS Summer Schools were held in Seoul and Bangalore, and recent IACS Conferences were held in Tokyo and Dhaka. The 2013 Conference was held in Singapore, organized by the CSA-PhD Programme and saw over 300 scholars and students participating in the 5-day event.



Our network also includes the many scholars who visit the Asia Research Institute, particularly those attached to the Institute's Cultural Studies research cluster. Every year, we invite one eminent professor to visit our Programme to teach a two-month special topic module under the William Lim Siew Wai Fellowship. Past visiting fellows include Professors Maila Stivens, Mike Featherstone and Audrey Yue.

Duration of Candidature

- Research candidates pursuing full-time studies are expected to commit themselves to at least 40 hours per week of study. The University does not encourage full-time students from taking up employment during term time that might interfere with their studies. Foreign students pursuing studies on a Student's Pass must pursue their studies on a full-time basis.
- The maximum period of candidature for a doctoral candidate is 60 months from the date of the registration. The maximum period of candidature is inclusive of periods of approved study leave. It is inclusive of any period of preparatory study that may be required by the Department where the candidate is pursuing his/her studies.

Curricular Requirements

- Candidates admitted must pursue in the University a course of advanced study comprising no fewer than 8 modules and research approved by the Faculty under the supervision of one or more academic staff of the Faculty.
- Three core modules are compulsory for all candidates, so as to provide a common grounding in the field. All elective modules will be drawn from existing relevant postgraduate modules on offer from the different departments in FASS. In addition, one special topic module will be conducted each academic year by a visiting scholar.
- For PhD students, at least 50% of the total MC requirements must be at level 6000. Up to 25% of the total MC requirements may be at level 4000. The remaining MCs must be at level 5000 or 6000.

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Felicia Low Ee Ping

The Cultural Studies in Asia PhD Programme has deepened the scope of my work as an artist in Singapore. I particularly enjoyed taking a range of modules across the faculty, from anthropology to geography to philosophy. A focus on aspects of culture and politics in Asia has enabled me to understand better the place of the arts and subaltern communities in Singapore. My research looks into the possibilities of subaltern freedom within a political framework of neo-liberalism through an auto-ethnographic study of three art projects carried out with an institution for the incarcerated, an NGO that supports the rights of sex workers and three young ladies who identify themselves as homosexual, bisexual and heterosexual respectively.



Ye Xiaojun

CSA-PhD Programme, with its institutional openness and academic diversity, opens up an amazing space where I can do intellectual work in a different way, which may not be so readily available in other places. It helps me to seek an alternative approach with more explanatory power to the relationship between media and Chinese society. My research tries to better understand both the social structure and formation through reading Wenchuan Earthquake as a media event, which organised the Chinese people into a unified time-space, linked local community and larger structure, and displayed both the continuance and disruption of the dominant social structure. And CSA-PhD with its interdisciplinary strength provided me privileged insight to the disaster with extraordinary complexity.



Robert Williamson

My research concerns documentary filmmaking in Southeast Asia, with an emphasis on how young people use the medium to formulate political positions and identities in societies where the public discussion of recent political history remains regulated or restricted. This topic is positioned at an intersection of political science, law, education, social memory and film aesthetics. The Cultural Studies in Asia programme is designed to help students negotiate these kinds of complex interdisciplinary questions and construct theoretical frameworks that cut across traditional academic disciplines. It allows real flexibility and freedom to explore issues from a number of perspectives, encouraging students to take classes and choose advisors from any number of the departments within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. I feel I can approach my topic in a much more comprehensive way than a Film Studies programme would normally allow, and the resulting work should be of interest to a wider range of readers.



Residency Requirements

- Candidates must spend a period of residence in Singapore for a minimum of 18 months for the PhD degree during their candidature. Period of study leave and overseas fieldwork do not count towards residency.
- Please note that candidates who are awarded NUS scholarships must reside in Singapore throughout the duration of the scholarship award.

Founding Professor: **Professor Chua Beng Huat**
Convener: **Associate Professor Daniel PS Goh**

CSA-PhD Core and Elective Modules

- CSA6101 Cultural Studies Theory and Analysis
- CSA6102 Cultural Studies in Asia
- CSA6770 Graduate Research Seminar
- CSA6880 Topics in Cultural Studies in Asia

For enquiries pertaining to CSA-PhD, please email us at: socbox1@nus.edu.sg

For more information, please visit our website at: www.fas.nus.edu.sg/soc

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