Chen Liang (Mr)

Thesis Title: From a Christian Socialist to a Christian Realist: Reinhold Niebuhr and the Soviet Union, 1930-1945
Thesis Committee: Assoc Prof Ian Gordon/Peter Borschberg, Dr Michael Kelly, Dr Quek Ser Hwee

Building on his famous slogan “politically to the left and theologically to the right,” my research attempts to prove that Reinhold Niebuhr’s engagement with the Soviet Union played a decisive role in turning him from a Christian radical into a famed Christian realist. Niebuhr’s grappling with communism, my thesis argues, not only led this one of the greatest American theologians of the past century to rediscover “sin”, the linchpin of Christian Realism, but also greatly impacted his understanding of the dialectic relation between love and justice in the political arena.

CHI Zhen (Mr)

Thesis Title: A Pragmatic Experiment in Rural Construction Movement: The Self-Government of Wanxi in Southwest Henan, 1930-1940
Thesis Committee: Assoc Prof Thomas DuBois, Assoc Prof Huang Jianli, Prof Ng Chin Keong

Wanxi locates in the southwestern part of today’s Henan Province, China. It includes several counties. In the 1930s, there was a local self-government led by some local elite. The local self-government created a powerful local armed force, and resist successfully the Guomindang’s provincial government’s effort of resuming its rule in this region. In ten years, Wanxi kept a semi-independent status. The local self-government did its utmost to resume social order, rehabilitate local economy, and develop rural education. Therefore, it was regarded as an important rural reconstruction experiment. This thesis discusses the local self-government of Wanxi from the perspective of central-local relationship and rural reconstruction movement. This thesis argues that it was a practice of local state building. In the short run, local state building ran counter to the power centralization; but in the longer term, it would be helpful for building a strong modern state.

FANG Xiaoping (Mr)

PhD Thesis Committee: Assoc Prof Gregory Clancey, Assoc Prof Thomas Dubois, Assoc Prof Huang Jianli

This dissertation explores how the medical world of Chinese villages was transformed through medical contestation, structural evolution, and professional formation, in the dynamic period from 1949 to 1983. The advent of “barefoot doctors” during the Cultural Revolution marked the completion of a tremendous reshuffling of village healers and the fulfilment of the “state medicine” concept. Contrary to the propaganda of the time, barefoot doctors actually helped marginalize Chinese medicine vis-a-vis western medicine, in terms of knowledge, pharmaceuticals, and healing styles. The barefoot doctors changed the two-tier rural medical system that prevailed under union clinics in the 1950-60s into a three-tier system, in which they gained medical dominance. Moreover, the barefoot doctors constituted a nascent rural medical profession, establishing new identities, practices, and relationships in closed village societies under a revolutionary imperative. Their profession was only strengthened by post-Mao rural reforms.

MALA Raja Sathian (Ms)

Thesis Title: Socio-Economic History of the Southern Thai Provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat (C. 19th - 20th Century)
Supervised by: Assoc Prof Paul Kratoska

Ethnic Malay-Muslims of southern Thailand (Thai Muslims) comprise Thailand’s largest indigenous minority group. The provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat, located at the southeastern end of the country and bordering Thailand’s neighbour to the south-Malaysia- is home to the majority of Thailand’s ethnic Malays. These areas have long inherited the political nomenclature of Thailand’s “recalcitrant provinces”, referring to the Malay-Muslims’ persistent agitation for separation from the Thai state.

Malay-Muslim resistance to Thai rule is believed to have stemmed from Siamese injustices and misrule of these people, particularly in the period following the introduction of the centralization policy (1890s) of the Thai state. A close reading of documentary evidence, however, suggests that the implicit factors for the discontent were closely connected to the issue of revenue and the fear of foreign concession hunters flooding the south and appropriating the resource-rich areas in the south from Siamese control. By exploring the economy and the trade networks of the southern
region, focusing in particular on the tin mining industry and the overland cattle trade, this study suggests that political decisions made regarding the southern provinces were determined by economic considerations, thus offering a more comprehensive explanation for the problems in the south vis-a-vis Siamese administration. The study also attempts to provide a clearer perspective of the livelihood of the people, the economic diversity of the southern region and the constant construction and reconstruction as well as the contestation of the socio-political identity of its inhabitants.

**MERCEDES Planta (Ms)**

Thesis Title: Prerequisites to a Civilized Life: The American Colonial Public Health System in the Philippines, 1901 to 1927

Thesis Committee: Assoc Prof Gregory Clancey, Dr Hong Lysa, Assoc Prof Paul Kratoska

This study examines American strategies of governance through the colonial public health system from 1901 to 1927. It focuses on sanitation, health, hygiene, medical and scientific institutions, as well as health and medical professions. As a rationale of the civilizing mission to prepare Filipinos for independence, public health became the arena in which Filipino progress was gauged.

This study is positioned within the larger political concern of Philippine independence. At the same time, it is also being enfolded in the bigger theme of the United States Empire, race, colonial medicine, and public health in the context of the global phenomenon of imperialism in the late nineteenth century. As these fields come together, the study aims to participate in the development of a new cultural-political history of Southeast Asia in general and American colonialism in particular, in the 20th century.

**Deepa NAIR (Ms)**

Thesis Title: Political Agenda of History Teaching in India since Independence

PhD Thesis Committee: Assoc Prof Yong Mun Cheong, Prof Peter Reeves Prof Tan Tai Yong

This work seeks to delineate and analyze multiple readings of the Indian past as reflected in various history textbooks commissioned by the Indian state. It explores the divergent images of nationhood and the use and abuse of historical narratives by the state and also the historians. It discusses the nature and politics of historiography, historical truths and construction of historical identities by revisiting the pedigree of discordant voices, which characterize the present textbook debate in specific historical contexts in India.

An analysis of some textbooks prescribed by the post-colonial Indian state is used to identify the different themes focusing on the character of Indian civilization and the idea of an Indian citizen. The imprint of the ideology of various governments in power on the selection/omission of actors, periods, events, and communities in the broader narrative of Indian history is attempted.

**SHEN Huifen (Ms)**

Thesis Title: Engendering Chinese Migration History: “Left-behind Wives of The Nanyang Migrants” in Quanzhou before and after the Pacific War

Thesis Committee: Assoc Prof Huang Jianli, Prof Ng Chin Keong, Assoc Prof Liu Hong

This study intends to discover a history of Chinese women who were left-behind in male-dominated migration from south China to Southeast Asia (Nanyang). This will be achieved by a close examination of the “left-behind wives of Nanyang migrants” (fankeshen 番客婶) in Quzhou before and after the Pacific War from a gender perspective. It focuses on women’s autonomy and wisdom to handle the challenges left behind by their husbands. It will be noted that these women faced a variety of situations and their adaptation and survival strategies in the complex environment of modern China, made even more complicated by the international migratory process, is rather admirable. Changes in gender relations and gender roles within migrant marriages and families will be studied. The positioning of these women in the public sphere will be used to shed light on their socio-political life and to explore the intricate relationship between gender, state and migration.
ZHANG Leiping (Ms)

Thesis Title: Trade and security issues in Sino-Vietnamese relations from 1802-1874
Thesis Committee: Assoc Prof Bruce Lockhart, Prof Ng Chin Keong, Prof Anthony Reid

The Nguyen endeavored to expand the commercial contacts with China since they reconditioned the traditional Sino-Vietnamese relationship, namely the Sino-Vietnamese tributary relations in 1802. Besides, Sino-Vietnamese authorized commerce also proceeded. Plying junks and itinerated merchants knotted huge commercial network in northern Vietnam. Aside from this legal commercial network, a big invisible network, illegal trade also existed. Commercial activities by illegal merchants such as pirates, bandits and corrupted merchants and officials, did not only influence economic policy but also security concerns in Nguyen Vietnam. Therefore, Vietnam issued a forbidden-items policy of all kinds and consolidated national defense in an attempt to solve problems arising from an expanding Asian economy. These trade and security issues became the signal that Nguyen Vietnam endeavored to amend the traditional Sino-Vietnamese relationship and to seek more commercial profits.