



## Departmental Seminar

### TITLE

**Elite Selection in the Land of ‘Scholars’ and ‘Farmers’**

### SPEAKER

**Michael D. Barr**

School of Political and International Studies  
Flinders University, Australia

### Day, Date, Time, Venue

**Wednesday, 23 January 2008, 3 pm  
HY/PS Lounge, AS1-0401**

### Abstract

The myths of the meritocracy and multiracialism enjoy a truly symbiotic relationship in Singapore’s nation-building project, between them emphasising both the ‘fairness’ of the Singapore system and purporting to guarantee the minorities that they enjoy full status as members of the nation-building project.

In this paper Michael Barr interrogates the Singapore system of meritocracy and puts the case that the Administrative Service and the SAF officer corps may be missing out on the best and brightest Singaporeans because of biases in the system of elite selection. In this paper evidence provided by the Prime Minister’s Office and from within the Administrative Service has been supplemented by a study of public documents.

### About the Speaker

Michael Barr is a lecturer in International Relations at Flinders University, Adelaide. His publications include *Constructing Singapore: Elitism, Ethnicity and the Nation-Building Project* (In Press; co-written with Zlatko Skrbiš), *Lee Kuan Yew: The Beliefs Behind the Man*, *Cultural Politics and Asian Values: The Tepid War* and *Paths Not Taken: Political Pluralism in Post-War Singapore* (In Press; co-edited with Carl Trocki).

☎ 6516 3838/65163839 📠 6774 2528

**For enquiries, please contact the Department of History**