THE WORLD
A CLASSROOM,
MOTHER NATURE
THE TEACHER

4 NUS Open Day 2014
An Interview with Assoc Prof Robert Woodberry

11 Resilience Run

Channel NewsAsia Talking Point: Live on Campus
The World a Classroom, Mother Nature the Teacher

48 students embarked on a six-week journey to Thailand last June on a Field Studies programme offered by the Department of Geography. Dr Carl Grundy-Warr and Assoc Prof Alan D. Ziegler led them to Songkla, Pattalung, Khao Lak, Ranong, Sukhothai, Mae Sot, Chiang Mai and Mae Hong Son. This was the 12th trip for Dr Grundy-Warr and the fifth for Assoc Prof Ziegler since the module’s inception.

A total of 50 projects were undertaken (about five per student). Some of these projects include studying women’s organisation in a village context, impacts of coastal tourism and environmental conservation. Boot-camps and base-camps were set up over the years; these were where students interacted with research specialists and practitioners while experiencing cultural exchange and home-stays. Scientific and social research opportunities were made possible; in-depth learning that spans beyond the walls of classrooms and labs was realised.

In Assoc Prof Ziegler’s words: “Students extend themselves. It is in these research-learning camps where they are given hands on training in the finer points of digging holes, climbing steep slopes, wading turbid streams – the basics of hands on physical research; and the intricacies of living in different cultural milieu, ethics, safety, communicating with team mates and interpreters, and intensive team-based learning-by-doing.”

In these remote locations students learnt to value time and teamwork as they tackle a plethora of challenges. Exposed to problems in the real world, students quickly gained knowledge of handling projects through the different stages; from posing research questions to methods implementation, data analysis/synthesis and making presentations. The module is, after all, according to the professors, “hallmarked by placing students in uncomfortable life situations where culture shock and personal growth are rites of passage.” The world certainly is the well-equipped classroom and Mother Nature the relentless teacher.
Faculty Updates

FASS Alumni Return for Career Talks

Together with the NUS Career Centre, FASS held its second FASS Career Day on 13 March 2014. Specially organised to guide FASS students in charting their career paths upon commencement, FASS Career Day comprised three different events – two industry talks and a Speed Mentoring and Networking session, all of which featured alumni. In total, over 20 FASS alumni from various job sectors returned to share their work experiences with over 160 students.

FASS Career Day kick-started with an industry talk on Human Resources where representatives from CitiBank and McDonald’s were on hand to advise students on current employment trends. This was followed by “FASS Career Insights @ Marketing Analysis and Research” where representatives from Millward Brown and Bloomberg shared their perspectives on the market research/analysis industry. Millward Brown Account Manager Ms Cassandra Tan (Psychology ’10), said that it was a privilege to return to her alma mater and found the talk refreshing, inspiring and rewarding for both students and herself.

The day was capped by the highly interactive “FASS Alumni-Student Speed Mentoring and Networking Evening” where 17 FASS alumni from such sectors as banking, healthcare, education and consulting shared with students their working experiences over dinner and drinks. Mr Gabriel Yeo (Sociology 2004; Senior Manager and Head of Strategic Plans at MINDEF) reflected that the event was a good opportunity for him to connect with FASS students who were intending to join the public service. Student feedback on the session was also very positive, with many of them finding the alumni mentors “extremely passionate and informative”, in the words of one undergraduate.

FASS Office of Programmes and EU Centre in Singapore Organise Creative Writing Competition 2013

The FASS Office of Programmes, in conjunction with the European Union (EU) Centre in Singapore, organised the very first Creative Writing Competition in September 2013. More than 40 entries were received from students across NUS and assessed by a panel of adjudicators that comprised Assoc Prof Reuben Wong (NUS-FASS’s Jean Monnet Professor and Director of Studies, College of Alice and Peter Tan), Dr Barnard Turner (Academic Convenor, NUS-FASS European Studies), and Dr Yeo Lay Hwee (Director, EU Centre in Singapore).

“This competition was conceived as part of ongoing efforts to raise awareness among our students towards the European Union and its progress, and we are delighted to have received numerous high-quality and creative submissions,” remarked Dr Stephen Lim, Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Studies who oversees the FASS Office of Programmes.

The student winners received their awards on 6 December 2013 from His Excellency Dr Michael Pulch, Ambassador and Head of Delegation, Delegation of the European Union to Singapore, who also discussed the EU’s successes and future challenges through an informal dialogue session.

The three winning entries can be accessed in the links below:

**Winner:**
Mr. Lim Yejie’s (Business) entry (http://goo.gl/Lw6Sej)

**First runner-up:**
Miss Vina Jie-Min Prasad’s (History) entry (http://goo.gl/cjryI1)

**Second runner-up:**
Mr. Lam Pak Nian’s (Law) entry (http://goo.gl/RW8Xc7)
More than 21,000 prospective students, friends and their families visited the NUS University Town (UTown) on 15 March for NUS Open Day. The visitors soaked up the carnival-like atmosphere as they made their way through the plethora of activities lined up by the faculties and student groups. The 16 exhibition booths representing NUS’ academic programmes were the main attractions for the students and parents who were eager to know more about the different courses offered.

Amidst the seriousness of academic matters, the sights and sounds galore served by the different student groups provided a lively scene at UTown. While some were mesmerised by the break dance crews and various choir ensembles, others were drawn to the first ever NUS Student Union (NUSSU) Band Challenge. The visitors got a pleasant surprise when a flash mob comprising students from the Raffles Hall started dancing at the foyer.

From academic talks to candy floss, ice cream, flash mobs and choirs – there was something for everyone at NUS Open Day 2014.
Genes linked to strategic thinking, risk taking
(First published in NUS News)

Taking risks and making strategic decisions could be attributed to a person’s genes, more than one may realise. According to research by NUS, University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley) and University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, genes that regulate dopamine—a neurotransmitter that forms part of the pleasure and reward-seeking network in the brain—are involved in how someone takes strategic risks in situations such as betting and competing.

The findings published on 16 June in the online edition of the US Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences show that people have hard-wired predispositions in decision-making and strategic thinking that can impact how they take risks in business.

The B2ESS (laboratory for Behavioural x Bioeconomics and the Social Sciences) group at NUS has recruited more than 3,000 Chinese students from Singapore and Beijing in one of the world’s largest genetic studies of human decision-making. Almost complete genetic information was determined for each of these students, making the database a valuable resource that enables the investigators to undertake scientific collaborations on a global level.

In the current study on 217 NUS undergraduates, the students underwent a game called ‘patent race’, commonly used by economists to study competitive behaviour in a laboratory setting that captured individual differences in strategic thinking. In it, a person competed against an anonymous opponent by betting via computer.

The NUS team—Prof Chew Soo Hong from the Department of Economics and Prof Richard Ebstein from the Department of Psychology—worked with colleagues, including Dr Zhong Songfa from the Department of Economics, to combine biology, psychology and economics in this emerging research direction.

It was observed that variations in three dopamine-related genes linked to the prefrontal cortex of the brain contribute to a high degree of belief learning, the ability to anticipate and respond to the actions of others. In contrast, differences in trial-and-error reinforcement learning—how responsive people are in changing strategy as they recall past experiences—are associated with variations in two other genes more closely linked to the striatum region of the brain.

“The current study is unique in showing how a set of dopamine genes jointly impact strategic thinking,” said Prof Chew. It also demonstrates how different dopamine genes contribute to variations in reinforcement learning and belief-based learning in a winner-takes-all patent race game, he explained.

“The neurogenetic approach, in stratifying subjects’ responses by differences in their genetic variants, is a powerful strategy towards unraveling the neurochemical pathways underpinning human decision-making behaviour,” noted Prof Ebstein.

The results corroborate with findings by collaborator Dr Ming Hsu from UC Berkeley’s Haas School of Business. His previous imaging studies show that the prefrontal cortex of the brain plays a key role in belief learning, while the striatum is more involved in reinforcement learning.
An Interview with Assoc Prof Reuben Wong

Assoc Prof Reuben Wong (Department of Political Science) was recently appointed to the Jean Monnet Professorship of European Integration and Foreign Policy. To find out more about the appointment and Reuben’s ongoing research, we caught up over breakfast in the airy dining room of the College of Alice and Peter Tan (CAPT) at UTown, where Reuben is also Director of Studies.

Could you tell us what the Jean Monnet Professorship will entail?
Jean Monnet Chairs specialise in teaching European Studies and a large part of my commitment over the next three years will be teaching a minimum of 90 hours per academic year on this topic, with funding of €45,000 from the European Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). This will largely be met through the two FASS modules that I teach through the Political Science Department and European Studies Programme (‘Politics of European Integration’ and ‘European Foreign Policy’) but I also welcome those interested in independent study modules and thesis supervision.

How will the grant from the Professorship help in your research?
I plan to contribute to a very active research agenda on EU relations with China and ASEAN over the next three years. One book project, on EU-China security cooperation, is edited by two Jean Monnet Professors based in the Netherlands and the UK, but involving contributions from four others (in China and Singapore). So I will be likely be travelling to Brussels in the spring for an editorial meeting.

I am looking at a social constructivist perspective of EU-China relations in a second book project which looks at the EU-China nexus in global governance with collaborators from Macau and Europe. In a third project, Regional Integration in Times of Crisis (a comparative work on regional integration in different parts of the world), I work with collaborators in Grenoble, France (Grenoble Institute of Political Studies) to look at how the global economic crisis has affected the relations between state and institutions of regional integration in Asia.

Over the longer term I will work on a monograph which will look at Chinese views of the EU. The object is to understand how Chinese foreign policy elites view the role of China in international politics in relation to the western world (in particular the European Union), and how their views of the West translate into Chinese foreign policy. This may require some survey work, which I am exploring with universities in Beijing and Shanghai.

What common misperceptions do you find Singaporeans and other Asians might have about the EU and its foreign policy?
Most Singaporeans (and many citizens in other Asian settings) write off the EU as an irrelevant, has-been power weakened by a prolonged euro crisis. They see the EU as bloated and uncompetitive, taking their policy cues from the US, and with no coherent interests of their own. But such a view does not take into account the European Union’s importance as a major trading partner to Asian exporting economies, its return to economic growth in 2013-14, as well as its serious attempts as a standard setter for global norms in human rights, military intervention, trade and investment, environmental standards, etc.

Thank you Reuben. We wish you well in your research and Professorship.

An Interview with Dr Chong Ja Ian

Dr Ja Ian Chong (Department of Political Science) recently received the Faculty Award for Promising Researcher. This award is presented to researchers who have produced research that shows potential impact and promise.

Dr Chong has been with FASS since 2010 and his research focuses on international relations (IR), especially IR theory, security, and international relations in the Asia-Pacific. Of particular interest are issues that stand at the nexus of international and domestic politics. We caught up with Dr Chong to congratulate him on the award...

Ian, congratulations on the Award for Promising Researcher. Please can you tell us a little about how you became involved in your area of research?
Thank you. I study politics, particularly international relations, because issues of governance, contestation, cooperation, and conflict always interested me. I wonder especially about ways in which people and societies regulate different interests, as well as why and when cooperation works, when it breaks down. As for my more specific research on external
intervention and state formation, that came from my interest in how sovereign statehood took shape in Asia. Polities with discrete territorial boundaries, exclusive internal rule, and equal international standing are relatively new to Asia. Moreover, when you think about sovereignty disputes, they are much more common in Asia today than in Europe, where modern notions of sovereign statehood first develop. So, I was curious about what led to these changes.

**What was the particular piece of research that showed potential impact and promise that then led to your nomination for this award?**

This would be the work on external intervention and sovereign statehood that I mentioned earlier. The work was different because it took seriously the role that foreign competition and local collaboration with external actors played a big role in establishing sovereign statehood. When international conditions are competitive enough, outside powers may prefer to build up sovereign statehood in a particular locality by supporting indigenous actors than to let it fall under the dominance of a rival. In this respect, the story of sovereign statehood, at least in Asia, is not just about nationalism and resistance to foreign domination, which tends to be the standard narrative. This perspective, I argue, is more analytically and historically accurate. It also suggests ways - as well as the costs and risks - of trying to build up a weak state. Additionally, I point out that nationalism is not some irresistible force. It can be suppressed, it can take different forms, it can even compromise with avowed enemies.

**Although your research is partly theoretical, it does have implications for current sovereignty disputes in East Asia as well as the effects of foreign intervention on domestic politics. How do you hope your work might have some sway in the way such disputes or interventions play out?**

Well, I think what my research suggests is that sovereign claims are actually malleable over time, but they require time and political will to change. That means to say that sovereignty disputes in East Asia are not impossible to resolve, but they do need time and people need to keep talking about them, even if they disagree for now. They can also change if governments have the resolve to change the domestic narrative about a dispute. As for foreign intervention into domestic politics, it is a myth that it is a phenomenon that doesn’t occur. There is the channelling of money and arms to various domestic groups that I write about, but there is also the quieter lobbying of governments to change domestic policy. Where my research is most relevant is in pointing out that foreign driven state-building is possible. However, they take a lot of time, money, and persistence. These are extremely long-term processes. So, if you are not ready for such an endeavour, it may be best to avoid it. Otherwise, interventions can complicate domestic politics in a weak state, which may be relevant to places like Egypt and Syria today.

**Please could you share what you are currently working on?**

I am working on several projects right now. The bigger one tries to understand why states that just moved away from authoritarian rule tend to upset their security guarantors. Here, Taiwan with its testy relations with the Mainland during the 1990s and early 2000s, South Korea with its anti-Americanism in the 1990s, and the Philippines with the status of American bases in the late 1980s and early 1990s come to mind. Another project examines how efforts by non-major power states to protect their interest during periods of power transition - times when there is are major powers in relative rise and decline - can aggregate to exacerbate suspicions among the top powers of the day. Together, smaller states can inadvertently make regions with major powers more tense during times of transition.

So, think of Asia today, how different countries from Japan through Australia (and everything in between) act in their own interests can add up to encouraging Chinese fears of encirclement or American worries of being shut out of the region. I also have a piece questioning standard narratives of Chinese nationalism and traditional world order coming out with the European Journal of International Relations. This is part of another larger area of research is am doing that looks at how historical and national myths gain political purchase and change over time. The project is fun for me as I find so much of popular wisdom and interpretations of history to be based on immediate political expediency. This is the case whether looking at claims of Chinese nationalism, traditional world order, or narratives about nationhood elsewhere.

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**An Interview with Dr John DiMoia**

Dr John DiMoia (Department of History) recently received the Faculty Award for Promising Researcher. This award is presented to researchers who have produced research that shows potential impact and promise. John’s research focuses on the history of Modern Korea as well as the broader history of Science, Technology, and Medicine.

We caught up with Dr DiMoia to congratulate him on the award...

(Continue on next page)
Congratulations on the award! Please can you tell us a little about what drew you to your research on Korea and the history of medicine?

I taught English in Seoul back in the mid-90s (December 1995-May 1996), and first noticed the efforts at globalisation and the corresponding American presence, both cultural and military. I was working at the YBM-Sisa branch in Kangnam at the time, and many of my students came from the leading Korean universities: Seoul National University, Yonsei, Korea, and Ewha. My daily interactions with students fostered my initial interest in recent Korean history, although it would take some time for that interest to develop into anything, as I had no formal language training or background in the area.

Prior to this, I had made many Japanese friends as an undergrad (1990-1993) at Temple University in Philadelphia as Temple maintained a branch campus in Tokyo, TUI, or Temple University Japan. This context explains how I got motivated to go to Asia in the first place, although the transition from Japan to Korea was almost accidental, more a question of job opportunities than personal preference or deliberate planning. Korean companies kept sending me job offers, and Japan was very lukewarm, so I took a chance, went, and had a great time.

I didn’t think about the medical relationship until much later, but the use of American and international models of practice was conspicuous, and for Korea the tensions of recent history were much more palpable. I would have to attribute the medical interest to my family background, with both parents working as doctors: my father, as a child psychiatrist, and my mother, as a pediatrician. While working on my dissertation in 2004-2005, I came across the Minnesota Project materials, and with help from Dr Kim Ock-Joo of Seoul National University, a chapter began to take shape, and this eventually became a key part of the dissertation.

Your nomination for this award was largely due to your book Reconstructing Bodies: Biomedicine, Health, and Nation-Building in South Korea Since 1945. How did you begin to realise that South Korea’s development and its recent medical history would be so closely intertwined?

This development came more from my 2nd and 3rd visits to Seoul, in 2002 for a brief trip, and then again in 2004-2006, for dissertation and language study. I first came across references to Seoul physicians studying at University of Minnesota in 2004-2005, and this became Chapter Three, and led me into the subject. Dr Kim Ock-Joo in Seoul had done some work on this already, and helped me a lot, as I was able to consult with her. In short, I had an inkling before leaving for Korea, but once there, the relationship was obvious from even a cursory scan of the major libraries.

Obviously Korea has a much longer history with respect to its knowledge production both domestic, and as a colony under Japan and I had to make some realistic choices about how much of this I could take on. I decided to focus on the post-1945 period, both due to the documentary record, and to take into consideration the language issues. As I continue to expand my language base, I hope to take on more of the remaining story in subsequent projects.

The book contains some fascinating characters and amusing anecdotes – which were your favourite?

I think the most interesting figures were those from the 1940s, especially the family of Mr Byun Sang-hun, the traditional practitioner who figures prominently in Chapter One. They had me down to their clinic and gave me an all day tour in summer 2006, and I realised how complex life was for some of these families. Imagine living as a traditional practitioner under late Choson Korea rule, then under colonial rule (1910-1945), and then under a military government (1945-1948), and finally an independent South Korea (1948-). The numerous changes and the migration patterns caught my attention, not to mention the different styles of practice and medical pedagogy that one would have had to master.

At the same time, I was also able to interview some of the Korean biomedical doctors from the same period, and those who studied under Japanese imperial rule had equally fascinating stories. Chapter six of the book details South Korea’s extensive forays into aesthetic surgery. Could you tell us more about how you see this development as a quasi-negotiation between the individual and the state?

I might characterise it more as a triangle-the individual, the state, and the doctors who specialise in the area, along with South Korean insurance interests. South Korean patients don’t just latch on to these procedures so much as procedures are sold to them as a rational, economic choice; a means to control one’s identity and even professional future in an uncertain, highly neoliberal economic climate. Along these lines, the government is now thinking about restricting ads for the clinics in subway stations, as these currently play on the psychology of the average subway goer.

Moreover, this kind of culture holds not only for plastic surgery, but also for things like the C-section, and other elective surgeries where doctors know they can benefit if they recommend the work take place in a private setting, outside the public system of reimbursement.

The degree to which the South Korean medical system is going private continues to amaze me, especially as the public rhetoric and image is quite different. Since 1997 and the IMF crisis, more and more Koreans have regarded surgery in general as normal, a way to control an uncertain future and to craft one’s own image as desired.
Please could you share what you are currently working on?
Sure, I’m working on a piece for a special issue on family issues in China and Korea, trying to understand the newer incentive schemes for Korean mothers since the mid-1990s. Basically, it’s an attempt to get them to have a second child, while providing childcare and education benefits that would allow the mother to return to work.

Along with this shorter piece, I’m working on two major projects. The first, “Engineering Asia”, is an edited volume, working with Assoc Prof Hiromi Mizuno (University of Minnesota) and Dr Aaron S Moore (Arizona State University) and we hope to take this to publishers shortly. The volume looks at Japanese Empire, technocracy, and how this gets reinvented after 1945 as technical diplomacy. The second is my second book project tentatively titled “Energy and Infrastructure”, and this will look at energy issues in Northeast Asia from the 1930s to the present.

Thank you John. We wish you well in your future projects.

An Interview with Assoc Prof Robert Woodberry

Assoc Prof Robert Woodberry (Department of Political Science) recently received the Award for Excellent Researcher (AER). The award is presented to researchers based on the overall impact and strength of his research which was recognised by the research community as having achieved a significant breakthrough.

Prof Woodberry most certainly fits this bill – his ground-breaking 2012 paper ‘The Missionary Roots of Liberal Democracy’ was published in the American Political Science Review (APSR), which is ranked as the best journal in Political Science, and has since won 4 outstanding article awards.* The paper has already had over 10,000 downloads, been cited dozens of times in top journals and is now on the syllabi of many of the world’s best universities.

We caught up with Prof Woodberry to congratulate him on the award and find out more about his work...

Prof Woodberry, congratulations on the Award for Excellent Researcher. Your paper ‘The Missionary Roots of Liberal Democracy’ has been commended for its theoretical innovation and meticulous statistical research. Please can you tell us the crux of your argument and how this is backed up through data?

The article focuses on Christian missionaries and how they influenced the rise and spread of stable democracy around the world. It argues that conversionary Protestants were a crucial catalyst initiating the development and spread of religious liberty, mass education, mass printing, newspapers, voluntary organisations, and colonial reforms. These developments then created the conditions that made stable democracy more likely. Figure 1 shows the argument visually.

Statistically, the historic prevalence of Protestant missionaries explains about half the variation in democracy in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania. The statistical investigation includes many of the variables that dominate current statistical research about democracy (such as geography, economic development, British colonisation, etc.) to show that they alone do not account for the spread of democracy. The association found between Protestant missions and democracy is consistent in different continents and subsamples, and it is robust to more than 50 controls and to instrumental variable analyses. You can see how strongly Protestant missions predicts democracy in table 2.

*1) Luebbert Award for Best Article in Comparative Politics, 2013, American Political Science Association; 2) Best Article in Comparative Democratization, 2013 American Political Science Association; 3) Wallerstein Award for Best Published Article in Political Economy 2013, American Political Science Association – runner up; 4) Distinguished Article Award 2013, Sociology of Religion Section, American Sociological Association.

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Please tell us a little about how you became involved in this area of research?
I have always been interested in the history of religion, but few social scientists were actually using data to measure the long-term impact of religion on society. Despite some consistent correlations between British colonialism, Protestantism and democracy, it was difficult to measure what colonisers and religious groups actually did in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Thus, as a graduate student I was hunting for old data about religion and in the rare map collection at the University of North Carolina I discovered an amazing rare book – “The World Missionary Atlas”. It listed all the missions in the world - the places, dates, names, numbers – it was an incredible find and even referred to earlier atlases, so I knew there were more data to find. I began working on my historical arguments and thinking about how I could apply for grants that would enable me to enter and link these data. My first grant was a Louisville Grant which started me off with the digitization. In 2005 I was awarded a $500,000 grant from the John Templeton Foundation which allowed me to hire many research assistants and construct a major database. This became the Project on Religion and Economic Change (PREC).

Were you surprised by the results that Protestant missionaries were such a significant factor in determining a country’s path to liberal democracy?
I was more than surprised, I was shocked! I hadn’t expected missions to have such a powerful effect on democracy, 50% of the variation is massive.

Have you encountered much opposition while writing and trying to publish your work?
Yes. Much of it has been ideological, but some is because of the magnitude of the results. Most social scientists ignore religion or assume it is threatening to tolerance and democracy. Many did not want to accept something that rebuts the commonly held ‘secular modernity’ theory. To complicate the issue, many assume that the goals of missionary activity were on a par with those of colonisation. Yet the missionary goal to “save souls” is different from the largely economic and political goals of colonisation, and as I show, the tension between these goals helped moderate colonialism and spur democracy. So coming back to the publishing, some people were angry. That came out clearly when I tried to publish the article in the American Sociological Review to no avail. No one publicly critiqued my history or statistics, but the negative reviewer said it made him/her angry. I then submitted the article to APSR. The editor and reviewers asked for tons of additional evidence: case studies of India, China, Botswana, Lesotho and Zimbabwe, analyses at the sub-national level, analysis showing change over time, and analyses showing missions relationship with all my intervening mechanisms. It took 192 pages to write up. Even after all that, I only got a conditional acceptance. After several more resubmissions the editor accepted the article, but then revoked the acceptance because some of his graduate students got upset about it. Some thought I must have coded the variables incorrectly to bias the results. The editor decided he needed to check all my data and coding and rerun all my models. He also required I make my data public so others could check them, before he finally accepted my article again. I’ve never heard of an article that went through a similar level of scrutiny.

What sort of reaction have you had since publication?
It’s been encouraging, especially the four article prizes – but also many private comments and emails. Many economists and political scientists have now started studying the social impact of missions, and every paper I know about has found similar results. Most scholars who have read the article realise it is a major contribution and needs to be supported or challenged empirically.

Has anyone since publication been able to suggest a worthy omitted or confounding variable (to discount the Conversionary Protestants as being the significant factor)?
Not to my knowledge.

What has been the most difficult aspect of your longer-term PREC project?
Keeping track of all the historical documents and linking data accurately through space and time. I’ve collected an immense amount of material, have to link to areas that no longer exist, and must link the meanings of words across 200 years and a dozen languages. For example, the words ‘hospital’ and ‘college’ have very different meanings at different points in time and place and so without being careful all kinds of error could infiltrate the data. When everything is linked the database is amazing though.

What are your future research plans?
I am working on several projects. First will be a book that expands the APSR article. It will delve further into the historical arguments and concentrate less on statistics. I am also working on several articles: one on the history of printing, another on missionaries and ethnic violence, another on education and yet another on the variation in GDP in areas influenced by missionaries.

Thank you Bob. We wish you well in your future research.
Archaeological Research on Phnom Kulen, Cambodia

Phnom Kulen is believed to be the site where Jayavarman II conducted a major ceremony inaugurating the kingdom of Angkor. This plateau is still largely covered with jungle, landmines are still being found in the ground. Recent surveys using the airborne LIDAR technique have revealed an extensive network of man-made structures beneath the jungle canopy which still covers much of the plateau. The water management system of Phnom Kulen has long been perceived as one of the key elements in the development of the hydrological system of Angkor. Preliminary excavations have been conducted at a number of temples built during the first millennium CE and pottery kilns. The palace of Jayavarman II and associated buildings are believed to have stood on this plateau, but have not been found.

Scenes set in forested mountains play important roles in Khmer iconography. On Angkor Wat's south gallery, a relief depicts the temple's patron Suryavarman II (r. ca 1100-1150) holding court in such an environment. The earliest palace complex yet discovered in Southeast Asia is that in the northwest quadrant of Angkor Thom. No early Javanese palace has yet been discovered. It seems however that the kings may have had two types of residences: one in the lowlands near the general population, and another on a secluded mountain area. Here they could disport themselves in emulation of Indra, king of Mount Meru.

Assoc Prof John Miksic of the Department of Southeast Asian Studies obtained funds from the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre of Institute of Southeast Asian Studies for an archaeological excavation, which was carried out in May 2014 together with counterparts and collaborators in Cambodia. The project also included junior scholars from Singapore. The excavation uncovered evidence that a very large structure once stood on the plateau. It is unlikely to have been a temple, and may have been part of a palace complex. Radiocarbon dates will indicate whether the date of the structure corresponds to the period of Jayavarman II.

Resilience Run: Day of Fun and Excitement to Celebrate Faculties’ 85th Anniversary

In commemoration of their 85th anniversary, the Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences, Dentistry and Science, jointly organised the Resilience Run on Saturday, 29 March. Comprising a fund raising campaign to help the disabled community in NUS, the Run symbolised the resilience and determination of the three faculties as well as special guest Dr William Tan in overcoming various challenges over the years to become the success stories they are today. The Guest of Honour was NUS Provost Prof Tan Eng Chye.

Dr William Tan, Faculty of Science alumnus and NUS Distinguished Alumni Service Award recipient was an inspiration to everyone who attended the run that day. Starting at six in the morning, Dr Tan proceeded to carry out his pledge to do an 85-kilometer run over five gruelling hours, largely under the hot morning sun, in his specially-equipped paraplegic tricycle. The distance he pledged was actually an astounding 213 rounds on the running track!

More than 500 participants took part in the run while another 300 staff, students, alumni and their family and friends turned up to cheer for them from the grandstands. The carnival ambience to the event was unmistakable – the live emceeing coupled with music, food, photo booth, balloon sculpting and face painting was a delight for the young and old alike.

(Continue on next page)
A highlight of the run was when the Deans from the three faculties ran together with the flags bearing their respective faculty anniversary logos. Staff, students and alumni also came together to join the run and root for their Deans as the flags came running by.

The excitement level reached a climax towards the end with the relay fun run. Each of the three faculties fielded a team comprising faculty members, students and alumni, to run the symbolic 8.5km relay, or 21 rounds on the running track. They were joined by teams from Geography (Mangrove Lab), Biological Sciences Department and the Food and Science Technology Programme. The spirit of friendship and camaraderie was palpable when all the relay teams, including Guest of Honour Prof Tan who gamely joined the relay, ran alongside Dr Tan on his paraplegic tricycle towards the finishing line amid all the cheering from the spectators.

“Prof Brenda Yeoh and Assoc Prof TC Chang sharing a moment with Prof Tan Eng Chye (right)"

“It was not only a fun and exciting day for runners, families and friends, but a meaningful way to mark our Faculties’ anniversary” said Assoc Prof TC Chang, FASS Vice Dean (Student Life) and co-chair of the event. ”More importantly, the event helped to create greater awareness and support for the special-needs student community in NUS.”

All proceeds from the run will go towards the NUS Enablers, a non-profit student-interest group aimed at helping special needs students to integrate into campus life through an extensive range of activities and projects.

To find out more about NUS Enablers, please go to their Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/NUS.Enablers

Some of the FASS team members pose in front of the wish board where participants penned their hopes and dreams in commemoration of the Faculties’ 85 years

“FASS Deanery, Faculty members, students, alumni, Provost Prof Tan Eng Chye and Dr William Tan – all giving thumbs up!"
Gifts To The Faculty

FASS has received more than $1.7 million in gifts since January 2014. A list of notable gifts are as follows:

**FASS Class of ’69 Sociology Alumni Fund**
In commemoration of their 45th year of graduation in 2014, the classmates of our pioneer Sociology Class ’69 raised over $50,000 to set up the Department of Sociology's inaugural bursary, FASS Class of ’69 Sociology Alumni Bursary.

**Wan Boo Sow “雲茂潮” Chinese Studies Scholarship**
is currently the only Entrance Scholarship at FASS set up through the generosity of the Wan Boo Sow family (雲茂潮子女). The $500,000 pledge gift will be administered by the Department of Chinese Studies to offer up to 3 Scholarships annually to select top candidates from Junior Colleges/Polytechnics.

**Accountability of Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs) in Singapore’s Social Service**
The Department of Social Work’s Centre for Social Development Asia received a gift pledge of $180,000 from the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants to conduct research on NPOs in Singapore over a three-year period.

**Next Age Institute**
FASS has received $420,000 from the Lee Foundation to fund research projects under the auspice of Next Age Institute, a partnership between NUS and Washington University in St. Louis (WUSTL) to study, design, and test social innovations. In the start-up phase over the next 2 years, FASS and WUSTL researchers will be working on research projects that address the changing global context and trends that present challenges and opportunities for families, communities, and societies — aging populations, globalization of markets, rising inequality, and shift to information age technologies.

**Project on Regional Architecture and Frameworks for Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific**
The Department of Japanese Studies is administering a gift of S$283,000 from the Embassy of Japan, which will be used to facilitate engagement between Japanese scholars and academics in Singapore; in the study of challenges and opportunities associated with the need for enhanced cooperation whilst managing security concerns in Asia-Pacific.

**Emeritus Prof Edwin Thumboo and friends**
donated $50,000 to the Department of English Language and Literature. The donation will fund an award to nurture interest in poetry amongst young Singaporeans.

**NUS Master of Social Work Scholarship**
An anonymous donor contributed $500,000 for practicing social workers from voluntary welfare organisations who are undertaking the Master of Social Work (by coursework) programme at the Department of Social Work.

**Singapore History Project Prize**
An anonymous donor is giving half a million dollars to writers who can tell Singapore’s story best. From 2018, and every three years after that, the best history book on the nation will get a $50,000 prize. The competition will be organised by the Department of History.
Hochstadt Scholarship commemorates family’s dedication to education
(Article reproduced with permission from NUS Development Office)

“The wise old saying, ‘Give the man a fish, and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime’ always rings true to me,” says Mr Herman Ronald Hochstadt, who established the Hochstadt Scholarship in The Humanities at FASS.

Indeed, education has a special place in the lives of many members of the Hochstadt family. Mr Hochstadt’s father dedicated his entire working life to education in Singapore, serving as a school teacher, then school principal, and finally, as a senior Ministry of Education official. Mr Hochstadt’s three sisters were also all school teachers, as was his daughter, initially. He worked briefly as a tutor himself in the University of Malaya in Singapore and later University of Singapore, both predecessor institutions of NUS, from which his wife graduated and where she served as chief librarian. Mr Hochstadt later became permanent secretary in the Ministry of Education and deputy chairman of the Vocational & Industrial Training Board.

Mr Hochstadt attributes his success to his family’s help and support and wants to commemorate the family name with the Scholarship, which will benefit outstanding students majoring in Humanities subjects including English Language, English Literature, Theatre Studies, History and Philosophy.

“I was taught from young by parents, other family members, and teachers at St Andrew’s School where I had my primary and secondary schooling, that I should contribute whatever I could and whenever I could to deserving causes. And I have been doing so ever since I started working,” shares Mr Hochstadt.

“It is only fitting, in fondness, gratitude and memory, to give in my retirement to NUS which since its predecessor days, nurtured me, my late wife, my daughter and her husband, and my son into whatever we did become and helped us achieve whatever we did achieve. And especially for me to give back in support of undergraduate study of the Humanities at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences from which Peggy, Karen Lynn, Erwin Wei-Sung and I all graduated ourselves.”

For information on making a gift to NUS, contact us at 1800-DEVELOP (1800-338-3567) or email askdvo@nus.edu.sg.
Feature: Channel NewsAsia Talking Point: Live on Campus

The Channel NewsAsia’s “Talking Point – Live on Campus” series visited the FASS campus at the National University of Singapore on 6 November 2013. Armed with the topic of discussion - Social Media: More Harm than Good? – show host Mr Daniel Martin moderated live phone-ins, polls and tweets. He also invited the undergraduate audience at the AS7 auditorium to ask questions and air their views.

The panel of experts who helmed the forum were Prof Mohan Dutta (Head, Department of Communications and New Media (CNM)) and Ms Megan Fitzgerald (International Career Coach, specialising in social media). Also present was Ms Silver Ang, an actress and blogger, who shared with the audience her experience on privacy management and other social-media related issues.

Among the problems that Prof Dutta raised with regard to the usage of social media was the isolating and fragmenting effect it has on individuals; users can choose friends and social circles with similar mindsets thus cocooning themselves, rendering their values and beliefs unchallenged. One of Ms Fitzgerald’s advice was to take into consideration professional goals while using social media, even though the accounts are for personal purposes. She shared that 90% of recruiters and 78% of HR managers are recruiting online.

Some of the pertinent points raised by the audience were that of accountability – fourth year CNM major Chong Wei Ming, for example, highlighted that users who are otherwise shy in voicing their opinions in real life now feel that they have an outlet to do so, masking behind anonymity and hence relinquishing accountability. Second year CNM major Muhammad Zainuddin suggested that people are forming uninformed opinions online, to which Prof Dutta emphasised the importance of creating a climate of engagement so that alternative viewpoints and ideas can be shared.

The four-part video can be accessed on YouTube (http://goo.gl/sJTrkW).
Student Activities & Achievements


Tong Wenxu has been conferred the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce Foundation Student Researcher Award 2013 on 1 January 2014. She will be writing an Honours Thesis on “Tan Chin Hean and the Society in Singapore before the Second World War (陈振贤与战前新加坡社会)”.

Nicole Kang, an honours student from the Department of English Language and Literature, received the 3rd prize in the Goh Sin Tub Creative Writing Competition 2013 – Poetry. The English Literature major received $4000 last 19 February 2014.

Low Hsiang Hun Rebecca, a Year 2 Japanese Studies major, received a full scholarship from the Heiwa Nakajima Foundation for the Invited Foreign Scholarship Students Programme. She will be studying at Waseda University, Japan, from September 2014 to July 2015.

Sara Adam Ang, who graduated last year from the Department of History with an Honours degree, was the Regional Winner, Asia, in the Commonwealth Short Story Prize for her composition “A Day in the Death”. The story – which takes place in 1921 and was written originally as an assignment for HY4217: Sources of Singaporean History – describes the death of a coolie while questioning social and economic conditions in Singapore during the period.

Vina Jie-Min Prasad, a Year 4 history student, is a winner in the EUC-FASS Creative Essay Competition. Her submission came in the form of a letter to the EU written by a long-tailed shrike! She received her prize from EU Ambassador to Singapore Dr Michael Pulch on 6 December 2013. (The link to her submission and the article about the competition can be found on page 3.)

Sandeep Ray, a PhD candidate in the Department of History, received the Muhr Asia Africa Best Director Award on 13 December 2013 for his short film, “Thin Arms”. The prize was awarded by the 10th Annual Dubai International Film Festival in Dubai UAE.

Ghazrizal Azry Ghazali Nor, a Masters candidate at the Department of Southeast Asian Studies won both the Critics’ Choice Award and the Viewers’ Choice Award at the Singapore on Screen 2014 competition held by the FASS Sciences Singapore Research Nexus on 12 March 2014.
Let us warmly welcome Prof Lionel Wee and Assoc Prof Lim Sun Sun who joins the FASS Dean's Office as Vice Dean and Assistant Dean of Research respectively this year! We caught up with both of them to find out more about them.

Please tell us a bit about yourself.

Prof Lionel Wee: I enjoy travelling, but mainly to cities. The countryside is fine for about half an hour, then I get bored and restless.

I work mainly in cafes, a habit I picked up as a graduate student doing my PhD in Berkeley, California. My problem is that when I sit down to work, I am quite focused about what specific idea or argument I am trying to develop. Once that has been done, I need to walk around before I can move on to a new idea or a different part of the argument. This means that I tend to drink too much coffee because I have to buy a new cup each time I sit down again.

I am not a particularly sentimental person. But the one thing that I feel very strongly about is animal welfare. There is still insufficient respect in society for non-human life.

Assoc Prof Lim Sun Sun: I graduated from NUS with an Honours degree in Political Science after some of the best years of my life as a student in FASS. I enjoyed what I was learning so much – history, philosophy, political science – each subject was compelling, intriguing and thought-provoking in its own way and I loved them all! It was a wonderful introduction to the social sciences. So after receiving my PhD in Media and Communications from the London School of Economics, I jumped at the chance to teach in FASS so as to recreate my experience for my students.

I have two young children who keep me busy with their incessant and often mind-blowing questions and observations. I enjoy reading, travelling and experimenting in the kitchen, although not always with good results.

What is your area of research?

Prof Lionel Wee: I work on language policy, world Englishes, sociolinguistics and applied linguistics. I also have a strong interest in general sociology. I am currently working on two projects: emotions and cities, and the biopolitics of language.

Assoc Prof Lim Sun Sun: I study the social implications of technology domestication by young people and families, charting the ethnographies of their Internet and mobile phone use. My recent research has focused on understudied and marginalised populations including young children, youths-at-risk and female migrant workers. I also conduct research on new media literacies, with a special focus on literacy challenges in parental mediation and young people's Internet skills.

Lionel, as a linguist in the Department of English Language & Literature, what are your thoughts on Singlish? Is it an abomination or a national treasure?

Prof Lionel Wee: This is one of those false dichotomies that plague public discussions about Singlish. The more important question and one that remains under-discussed is: What do we really mean or understand by the label ‘Singlish’?

There are subtly different understandings of what we mean by ‘Singlish’, and there can be little progress in public debates/discussions as long as we fail to confront this more fundamental question about the nature of Singlish.

Sun Sun, why Communications and New Media (CNM)?

Assoc Prof Lim Sun Sun: Our increasingly mediatised society has been greatly enriched by the advent of new communication technologies. These technologies have a potentially transformative effect on the ways in which we live and work, and how we engage with and relate to one another. Communications and New Media studies seeks to understand the impact of such technologies and human responses to such impacts.

Sun Sun, can you share your thoughts about joining Dean’s Office as Assistant Dean for Research?

Assoc Prof Lim Sun Sun: After teaching in NUS for 10 years and having been involved in departmental service as Deputy Head of CNM, I appreciate this opportunity to serve at the faculty level. I hope to make a difference by helping to enhance the faculty's research landscape through initiatives that can connect researchers with one another, as well as with their multiple stakeholders. There is also tremendous resonance between my work as Assistant Dean for Research and my involvement in the international academic community. I sit on the Executive Committee of the Association of Internet Researchers and I serve on the editorial boards of Journal of Computer Mediated Communication, Communication, Culture & Critique, Journal of Children and Media, Mobile Media & Communication and the Journal of Virtual Worlds Research. I believe that my new role in the faculty will be challenging but rewarding and look forward to this learning opportunity.
Congratulations to Dr Susan Ang on Receiving the Outstanding Educator Award!

Congratulations to Dr Susan Ang (Department of English and Literature) who received the Outstanding Educator Award (OEA) at this year’s NUS University Awards. The OEA is given out annually to acknowledge faculty members who have excelled in engaging and inspiring students in their discovery of knowledge. Dr Ang is the coordinator of her Department’s undergraduate, honours as well as exchange programmes, and she has contributed significantly to shaping and enhancing students’ learning and development needs. She presents thought-provoking and carefully crafted questions widely acknowledged by students as having helped them delve deep, think critically and develop a strong voice and mind.

The OEA carries a cash award as well as an education-related grant which is intended to enable the awardee to engage in activities that will support and enhance his/her role as an educator and contribute to teaching/learning at NUS.

Annual Teaching Excellence Awards 2012/13

We are very pleased to extend our warmest congratulations to the following faculty members on their achievements. A total of 11 lecturers have won the Annual Teaching Excellence Award 2013 (for teaching done in 2012/13). Of these, four have further distinguished themselves by being placed on the Annual Teaching Excellence Award Honour Roll for having won the ATEA a total of three times. We would also like to extend our congratulations to Dr Aamir Rafique Hashmi (Department of Economics) for being inducted into the NUS Teaching Academy. Teaching excellence is something FASS is deeply committed to, and our faculty members are testimonies to this.

Here is the list of Annual Teaching Excellence Award (ATEA) 2012/13 winners:

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<tr>
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Assoc Prof Woodberry Wins Six Awards for Groundbreaking Article

We are proud to announce that Assoc Prof Robert Woodberry has won six awards for his article “The Missionary Roots of Liberal Democracy” in American Political Science Review (Impact Factor: 3.93). 01/2012; 106(2):244-274.

It has won more American Political Science Association (APSA) and American Sociological Association (ASA) awards than any article in history. No other article has won more than three ASA and APSA awards (one article has won 1 award and 2 honorable mentions and several have won 2 awards and no honorable mentions). To date, no other scholar has won more than 4 outstanding article awards (including honorable mentions) from ASA and APSA in their career.

The awards are:

- **Best Article Award, Global and Transnational Sociology, 2014.** American Sociological Association. (to be awarded in August)
- **Distinguished Article Award, 2013.** Sociology of Religion Section, American Sociological Association.
- **Luebbert Award for Best Article in Comparative Politics, 2013.** American Political Science Association
- **Best Article in Comparative Democratization, 2013.** American Political Science Association.
- **Wallerstein Award for Best Published Article in Political Economy, 2013.** American Political Science Association – Runner up.
- **Excellent Research Award, 2013.** Faculty of Arts and Social Science, National University of Singapore

You can read the interview with Assoc Prof Woodberry about his award-winning article at page 9.

Congratualtions to Faculty Members Appointed as Provost’s Chairs

We are pleased to announce that the following faculty members have been appointed as Provost’s Chairs, in recognition of their outstanding and impactful scholarly accomplishments, which are internationally acknowledged. The appointments are for a period of 3 years from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2017. The Faculty looks forward to their continued leadership and successful contributions to the growing international profile and standing of the University:

- Prof Chew Soo Hong, Department of Economics
- Prof Mohan Dutta, Head, Department of Communications and New Media
- Prof Theodore (Ted) Hopf, Department of Political Science
- Prof David Taylor, Department of Geography

Staff Spotlight

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- **Excellent Research Award, 2013.** Faculty of Arts and Social Science, National University of Singapore

You can read the interview with Assoc Prof Woodberry about his award-winning article at page 9.
NUS Holds Innovative Conference on Human Trafficking

On 10 January 2014, NUS held an innovative conference at the NUS University Town’s Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium to raise public awareness and improve best practices in addressing human trafficking in Singapore and the region. The conference was made possible by financial support from the Singapore Inter-Agency Taskforce on Trafficking in Persons, which is co-chaired by the Ministry of Manpower and Ministry of Home Affairs, as well as the Chua Thian Poh Community Leadership Programme and the Department of Political Science at NUS.

One of the key conference speakers was Dr Monti Datta, who is an assistant professor of political science at the University of Richmond with research experience in Southeast Asia. Dr Datta, who along with Dr Kevin Bales at the University of Hull, developed a new and much-publicised quantitative measure of human trafficking around the world called the Global Slavery Index. The index aims to document various forms of human trafficking globally to help shape public policies in mitigating worker exploitation and abuse.

Other presenters at the conference included Mr John Gee, the former president of the Singapore-based Transient Workers Count Too, Mr Robert Larga, a director at the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration in Manila, Ms Samanthé Eulette, a political officer at the US Embassy in Singapore. Mr Kandhavel Periyasamy, who is the director of the Task Force at the Ministry of Manpower, also spoke and fielded questions from the audience. Importantly, undergraduate students presented their own research projects on human trafficking at the conference as well.

Dr Kevin McGahan, who teaches in the Department of Political Science and the College of Alice & Peter Tan, convened the conference, commenting: “The event not only brought together a diverse array of students, academics, policymakers and activists, but it also facilitated an important dialogue in better addressing the controversial topic of human trafficking.”

“Hopefully, this conference is the start of an ongoing exchange among scholars and students at NUS who are focused on research and community engagement regarding human trafficking and other migration-related issues.”

(From left) Dr Kevin McGahan, Dr Monti Datta, Ms Samanthé Eulette, and Mr Robert Larga

Dr Monti Datta giving a presentation
Departmental News

Department of Chinese Studies

Assoc Prof Lee Chee Hiang

Assoc Prof Lee Chee Hiang has been appointed by the Ministry of Manpower as a member of "Commercial Chinese" Curriculum Expert Group for two years starting 1 April 2014.

Distinguished Visitor: Assoc Prof Chen Jingxi

Chen Jingxi, PhD, in history of Sun Yat-sen University is Assoc Prof of Overseas Chinese Institute in Hua Qiao University, Associate Director of Overseas Chinese Materials Center and Director of Chinese Academy of Religion. His primary research expertise is Folk Beliefs of South China and Religion of Overseas Chinese, Folk Literature, Overseas Chinese Literature and Chaoshan Studies.

The Department of Chinese Studies and Assoc Prof Chen will co-organise the International Conference on World Memory Heritage of Overseas Remittance File, which will be held in the fourth quarter of 2014 in Shantou City, Guangdong Province, China.

Both he and Assoc Prof Lee Chee Hiang, Department of Chinese Studies, are joint Principal Investigators of the research project on "Community service and charity by Folk Religious Organizations of Overseas Chinese".

Junior College Seminar -《华文华语和我们的过去、现在与未来》

The Department of Chinese Studies, in conjunction with Mr Su Zhangkai (Nanyang Girls' High School Teacher), Ms Han Yong May (Lianhe Zaobao Associate Editor-cum-News Editor), and Ms Tan Bee Leng (General Manager, CapitaLand Hope Foundation), organised the seminar on 12 April 2014 for 150 junior college students to help them recognise the vibrance and importance of the Chinese language.

Department of Communications and New Media

JENESYS 2.0

On 18 January, 2013, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, during his visit to Indonesia, announced to undertake a new youth exchange programme between Japan and ASEAN Member States, among other countries, as “JENESYS 2.0.” The Department is proud to nominate its top honours students and graduate students to take part in this youth exchange programme, which aimed to foster greater understanding and friendship between youths from Asian countries and Japan. The programme included visits to historical architectures, World Heritage sites, and exhibitions promoting high-tech products in Japan.

Department of Economics

Prof John Taylor

Appointed as MAS Term Professor

Prof John B. Taylor served as a Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) Term Professor in Economics and Finance from 19 to 25 May 2014. During his visit, he interacted with faculty members, undergraduate and graduate students, MAS policymakers and GIC staff. He also delivered a public lecture on “The Unintended Consequences of Policy in the Great Recession and the Weak Recovery”, a seminar at MAS and GIC on “Re-Normalize, Don’t New-Normalize Monetary Policy”, and attended the Asian Monetary Policy Forum.

Prof Taylor is the Mary and Robert Raymond Professor of Economics at Stanford University. He formerly served as the Director of the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research where he is currently a Senior Fellow. He is also the George P. Shultz Senior Fellow in Economics at the Hoover Institution. Taylor’s fields of expertise are monetary policy, fiscal policy, and international economics. Taylor has an active interest in public policy.

SCAPE Workshop on Illusive Productivity

Singapore Centre for Applied and Policy Economics (SCAPE) held a half-day Workshop on “Illusive Productivity and SMEs in Singapore” on 9 December 2013. The idea was inspired by Assoc Prof Shandre Thangavelu (Department of Economics and a consultant researcher at the Ministry of Manpower) who also arranged the speakers for the event. In attendance were private and public sector economists, academics, students and journalists.

Assoc Prof Tilak Abeyesinghe (Director, SCAPE) delivered the opening remarks. In the first plenary session, Assoc Prof Thangavelu delivered a thought-provoking talk on “Productivity and SMEs in Singapore: Where is the Productivity?” He differentiated between cost-based production and
investment oriented production and argued why firms mostly go for the easy option of cost-based production when cheap labour is available.

In the second session, Assoc Prof Wong Marn Heong (Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy) who researches on trade, investment, innovation and their impact on productivity and competitiveness of firms and countries, made her presentation on “SME internationalisation: drivers and strategies for Singapore and ASEAN”. Based on surveys that she conducted, she observed that ASEAN-based firms that had internationalised tend to be larger, older and have foreign equity ownership. A global mindset of the top manager and a more dynamic industry environment seem to spur firm internationalization.

In the third presentation, Dr Fiona Kerr who is a visiting research fellow and an organisational and neural complexity specialist at Entrepreneurship, Commercialisation and Innovation Centre of the University of Adelaide, discussed “Elements of supportive government for increasing productivity and innovation in SMEs”. In particular, she discussed in detail the roles played by regulations, public procurement, and policies in enhancing productivity and innovations.

**Workshop on “Wealth and Income Inequality in China and Singapore”**

Singapore Centre for Applied and Policy Economics (SCAPE) held a two-day conference titled “2014 Workshop on Wealth and Income Inequality in China and Singapore” on 5 and 6 June 2014. The idea was inspired by Dr Shenghao Zhu who also arranged the speakers for the event. Each speaker presented his/her paper in 30 minutes, followed by a 15-minute discussion given by a discussant working in the relevant field and also comments and suggestions from all participants. In this arrangement, each paper had sufficient opportunities to be discussed in the conference.

**Inaugural Economics Alumni Homecoming Event 2013**

*(From ECONews, April 2014 issue)*

On 6 December 2013, the Department of Economics, together with the NUS Economics Alumni, organised the inaugural Economics Alumni Homecoming event at the Alumni House@Kent Ridge. The evening began with a sumptuous dinner which was the best way for our alumni to catch up with their friends, former classmates and professors.

In his opening address, Prof Julian Wright, Head of the Department, announced that the Department hopes to achieve two main objectives with this inaugural homecoming event. Firstly, the Department wishes to know how our alumni are doing after graduation. Our graduates would be in a more informed position to share with our current undergraduates the skills valuable to today’s labour market. Earlier this year, the NUS Economics Society had organised a speed mentoring event and our undergraduates had benefitted from the alumni’s sharing. The Department hopes more of such alumni-undergraduate interaction and sharing sessions will be organised.

The second objective of this event is to encourage our alumni to be active in the Department’s activities. The Economics Alumni is a relatively young alumni set up in 2007 but it is already one of the most active alumni in NUS and the most active in the Faculty. However, there is a need to push for even more activities and the growth of the alumni. Prof Wright urged our alumni to come up with new initiatives which the Department will support.

Following Prof Wright’s address, Mr Daniel Lo, Chairman of the NUS Economics Alumni, shared with the audience the activities that have been organised by the alumni and the activities lined up for the upcoming 2014. Mr Lo remarked that we are blessed to be in Singapore. Unlike the rest of the world where there is massive unemployment, “in Singapore, jobs are chasing people,” he said. China alone churns out 7.7 million graduates each year but because of the tight labour market, these graduates are working in low-skilled jobs such as waiters. In Europe, youth unemployment is in excess of 25%. “Therefore, given that we are blessed, we should give back more,” he urged.

The alumni has organised two trishaw fund-raising events and has raised a total of $33,000 which will help reduce the financial burden of economics undergraduate students in the form of bursaries. The annual alumni dinner is organised to coincide with the commencement ceremony to reach out to graduating students. The alumni recognise that networking has an economic value that cannot be quantified. The alumni has thus also organised mentor-mentee events to help undergraduates make more informed decisions. In the past there is one mentor attached to one mentee, but due to a lack of mentors, the ‘clan’ concept is now adopted where two mentors are attached to three to five undergraduates. Going forward, the alumni would like to work more closely with the Department.

In his concluding remarks, Mr Lo describes the Economics Alumni as an in-group and the more activities the members take part in, the more benefits they get out of the alumni and the more others will benefit from the members. The Alumni Homecoming Event concluded with a photo-taking session.

**Law and You**

More than 15 NUS Economics Alumni (NUSEA) members attended the “Law and You” talk given by our economics-law alumna Ms Shen Xiaoyin on 9 May at the NUSS Graduate Club’s Suntec City guild house. The talk was organised by NUSEA n chaired by its President Mr Daniel Lo.
NUS Economics Society and Alumni Bond over BBQ and Games

(From ECONews, April 2014 issue)

On 9 January 2014, the NUS Economics Society organised a chalet gathering for all economics students at Costa Sands Resorts Pasir Ris. Held just a few days before the second semester officially started, it provided a pleasant close to the holidays.

Food is served as of the best conversation starters of the night. It offered us a sense of security when we were introduced to strangers. Slowly but surely, we got to know each other better and broke the ice throughout dinner. You can just imagine the happy exchanges between economic majors as we satisfied our stomachs with our own proudly cooked food.

Instead of just eating the food the usual way, half of it were saved for games. We played “Circle of Death” and “Spoon”, using food as the bait for both games. All of us present tried our utmost best to win at the games, craving for another bite of the tasty barbeque food. We got to witness the playful side of each other and the night was punctuated with laughter and joyful screams.

New bonds formed, old bonds refreshed and stomachs satisfied - but alas all good times come to an end. We ended the day with posing for photos together at the photo booth set up and decorated specially for the chalet. The photos would no doubt be unique memorabilia for this special event. After this event, we look forward to seeing each other in school in the new semester, and relish in the comfort that more of such fun bonding activities would be held along our journey as economics majors.

Department of English Language & Literature

Rhythms: Work, Art and Text

The international workshop held from 10 to 12 April 2014 examined the notion of rhythm as a motif in several fields of critical thought. In particular, the relation between the artwork and the “sense of the world” has become more urgently questionable recently. Novel approaches to questions of aesthetics and politics have emerged influential in the context of popular movements of various kinds that actively contest the trends associated with global finance (Rancière, Badiou, Balibar, and Zizek). Furthermore a trend towards more traditional lines of inquiry seems to be gaining interest under the heading of “speculative realism”.

The workshop returns initially to a seminal moment in critical thought, with Martin Heidegger's “The Origin of the Work of Art” and associated texts, which include the readings of Hölderlin and Rilke, and which bear on issues related to truth, hospitality and justice. By close reading, the folds and unfolding of thought, sound, cadences in Heidegger's text were attended to. In particular, the workshop examined the threefold notion of work to emerge in the following ways: in the artwork, in the workings of the text, and the work of reading said text. The workshop also sought to understand the genealogy of the thinking behind Heidegger's “Artwork” essay, where rhythm becomes important, with reference to some of the more detailed readings of poetry in the lectures of the same period. The question of rhythm figures widely, though often obscurely, in much of the available and influential writing on art and the everyday.

The guests of honour were Dr Sylvia Goh and her son Dr Patrick Goh, and Prof Brenda Yeoh (Dean, FASS).

The judges for the first round of adjudication were Dr Jane Nardin and Dr Gilbert Yeoh from the Department of English Language and Literature, and Ms Shen Jia Yi, Vice-President of the NUS Literary Society.
The judges for the second round of adjudication were Emeritus Prof Edwin Thumboo and Dr Jane Nardin from the Department of English Language and Literature, and Mr Yeow Kai Chai, journalist and critic for the Straits Times and co-editor of the Quarterly Literary Review Singapore (QLRS).

Subsequent competitions will feature other literary genres. The competition is open to all members of the NUS community at the time of submission of entry.

“We, The Inhabitants”, an FASS 85th Anniversary Celebrations event by The Theatre Studies Programme
Life in Singapore through the lens of Haresh Sharma’s most popular earlier works was given a fresh, prismatic spin by a collective of the Theatre Studies Programme’s 2014 graduating cohort under the direction of Natalie Hennedige, of Cake Theatrical Productions.

Made for a new generation of local theatre audience as well as supporters old and new, this production was a dynamic remix of Sharma, with the 14 young talents bringing their own perspectives into some of Sharma’s most potent works.

With a whimsical medley of characters ranging from prophet, schizophrenic, to an exasperated mother from the heartlands, this new and unpredictable take on the local playwright’s works sheds light on the range of concerns that Singaporeans have – both central and peripheral.

Haresh Sharma, an alumnus of the Department of English Language and Literature and Resident Playwright of The Necessary Stage, has written more than 100 plays to date, mostly centering on socio-political themes.

Prof Duara was invited to give two lectures at the Peking University, Beijing. The first was “Network Asia: China and its Asian ‘Routes’” on 28 April 2014 as part of the Peking Dharma Drum Lecture series. The second lecture, “Confucianism and Citizenship in the Nanyang Diaspora”, was delivered as part of the 4th Overseas Chinese Research Lecture series on 29 April 2014.

He was also invited to give a talk on “Network Asia: Globalisation, Region and a Sustainable Future” on 5 May 2014 at Sun Yat-sen University, Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall, Guangzhou, China.

“1914/2014: A Warning from History?” – Public Lecture by Prof Sir Richard Evans
Renowned historian, Prof Sir Richard Evans, gave a public lecture hosted by the Department of History on 28 March 2014. In this lecture entitled “1914/2014: A Warning from History?”, Sir Evans asks if we should be worried that the events of 1914 are repeating themselves as the centenary of the outbreak of World War I approaches, and he argues that the parallels are largely misleading.

(Continue on next page)
In 1914, the European powers who launched the war had what seems to us to be an irresponsibly positive attitude towards war, and had little idea of the catastrophe that was about to overtake them. The massive human and material losses of both world wars, and the invention of the atomic bomb, have led to a general desire in the world community to avoid large-scale warfare for it would be too destructive.

Sir Evans has been Professor of European History at the University of East Anglia, Professor of History and Vice-Master at Birkbeck, University of London, and Professor of Modern History at the University of Cambridge. He is currently Regius Professor of History and President of Wolfson College in the University of Cambridge. He has won many awards, including the Wolfson Foundation History Prize, the Hamburg Medal for Arts and Sciences, and the Norton Medlicott Medal of the Historical Association of the UK.

Prof Fredrik Logevall

Visiting Undergraduates from University Of Wisconsin-Madison

On 30 December 2013, Dr Donna Brunero presented a seminar and discussion for a group of visiting undergraduates from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her presentation was an introduction to the history of the Chinese in Singapore and the changing nature of their ‘China Connection’ from the 1850s through to the 1960s. The discussion was aided by the inclusion of woodblock print edu-boards depicting images of Singapore in the 1950s and 1960s (the prints are held by the NUS Museum). This student field trip was led by Prof Dreux Montgomery.

Mad Hatters Event

Mad Hatters, in its sixth iteration, is an annual dinner gathering organised on 12 May 2014 to celebrate the graduation of yet another cohort of History majors, as well as to bring the Department’s alumni back for a night of reunion and recreation. This year’s edition, generously supported by the NUS Office of Alumni Relations (OAR) and the Faculty, saw about 120 Mad Hatters, including the graduating class, alumni from the Classes of 2013, 2007 and 2008, the Department’s faculty and friends enjoy a night of feasting, fun and fellowship in the Della and Seng Lee Guild Hall of the Kent Ridge Guild House. The graduating cohort dedicated a lot of energy, passion and commitment towards making Mad Hatters 2014 a night to remember, putting up a number of crowd-rousing performances that showcased their talent in music and nonsensical fun-making. In between these, Mr Wong Peng Meng (Associate Director, OAR) also gave a comprehensive presentation on how the alumni could and should stay in touch and engaged with the alma mater. Other highlights of the night included the traditional roasting/toasting of the graduating class by Assoc Prof Bruce Lockhart and a challenging History quiz conducted by Assoc Prof Tim Barnard.

Engineering Asia Workshop

The Department of History, with generous assistance from FASS, the Science Technology & Society cluster, and Tembusu College, held the first meeting of the “Engineering Asia” workshop from 15 and 16 December 2013, at the Learn Lobe in Tembusu College.

Participants from the United States, Japan, and South Korea presented workshop papers, centering on common themes of pre and post-World War II technological networks (agriculture, energy, infrastructure) in Asia, especially those starting from the Japanese Empire, and reconstituting themselves after the war within the frameworks of newer post-colonial, national communities, or under the auspices of international organizations such as the United Nations. In this manner, the 1945 divide line comes under challenge, as it becomes clear that many actors under Empire were able to successfully re-invent themselves. This is equally important in that it underscores the prominent role of technical networks in the non-West, long a theme neglected within the history of science and technology.

A follow-up meeting will be held in July 2014, after which the organisers intend to submit the workshop papers for publication as an edited volume.
Cultural Industries and Convergent Culture Workshop
Assoc Prof Ian Gordon organised a two-day workshop on 26 and 27 February 2014 around the topic “Cultural Industries and Convergent Culture”. The workshop brought together humanities and social science scholars from the universities of Arizona, Calgary, Denver, Melbourne, Texas A&M and De La Salle in the Philippines and members of the Departments of History, Communications and New Media and English with an interest in the way users engage with media and the ways this may have changed with increasing instances of transmedia and media convergence. His work examined the processes at work since the turn of the twentieth century to argue that what is now called transmedia is not that new a thing but in many ways a redefinition of what used to be called product licensing. What is new is the ability of users to spread media, at a pace that threatens the intellectual property regimes that produce profits for media companies. Other papers looked at the tactics and techniques of activists who use media in political campaigns, and at companies that adopt social media campaigns to connect with audiences.

Department of Japanese Studies
Japanese Anime and Video Game Workshop with Pros
Professors Mitsuru Kaneko and Nobuhiko Kosuge ran a week-long (24-28 February 2014) workshop on the anime and video game industries in Japan for NUS undergraduate students who are interested in becoming writers, programmers, animators, directors or producers. They discussed how the industries are organised and gave hands-on advice for students in developing their own projects. Students enjoyed learning about topics not covered in NUS modules and receiving career advice. This event was co-sponsored with the Department of Japanese Studies, Vivid Creations and ViPO. We hope to make this a recurring annual event.

“Competition and Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific: Recognising Challenges, Seizing Opportunities”
The Department of Japanese Studies will organise a public symposium on “Competition and Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific: Recognising Challenges, Seizing Opportunities” with the Department of Political Science on 19 November 2014 at The Gallery, Grand Hyatt Hotel, Singapore.

The Asia-Pacific is home to several major world economies. The region is undergoing increasing social integration and countries are facing common concerns and challenges such as the environment, humanitarian needs, the spread of disease, and development. The region is also the location for several longstanding territorial disputes that have been the source of heightened international tensions in recent years. These dynamics present challenges to regional cooperation and stability. The symposium brings together the combined insights and expertise of leading scholars, policy practitioners, and public intellectuals to consider the challenges facing the region and possible approaches to address them.

The symposium includes a keynote address and an in-depth panel discussion of the political and security dynamics of the Asia-Pacific involving high-profile speakers from the United States, Japan, China, India, and Singapore, who will address how existing institutions and cooperative networks may affect regional cooperation.

Department of Political Science
Dr Chong Ja Ian
Dr Chong was awarded the International Security Studies Section (ISSS) Best Book Award 2013/4 by the International Studies Association (ISA) on 28 March 2014. The ISA is one of the two largest professional associations for political scientists, and focuses on international and comparative politics. The ISSS is the largest organised section within the ISA.

Assoc Prof Reuben Wong
Assoc Prof Reuben Wong was awarded the UACES Arena Bursary to give a seminar “Power shift? The EU’s pivot to Asia” and offer research-based policy recommendations to an influential audience.

This event is part of the UACES Arena-organised by UACES and Edelman-The Centre in cooperation with the University of Kent at Brussels. This seminar was funded with the support of the Lifelong Learning programme of the European Union.

Department of Psychology
Graduate Luncheon
The Department of Psychology held its annual graduate luncheon on 19 May 2014. The luncheon was a celebration of graduation for the class of 2014. The luncheon was attended by students, who included graduate students and undergraduates, and their guests, as well as faculty and office staff members.

The event included a welcome and congratulatory message by the Head of Department, Assoc Prof Sim Tick Ngee, and a brief presentation by Mr Chua Sin Chew from the NUS Office of
Alumni Relations. The event concluded with a photo and video presentation prepared by the NUSPsyche (NUS psychology student society). The presentation drew warm reactions as well as chuckles and laughter as students and faculty remembered the moments captured in the photos and videos. As a memento, each student attendee received a Linus (NUS lion) stuffed toy, courtesy of the Office of Alumni Relations.

The event was a success, with many happy faces all around as well as plenty of opportunities for students and faculty to mingle, chat, and take photos. It was truly a time of celebration for the students as they pass a great milestone in their lives - graduating from the University. Here's wishing the graduates all the best in all their future endeavours!

Psychology Teaching Assistant Symposium (PTAS) 2014
The Department of Psychology organised the inaugural NUS Psychology Teaching Assistant Symposium (PTAS) 2014 on 25 February 2014, with the aim of sharing best practices and ideas to empower both Full-time and Graduate Student Teaching Assistants (TAs) on how best to teach psychology students.

Advised by Assoc Prof Melvin Yap (Psychology Graduate Studies Director), Dr Stephen Lim (Symposium Chair) – along with his Team that comprised of two Full-time Teaching Assistants Mr. Lee Li Neng (Symposium Co-chair) and Ms. Sarah Wong (Symposium Secretariat) – devised a half-a-day programme that developed TAs' pedagogical and presentation skills, and discussed such topics as how TAs might effectively relate with their module lecturers and students as well as balance coursework with research and teaching.

The PTAS 2014 received very positive feedback from attendees, who thought that it was "personally relevant" and "highly engaging". They liked the fact that the Symposium promoted "exchanges of problems [sic] and ideas between panel members and attendees, created "[a] chance to connect with other TAs", "didn’t merely impart teaching skills but also reminded [them] to reflect and leverage [on] their strengths", contained "inspiring testimonials from the facilitators", and provided "a refreshing reminder [that they too] can potentially impact and inspire students". A participant "[felt] recharged to continue to teach passionately". Many yearned for full-day Symposiums in future runs.

Inaugural S R Nathan Professor Michael Sherraden Delivers Public Lecture on Asset Building
Prof Michael Sherraden, a renowned social policy expert is the first Visiting Professor to be appointed under the S R Nathan Professorship. He visited from 4 February to 3 March 2014. Prof Sherraden is also the Youngdahl Professor of Social Development and Founding Director of the Center for Social Development at Washington University in St. Louis. He is the creator of Individual Development Accounts, a matched savings programme designed to help the working poor save money and accumulate assets. His work on assets has also influenced policy and programme development in the United Kingdom, Canada, Korea, China, Australia, Peru, Colombia, Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, and other countries around the world. He has served as an advisor and consultant to the US White House, leadership in other countries, and many non-governmental and private organisations. In 2010, he was listed by Time Magazine as one of the 100 most influential people in the world.

On 17 February, Prof Sherraden delivered the S R Nathan Professor Public Lecture entitled “Innovations in Asset Building”. The seminar was very well attended with 156 participants comprising social service practitioners and students, as well as former Singapore president, Mr S R Nathan, who was there to grace the event.

In his lecture, Prof Sherraden discussed asset building as a social policy strategy, which Singapore has carried out with notable success through the Central Provident Fund and other programmes. He also highlighted the benefits of Child Development Accounts (CDA) and cited published results which show that children who have college savings accounts from as young as age four have better social emotional development than those who do not.

The S R Nathan Professorship in Social Work was established by FASS in 2012 to honour Mr S R Nathan, who is a former NUS Chancellor and an eminent alumnus of the Faculty. The aim of the Professorship is to support the long-term goal of promoting social work education and encouraging research among scholars in Singapore and Asia on issues related to social development, poverty and asset building.
It also highlighted implications and contributions of the study for academic knowledge, clinical practice, social policies, and proposals for future research.

The presentation on infidelity among Singapore Chinese service users was informative and meticulously carried out. A new study that Dr Yow embarked on and is conducting to validate his thesis findings was also introduced as a next step for his thesis work and the focus was placed on implications for clinical practice with people who suffer the issue of infidelity in the Singapore context.

Social Work Departmental Seminar on Problem Gambling

Dr Vincent Ng, Executive Director of AMKFSC (Ang Mo Kio Family Service Centre) Community Services, gave a talk entitled “Study on Factors Affecting Help Seeking amongst Active Gamblers in Singapore” on 25 April 2014.

Gambling is a widely accepted social and recreational activity in Singapore dating back to our colonial days. Despite the long history of gambling and the availability of legalised gambling here, very little is known about problem gambling in Singapore. Utilising Ronald Andersen’s socio-behavioral model, the speaker aimed to establish the factors associated with help seeking among active gamblers in Singapore. Implication for policies and service delivery for problem gambling were also discussed in this presentation.

There was active participation during the questions and answer time from the audience, comprising participants from the social workers, casino regulators, hospital staff and NUS faculty members. The presentation aroused much interest in the audience particularly on issues related to social work practice with problem gamblers.

South Asian Studies Programme (SASP)

Prof Zoya Hasan was the Visiting Professor of Distinguished Leaders in Asian Studies from 15 January to 6 February 2014. She is a professor of political science and the dean of School of Social Sciences (SSS) at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. While she was here, she gave a public lecture on “Democratic Engagement, Social Mobilisation and Policy Change in India.” As part of the SASP Seminar, Prof Zoya Hasan presented on “Democracy and Rising Inequalities in India.” She also gave a talk on “Representation of Women in Indian Politics,” jointly organised by the Association of Women for Action and Research (AWARE) and SASP.

Department of Southeast Asian Studies

Assoc Prof Maitrii Victoriano Aung-Thwin

Assoc Prof Maitrii Victoriano Aung-Thwin was elected Chair of the Southeast Asia Council, the administrative body that oversees the promotion of Southeast Asian Studies within the Association for Asian Studies (AAS), the largest body of Asian scholars in the world (8000 members). As Chair, Assoc Prof Aung-Thwin also joins the AAS Board of Directors, the unit that is charged with making recommendations for policy and governance of the AAS.

Spaces of Technoscience

The Science, Technology, and, Society (STS) cluster and the Department of Southeast Asian Studies held an inter-disciplinary workshop entitled “Spaces of Technoscience” from 21-22 July 2014.

The need to focus on “Spaces of Technoscience” begins from the recognition that much of contemporary technoscience can no longer be contained by analysis at the national scale. From flows of expertise and movements of bodies to the mutations of labour, value, instruments, and artifacts, technoscience is increasingly determined by transnational horizons. The inertial weight of the national scale, however, has not disappeared from our concepts, scholarship, or policy recommendations, and this tension opens up a productive point of departure for this workshop.

“Spaces of Technoscience” thereby offered STS scholars the opportunity to explore technosciences in one location or many, through networks and across different scales of theory, action, and struggle. In the process, it also offers the possibility of side-stepping intellectual aporias that have plagued STS for too long, namely, the varieties of cultural essentialisms that typify “East v. West” distinctions, familiar markers of difference that are nonetheless reliant on shallow and reified concepts of space.
Southeast Asian Night 2014

Southeast Asian Night, supported by the Department of Southeast Asian Studies, has always been a showcase for traditional and contemporary Southeast Asian performing arts. On 14 March 2014, the NUS Singa Nglaras Gamelan Ensemble and Southeast Asian Studies Student Society organised one of the largest performances yet, collaborating with Gamelan Asmaradana, Gamelan Singamurti Balinese Ensemble, the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA), and various dancers and musicians from Singapore and Indonesia. The audience was treated to the spectacle of two contrasting gamelan sets from Java and Bali, and a wide variety of items from Sunda, Java, Banyumas, Bali, and the Philippines.

The NUS Singa Nglaras Gamelan Ensemble, under the directorship of Assoc Prof Jan Mràzek of the Department of Southeast Asian Studies, opened the show on a traditional note with a Patalon, a Javanese musical arrangement used as an overture before the start of Javanese Wayang Kulit. The NUS Singa Nglaras Ensemble then took turns with Gamelan Singamurti Balinese Ensemble to fill the evening with both traditional repertoire such as Kompyang and Ayak-ayak Pamungkas, and tradition inspired contemporary items such as Rampak and Tari Gambirsawit.

This year, we were fortunate to work with Banyumas dance specialist Rianto, who is currently the Artistic Director of Dewandaru Dance Company, Tokyo. Together with his workshop participants from Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, he presented two items: a traditional Banyumas dance that is rarely performed in Singapore, and a Javanese inspired contemporary work Tari Gambirsawit that interweaves elements of dance, music and batik into its presentation. Both items were performed to live music from the Singa Nglaras Ensemble.

During the evening, the various talents of NUS academics were also on display. Assoc Prof Jan Mràzek and Assoc Prof Sarah Weiss (Yale-NUS) filled key positions in the NUS Singa Nglaras Gamelan Ensemble; Assoc Prof Irving Johnson from the Department of Southeast Asian Studies performed Topeng Keras, a solo Balinese mask dance from dance-drama repertoire while Assoc Prof Teofilo Daquila, also from the Department, charmed the audience with his renditions of two Filipino songs: Ang Dalagang Pilipina and Dahil Sa Iyo.

This event would not have been possible without the logistical and administrative support provided by the Southeast Asian Studies Students Society, Gamelan Asmaradana and the volunteer coordinators from NUS Singa Nglaras. This event has allowed various groups and artistes to come together and showcase the rich diversity of Southeast Asian performing arts to both the campus community and the wider public. It is our hope that support will continue to be given to it in the years to come.
Between Our Shelves

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS AND NEW MEDIA

Reducing Health Disparities – Communication Interventions
Mohan J Dutta and Gary L Kreps (Eds.)
New York: Peter Lang, 2013

Over the last five decades, the gap between the haves and have-nots has consistently increased in the realm of access to healthcare services among different sectors of society: from quality of healthcare services, access to health supplies, technologies, and usage of health information and health prevention services, to vulnerability to certain types of diseases and health outcomes. Against this backdrop this edited collection - the first of its kind - uses the framework of communication in order to understand the underlying dimensions of health disparities and the communicative processes, policies, methodologies, and messages that are deployed with the goal of increasing access, improving quality, and addressing the underlying causes.

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Little Women on Their Own
Jane Nardin

Reunited after the Indian Mutiny of 1857, the four May girls are restless. Catherine goes to work as a governess on a remote tea plantation, where she discovers that her employer has murdered an Indian worker. Timid Fanny comes out of her shell to play a star role in the sensational trial that follows. Meanwhile, Jane and Elizabeth travel to England, where they must resist the Victorian belief that motherhood is every woman’s destiny, without giving up on love. This hilarious and exciting sequel to the acclaimed Little Women in India sees the sisters balancing the claims of romance, ambition, and conscience... in an unjust world.

The Routledge Handbook of Syntax
Carrie, A C, D S Sidiqqi and Yosuke Sato, (Eds.)

The study of syntax over the last half century has seen a remarkable expansion of the boundaries of human knowledge about the structure of natural language. The Routledge Handbook of Syntax presents a comprehensive survey of the major theoretical and empirical advances in the dynamically evolving field of syntax from a variety of perspectives, both within the dominant generative paradigm and between syntacticians working within generative grammar and those working in functionalist and related approaches.

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

Special Issue: Advancing Postcolonial Geographies, Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography
Sidaway, J.D., Woon, C.Y. and Jacobs, J.
Wiley Blackwells. 35(1), 2014.

This special issue is a collection of papers presented at the international symposium on Advancing Postcolonial Geographies (organised by Prof Jane Jacobs, Yale-NUS, Prof James D. Sidaway, Department of Geography and Dr Woon Chih Yuan, Department of Geography) that took place in February 2013, as reported in the last issue of Ascent (Vol. 19 No. 1 January 2014). All the papers are open access: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jsjg.2014.35.issue-1/issuetoc

Migration and Diversity in Asian Contexts
Lai Ah Eng, Francis Leo Collins and Brenda Yeoh Saw Al (Eds.)
Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 2012

This volume makes an important and unique contribution to scholarly understandings of migration and diversity through its focus on Asian contexts. Current scholarship and literature on processes of migration and the consequences of diversity is heavily concentrated on Western contexts and their concerns with “multiculturalism”, “integration”, “rights and responsibilities”, “social cohesion”, “social inclusion”, and “cosmopolitanism”. In contrast, there has been relatively little attention given to migration and growing diversity in Asian contexts which are constituted by highly distinct and varied histories, cultures, geographies, and political economies. This book fills this significant gap in the literature on migration studies with a concentrated focus on communities, cities and countries in the Asian region that are experiencing increased levels of population mobility and subsequent diversity. Not only does it offer analyses of the policies and processes of migration, it also addresses the outcomes and implications of migration and diversity – these include a focus on multiculturalism and citizenship in the Asian region, the emerging complex forms of governance in response to increased diversity, discussions of different settlement experiences, and the practices of everyday life and encounters in increasingly diverse locales.

Return: Nationalizing Transnational Mobility in Asia
Biao Xiang, Brenda S. A. Yeoh and Mika Toyota (Eds.)

Since the late 1990s, Asian nations have increasingly encouraged, facilitated, or
demanded the return of emigrants. In this interdisciplinary collection, distinguished scholars from countries around the world explore the changing relations between nation-states and transnational mobility. Taking into account illegally trafficked migrants, deportees, temporary laborers on short-term contracts, and highly skilled émigrés, the contributors argue that the figure of the returnee energizes and redefines nationalism in an era of increasingly fluid and indeterminate national sovereignty. They acknowledge the diversity, complexity, and instability of reverse migration, while emphasizing its discursive, policy, and political significance at a moment when the tensions between state power and transnational subjects are particularly visible. Taken together, the essays foreground Asia as a useful site for rethinking the intersections of migration, sovereignty, and nationalism.

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

Nature Contained: Environmental Histories of Singapore
Timothy P. Barnard (Ed.)
Singapore: NUS Press, 2014

How has Singapore’s environment and location in a zone of extraordinary biodiversity influenced the economic, political, social and intellectual history of the island since the early 19th century? What are the antecedents to Singapore’s image of itself as a City in a Garden? Grounding the story of Singapore within an understanding of its environment opens the way to an account of the past that is more than a story of trade, immigration and nation building. Each of the chapters in this volume focusing on topics ranging from tigers and plantations to trade in exotic animals and the greening of the city, and written by botanists, historians, anthropologists, and naturalists examines how humans have interacted with and understood the natural environment on a small island in Southeast Asia over the past 200 years, and conversely how this environment has influenced humans. Between the chapters are travellers’ accounts and primary documents that provide eyewitness descriptions of the events examined in the text. In this regard, Nature Contained: Environmental Histories of Singapore provides new insights into the Singaporean past, and reflects much of the diversity, and dynamism, of environmental history globally.

Chinese Indonesians Reassessed: History, Religion and Belonging
Siew-Min Sai and Chang-Yau Hoon (Eds.)
London and New York, Routledge 2013

The Chinese in Indonesia form a significant minority of about three percent of the population, and have played a disproportionately important role in the country. Given that Chinese Indonesians are not seen as indigenous to the country and are consistently defined against Indonesian nationalism, most studies on the community concentrate on examining their ambivalent position as Indonesia’s perennial “internal outsider.” Chinese Indonesians Reassessed argues for the need to dislodge this narrow nationalistic approach and adopt fresh perspectives which acknowledge the full complexity of ethnic relations within the country. The focus of the book extends beyond Java to explore the historical development of Chinese Indonesian communities in more peripheral areas of Indonesia, such as Medan, the Riau Islands and West Kalimantan. It reveals the diverse religious practices of Chinese Indonesians, which are by no means confined to “Chinese” religions, and celebration of “Chinese” ethnic events. Presenting a rich array of historical and contemporary case studies, the book goes beyond national stereotypes to demonstrate how Chinese Indonesians interact with different spaces and environments to establish new Chinese Indonesian identities which are complex and multi-faceted. The book engages with a larger global literature concerned with diasporic Chinese identities and practices and offers sophisticated and empirically grounded insights on the commodification of ethnic cultures and religions.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Remembering the Samsui Women: Migration and Social Memory in Singapore and China
Kelvin E.Y. Low
Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014

Remembering the Samsui Women tells the story of women from the Samsui area of Guangdong, China, who migrated to Singapore during a period of economic and natural calamities, leaving their families behind. In their new country, many found work in the construction industry, while others worked in households or factories, where they were called hong too jin, translated literally as “red-head-scarf,” after headgear that protected them from the sun. Adding on to current debates in the fields of social memory and migration studies, this is the first book to examine how the Samsui women remember their own migratory experiences and how they, in turn, are being remembered as pioneering figures in both Singapore and China.

Diaspora Engagement and Development in South Asia
Tan Tai Yong and Md Mizanur Rahman (Eds.)
Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013

The global South Asian diaspora is over 50 million strong. Many of its members maintain strong social, economic and cultural connections to their countries of origin. They also engage in various causes and institutions that directly benefit their countries and people in South Asia. A global cast of contributors aims to document the various forms of diaspora engagement between global South Asian diasporas and their origin countries, deepening understanding of the opportunity that these diaspora communities are hoarding for development and providing insight on how to tap the development potential of diaspora engagement for countries in South Asia.
A Mountain of Difference – The Lumad in Early Colonial Mindanao
Oona Paredes
Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 2013

While Lumad peoples are widely believed to have successfully resisted the traumatic transformations of Spanish colonization, Oona Paredes makes a case for the deep cultural impact of Catholic missions in Mindanao, arguing that key elements of “traditional” Lumad life today may have evolved from earlier cross-cultural encounters with Iberian Catholic missionaries. Vignettes of Lumad life prior to the nineteenth century show different communities actively engaging colonial power and mediating its exercise according to local priorities, with unexpected results.

This book complicates our understanding of Mindanao’s history and ethnography, and outlines the beginning of an autonomous history for the marginalised Lumad peoples. The interactions explored in this book illuminate the surprisingly complex cultural and power dynamics at the peripheries of European colonialism.

Religion and Identity in the South Asian Diaspora
Rai, Rajesh and Chitra Sankaran, (Eds.)

Religious identity constitutes a key element in the formation, development and sustenance of South Asian diasporic communities. Through studies of South Asian communities situated in multiple locales, this book explores the role of religious identity in the social and political organisation of the diaspora. It accounts for the factors that underlie the modification of ritual practice in the process of resettlement, and considers how multicultural policies in the adopted state, trans-generational changes and the proliferation of transnational media has impacted the development of these identities in the diaspora. Also crucial is the dynamic and evolving relationship between religion and caste affect women’s roles in the South Asian diaspora. What emerges then from the way separate communities in the diaspora negotiate religion are diverse patterns that are strategic and contingent. Yet, paradoxically, the dynamic and evolving relationship between religion and diaspora becomes necessary, even imperative, for sustaining a cohesive collective identity in these communities.
Early Bangkok in Choa Chu Kang: Painting Thai Murals in a Temple in Singapore

Scholars of Thai painting have often discussed the art form as part of a larger literature on art history, religion, form and technique. Few (if any) have been artists themselves and work on their academic projects as part of personal endeavours. In January 2013, Assoc Prof Irving Johnson started work on painting traditional Thai murals on all four walls of the preaching hall (wiharn) at a Thai temple in Singapore. The massive undertaking, now in its second year, involves adorning the otherwise plain white walls with scenes from Buddhist narratives in a style that harks back to late eighteenth century Central Thailand.

Thai temple walls are traditionally plastered with floor to ceiling murals. These intricate works of big art depict the life of the Buddha as well as stories from religious and secular literature. As an anthropologist-artist, Assoc Prof Johnson has always been enamoured by these massive yet highly intricate works. However, a mural painting project is a large undertaking, both in terms of financial cost, energy and most importantly, time. When Assoc Prof Johnson approached the abbot of Wat Uttamayanmuni in Choa Chu Kang about his proposed plan to paint the walls, the abbot was initially apprehensive. "Why don’t you paint the doors first and show me what your work is like?" he suggested. This was in 2012. The door paintings, done in acrylic and gold-leaf took 8 months to complete.

Painting a Thai mural is not easy, especially in Singapore, where one does not have the necessary help. Unlike in Thailand, where murals are often painted as part of a team effort with some 20 people working day and night for some 10 years on a project, the Choa Chu Kang mural is very much a personal endeavour. Assoc Prof Johnson did not have a team of artists working with him as no one could paint the intricate details that have become synonymous with Thai classical art.

Teaching SE3224 Thai Drawing and Painting has allowed Assoc Prof Johnson to train a group of students in the aesthetics of Thai traditional art. However, the typical NUS undergraduate is not a mural painter and it was impossible to convince them to work on the wall project which required a huge sacrifice in time. One student from the class helped Assoc Prof Johnson for a year after her graduation until she landed a job and Assoc Prof Johnson was back to facing the walls alone. Although the project has led to deteriorating eyesight – glasses do not help as the design is too fine, there is an intense feeling of satisfaction in seeing color and story light up plain cement. For a few hours every week, Assoc Prof Johnson feels himself walking in the footsteps of such artistic giants like Khru Khong Pek and Khru Thong Yu – the Michelangelos of Thai mural painting, who in the 1800s were commissioned by King Rama III to decorate some of Bangkok’s most magnificent temples. Some people have asked Assoc Prof Johnson, “When will your mural be complete?” His answer is a typical Thai response to concepts of long time – “It will be complete when it finishes.”