Department of Political Science
Department Seminar

Professor Ole Wæver
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"Securitization Theory: Recent Scholarly Debates, New Security Threats, Emerging Research Strategies"

Moderator: Prof Ted Hopf
Tuesday, 28th Aug 2018
2.00pm to 3.30pm
PS Staff Meeting Room, AS1, #04-01
National University of Singapore
ALL ARE WELCOME!

ABSTRACT
In the 1990s, a number of new theories of security emerged – challenging both conventional concepts of security confined to military threats to states and simultaneously the US dominance of security studies. Among these (at the time mostly European) innovations in security research, the so-called Copenhagen School contributed concepts like securitization, regional security complexes and societal security. This provided a better framework for researching and understanding under what conditions it is possible for whom to turn what issues into security matters and with what implications, i.e.: What does security do? What difference does security make? The theory has been challenged and developed through many rounds of debates. The most recent ones have amongst other things questioned its conception of politics, the theory’s excessive focus on isolated ‘speech acts’ on existential threats and its disregard of general societal unease and anxiety in interaction with low-key rituals and techniques of protection and surveillance. Historically, the theory has evolved through its engagement concretely with new generations of security issues, and the talk will therefore move from a survey of key theory debates to a discussion of the peculiar challenges emanating from new security threats including religion, climate change and dramatic technologies like AI. The final part of the talk will present some research programs and strategies that might take this theory forward in productive ways. This implies revisiting speech act theory, philosophy of science on the theory of theory and the interface of sociology of risk and security studies.

BIO
Ole Wæver, Ph.D., Dr.h.c., is Professor of International Relations at the Department of Political Science, University of Copenhagen, and Director of the Center for Resolution of International Conflicts. Much of his international repute stems from coining the concept of securitization and co-developing what is known as the Copenhagen School in security studies. Beyond security theory, his research interests include the history and sociology of the International Relations discipline, global/regional analysis of power(s) and security, philosophy of science, sociology of science, religion in international relations, climate change, conflict analysis, transformative technology, and the role of identities in foreign policy. Among his main books are Security: A New Framework for Analysis (with Barry Buzan and Jaap de Wilde, Lynne Rienner 1988, Chinese, Czech and Romanian translations); Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security (with Barry Buzan, Cambridge University Press 2003; Chinese and Persian translations); International Relations Scholarship Around the World (ed with Arlene B. Tickner, Routledge 2009). Ole Wæver was elected to the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters in 2007, became Knight of the Order of the Dannebrog in 2014, and received an honorary doctorate from University of Turku in 2015.