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Mural by Darbotz & Setsu

Call for Papers

Pursuing the Common Good: Southeast Asia and Southeast Asian Studies

Canadian Council on Southeast Asian Studies (CCSEAS) 2025 Conference
23–25 October 2025 | University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

Southeast Asians have historically participated in a wide range of projects for social, cultural and political transformation. From pre-modern galactic polities to contemporary pro-democracy movements, these projects for change have been premised on one or another vision for human (and often more-than-human) flourishing—a model for living well, both individually and collectively. To be sure, institutional articulations of the common good are rarely, if ever, quite what they appear. Accordingly, popular participation in such projects (both state-sponsored and otherwise) has varied greatly—ranging from active engagement to strategic evasion, from promulgation to critique. The historical record provides ample evidence of how positive visions for the future tend to ride on the disarticulation, or exclusion, of at least some of their rivals. (As Tom Lehrer wryly noted, even the ideal of tolerance entails an exclusion of the intolerant.) So, whether we look to politics or the arts, the pursuit of a given ideal (environmental protection, freedom of association, transgender rights, etc.) often puts its proponents in conflict with alternative projects for human flourishing—as pursued, for example, by the state, or by transnational corporations and other competing interests. So, what forms of agency, alliance and collective life have characterized the pursuit of the common good in Southeast Asia, both historically and on the contemporary scene?

How might closer attention to this pursuit transform our understanding of history, culture, art and society in the region? And, given both calls and claims to embody a decolonial approach, what common goods – and alliances – should we be pursuing as scholars and practitioners of Southeast Asian Studies? In addition to its substantive focus on Southeast Asia, our choice of theme is meant to stimulate a conversation about the future of the field—with an eye to articulating a set of interests—or ‘goods’—common to Southeast Asia-focused scholarship from across the humanities, the arts, social sciences, environmental studies, language instruction, archival and research collections development, and related fields.

We invite proposals for papers, panels and roundtable sessions on the broad theme of Pursuing the Common Good as well as on other subjects pertinent to the study of Southeast Asia and its diasporas.

Deadline: Please submit your 250-word (max) proposal at this link—EXTENDED to Monday, 17 March 2025 at 17:00 EDT.

Proposals will be accepted in French, English and Southeast Asian languages; in the case of SEA languages, you will also be asked to provide a translation into English or French.



University of Victoria
Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives



CCSEAS 2025 is presented in collaboration with the Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives at the University of Victoria and the Canadian Southeast Asian Studies Initiative