

NEWSLETTER

MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

This month has been one of significant change for the School. In our biggest news, the long-serving and highly respected Senior School Manager, Tan Mei Sie, is moving to the School of Business. We thank her for thirteen years of service to SASS and wish her all the best in her new role. We also farewell Emily (who kindly stayed a little longer than expected). However, the reformulated School professional team remains in place, and we thank May May, Krystal, Nurul, Annabelle, and Eswary for their ongoing support for the work of the School.

In academic news I am delighted to announce the winners and runners up for the inaugural ECR publications awards. The certificates and prizes will be awarded at the School Research Retreat on the 3rd December by our outgoing Deputy Head, Yeoh Seng Guan. The judging panel included five readers: Dr Lucia Sorbera, University of Sydney (Arab women's autobiography, Arab women's political leadership, and contemporary Iraqi cinema), Emeritus Professor James Donald, UNSW (Film, Race and Difference, Masculinity, and Urban Sociality), A/Prof Michael Connors, Monash University Malaysia (politics of Thailand, nationalism, ideology, cultural policy, intellectual history and the international politics of the Asia Pacific), A/Prof Hongwei Bao, University of Nottingham (mediated cultural politics in a transnational context, gay identity and queer activism, community culture and citizen media), and myself as Chair. The external panel members all commented on the high quality of the submissions in both categories, monographs and journal articles published in 2020.

The judges were looking for originality, significance of contribution to the scholarly corpus, execution of argument, and quality of articulation and expression. After reading and ranking individually, the group met to give me their recommendations and to discuss the field. Thank you to everyone who submitted work to the competition. We all enjoyed the reading very much.

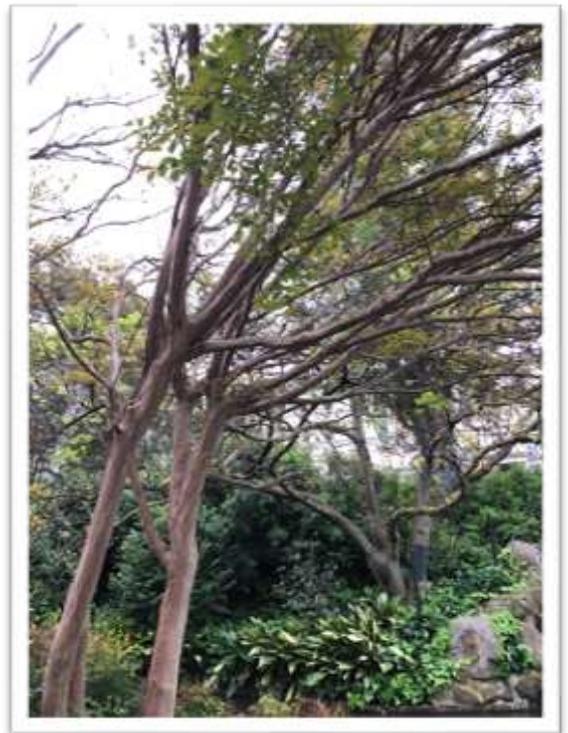
The results are:

Best Monograph

Agata Frymus. (2020) *Damsels and Divas: European Stardom in Silent Hollywood*. Rutgers University Press.

Special Mention for a Monograph

Joseph Goh. (2020) *Becoming a Malaysian Trans Man: Gender, Society, Body and Faith*. Palgrave.





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Damsels and Divas is an engagingly written and carefully researched history of women stars in early cinema. The use of the archive was commended by the judges, as was the interesting alignment of migration stories with the cinematic Other as personified in the white body. The book offers new insights into the hierarchies and narratives of stardom, and a nuanced view of the performance of Orientalism and gender in early film.

Becoming a Malaysian Trans Man is an original and important exploration of the lives of trans men in Malaysia, and the various typologies of courage required to fulfil destiny. The book is based on field work supported by a commitment to the authenticity and value of lived experience as the key source for understanding human society.

Best Journal Article

Koh Sin Yee. (2020) Disrupted Geographic Arbitrage and Differential Capacities of Coping in Later-Life: Anglo-Western Teacher Expatriates in Brunei, *International Migration Review* DOI: 10.1177/0197918320926910

Special Mention for a Journal Article

Tingfai Yu. (2020) Reconfiguring Queer Asia as Disjunctive Modernities: Notes on the Subjective Production of Working-Class Gay Men in Hong Kong, *Journal of Homosexuality*, DOI: 10.1080/00918369.2018.1560126

Disrupted Geographic Arbitrage evidences a surefooted deployment of theory to scaffold Koh's field work findings. The article is especially welcome in its attention to a group that is too easily misconfigured in less careful geo-economic analyses. The writing is mature and well expressed, whilst the structure of the article affords a powerful balance of scholarship, discovery and argumentation.

Reconfiguring Queer Asia is one of a sequence of journal articles. Taken together, they gesture towards an original and dynamic understanding of migration, and queer identity. The judges selected this particular article from Yu's submission for its theoretical ambition and its useful attention to the complex dynamics of class and generational discomfort in queer identities in Hong Kong.

This month has also seen new developments in our relationship with our Australian colleagues in Arts. The MMIC Migration in Asia page went [live](#). Thanks to Tingfai Yu for leading this initiative. Emma Baulch is on the organising committee for the [Asian Studies of Australia 2022 conference](#). We will be hosting a hybrid Malaysian hub for that event, with free access to our HDR students. Please do consider submitting an abstract or a panel. Dyah Pitaloka has joined the [Monash Digital Health Alliance](#) on behalf of the School and the Digital Asia research theme. Please contact her if you would like to know more.

The GA21 cross-School platform will not be continuing in 2022. Thank you to Koh Sin Yee for her work on this collaborative funding model, and to staff who have contributed. The campus will initiate new schemes to develop and support research and impact activities which we will share with you as they go live.

This is the penultimate newsletter for 2021. The final end-of-year wrap up would benefit from a [surprise guest editor \(think Vogue\)](#). If you (any of our readers) have ideas or would like to nominate / do in someone to do this, let me know.

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Content:

Page 1 to 2 – Message from the Head of School

Page 3 – Research News

Page 4 – Research / Graduate Research News

Page 5 to 6 – Education News

Page 7 – About Us



Research News

Publications

Goh, J. N. (2020) [Manang bali](#), indecent interweavings and healing spaces in contemporary Malaysian trans and queer theopastoralities. In L. Isherwood & H. C. Quero (Eds.), *The indecent theologies of Marcella Althaus-Reid: Voices from Asia and Latin America* (pp. 72-93). New York: Routledge

Associate Professor Yeoh Seng Guan, Book Review: 'The power of place: Contentious politics in twentieth-Century Shanghai and Bombay'. By Mark W Frazier (2019). *City & Society: Society for Urban, National, Transnational/Global Anthropology*, Vol. 33, No. 2.

Events

School of Arts & Social Sciences Industry Forum (Developing a Career in Digital Media) on 11 October 2021.

For those who missed the event, you can access the Zoom recording via this link:

https://monash.zoom.us/rec/share/c5dg8Oznzdhp8WKSJqIYAAtF551UtSZtzTr6GPSrh_InF09IrmV0WLOVose-QwVhV.As2-cYeuDj4lSHFB

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Dr Joseph N. Goh was a guest panelist for the 'Achieving Gender Equality in an Anti-LGBTQI Nation?' panel alongside Rozana Isa (Sisters in Islam) and Nisha Ayub (SEED) for the Malaysian Philosophy Society's international online [Think Big Summit 2021](#) on Sunday, 10th October 2021. More than a hundred people participated in the Summit.

Dr Koh Sin Yee will be speaking in the webinar "Key Issues in the ASEAN-Australia Region" on 23 October 2021. The webinar is part of the ASEAN-Australia Strategic Youth Partnership (AASYP) Review - IGNITE: Writers' Development Programme.

Dr Koh Sin Yee and her project team (including **Nirmala Prabhakar**) will be speaking at the webinar "Work and life in the COVID-19 Era: (Preliminary) findings from the SEAC Undergraduate Research Fellowship projects" on 28 October 2021. <https://www.lse.ac.uk/seac/events/2021/MT-21/Work-and-life-in-the-COVID-19-Era-Preliminary-findings-from-the-SEAC-Undergraduate-Research-Fellowship-projects>.

Dr Emma Baulch was interviewed by Sin Chew Daily, a leading Chinese-language newspaper on [Bachelor of Digital Media and Communication \(BDMC\)](#).

Upcoming Research Seminar Series

- a) Research Seminar Series (12/2021), 26th October 2021, 12-1 pm
"The Public and Personal Rights of Muslim Women in Malaysia: Findings from the survey on Muslim women's realities in Malaysia" by **Ms. Rozana Isa**, the Executive Director for Sisters in Islam, a Malaysian NGO working on women's rights within the framework of Islam.
Please click [here](#) for more details of the seminar. To attend, please register [here](#).



Research / Graduate Research News

Upcoming Research Seminar Series

- b) Research Seminar Series (13/2021), 2nd November, 5-6pm
“Migrant decision-making: The Choice of Malaysia as a Popular Destination by Nepali Migrants” by **Ms. Sharmini Nathan**, a researcher at the School of Arts and Social Sciences, Monash University Malaysia. Her research interests include exploring South- South migration and the complex challenges that developing countries face not only as countries of origin, but also as countries of destination.
Please click [here](#) for more details of the seminar. To attend, please register [here](#).

New Graduate Research Student

Name: Chew Chuan Yang (Dobby)

Title of project: Cross-border cultural influences on the death penalty among Mandarin-speaking communities.

Supervisors:

Associate Professor Yeoh Seng Guan (main supervisor, School of Arts and Social Sciences)

Associate Professor Mai Sato (associate supervisor, Faculty of Law, Monash Australia)



Project Description:

The project aims to explore the potential impact and change of perceptions on the death penalty created by popular media, historical or cultural icons in Mandarin-speaking or ethnic Chinese communities in the Asia-Pacific. It will also explore the cross-border influence of narratives in favour of the death penalty within the region.

About Dobby:

Dobby completed his LLM in Law at Birmingham City University and currently serves as the Executive Coordinator for the Anti-Death Penalty Asia Network (ADPAN). He has been actively involved in the abolitionist movement, campaigns and advocacy in Malaysia. Apart from his work on the death penalty in Malaysia, Dobby is also a co-founder of Security Matters, an NGO established in 2020 to provide physical and digital support for human rights defenders, as well as a committee member of Liga Rakyat Demoratik.

Commencement Date: 29th October 2021

Education News

Associate Professor Michael Connors

As we head into the October semester, staff are busy brushing up on delivering hybrid classes. These are classes where students join either online or on-campus but share the same class and teacher. This is called concurrent hybrid teaching and learning. Hybrid classes have their particular challenge. SASS must face these challenges because we want to engage online and on-campus students equally. And, the new world means that there is likely to be a mix of online and on-campus students. Recently, we sent some tips to staff on how to manage hybrid classes. SASS lecturers are resourceful and experienced, so the tips were just a helpful checklist. But such messages need not be secret. There is no reason students shouldn't be aware of the logistical challenges of hybrid teaching and learning. So, for this month's Newsletter, we reproduce the tips on how to run a successful hybrid class.

These tips do not replace what Monash University already advises on running hybrid classes (see [Hybrid teaching models - Learning and Teaching: Teach HQ \(monash.edu\)](#)), but there is nothing like nitty-gritty suggestions from the chalk face – or is that the Moodle-face – of teaching.

So here we go - a few tips on running hybrid classes.

My advice is to keep it simple: a camera projected onto a large screen with a good microphone projecting voice, along with presentation slides. Keep the screen simple and uncluttered.

- a) Do a practice session of the technology before class.
- b) At commencement, outline what will happen in the session and let students know when you pass through each stage because things often get murky working hybridly. By outlining what will happen, you keep online and on-campus students on the same page. Indicate times when the whole class will regroup.
- c) Always be visible (and audible) in the camera for online students while addressing the class as a whole. As Monash promotes active learning in scheduled classes, there won't be much lecturing: mostly students will be working together, with you, the teacher being a wandering soul, moving from group to group. Use a buzz or bell to bring the whole class together again after the group work. If a bell doesn't work, try Bruce Springsteen or a dramatic opera - anything which induces a refocus for the whole class.
- d) Suppose there are only a handful of online students. In that case, you may want to think about integrating each of them into an on-campus group discussion – with students using their own devices. It is a good idea to seek buddy volunteers to support online students – these are on-campus students who will make sure that an online student can hear and engage with the class. Buddies can check with online students through their own devices to check everything is going well. In a world of selfish behaviour, buddies deserve credit for their spirit of helpfulness. They are often the problem solvers when communications go wrong in the hybrid classroom.
- e) Online students and on-campus students tend to divide during report back from group work. Keep an eye on this – a good strategy is to get an online group to ask a question of an on-campus group etc.
- f) While roaming to visit groups during break-out sessions – disable the broadcast microphone so that conversations are specific to each group (in-class/online) – and use a local microphone for online groups.



Education News

- g) Check the chat box for online student comments questions regularly.
- h) For break-out groups, most lecturers I have worked with have found that online students should do group chats with other online students and on-campus students chat with on-campus students. But not always. Some colleagues (and students) may want to try mixing it up. Hybrid learning is about trial and error; it involves working with your class to make things work.
- i) Online students shouldn't simply disappear into their portals when the class finishes. I typically set a group discussion for 10 minutes or so to keep them together after the class finishes – so they get some of the out-of-class socialization that on-campus students will have. If that isn't feasible, it might be useful to assign quick group work to report to the next class. I know this is bread and butter stuff, but it is worth remembering that after class, chatter without the busy nose of an instructor poking into conversations helps social bonding.
- j) Online technologies that are useful in online classes can sometimes be chaotic in the hybrid class – I would use these sparingly. But each to their own. Again, learn with your class.
- k) For classes where the Unit Coordinator is off-campus – students on-campus should engage in on-campus learning with the support provided by TA/Tutor (which SASS has arranged). Again, you may wish to experiment, but by default, don't turn the class into an online class, as on-campus students will wonder why they are there.
- l) Constantly switch between conversations with online/on-campus students – make sure each can hear the other. The wandering microphone is essential. To be sure everyone has understood – recap very quickly questions or comments made by students to create a common understanding.
- m) Remember, even without COVID, the hybrid classroom will be a feature of education and the workplace. So, let's make it work together.

Remember, the most important thing is that students should let their unit coordinators know if things are working or not. SASS is full of dedicated educators who want student feedback and will use that feedback to improve things. Let students know you want to know their problems. If I have stated the obvious, it is because the obvious is sometimes worth restating.



About Us

Staff Achievements

The "The Story of Migration" animated video produced as part of the "Migration for development and equality" (MIDEQ) project funded by the UKRI Global Challenges Research Fund has been shortlisted for the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Research in Film Award for the Category of Best Animated Film. The results will be made known during the Awards Night on December 1, 2021. **Associate Professor Yeoh Seng Guan** was involved in the concept development and script for the 7 mins long animated video. See the video at: <https://www.monash.edu.my/news-and-events/pages/latest/articles/2021/the-story-of-migration>

An inside look at Mark Balnaves

I am honored to be working with SASS, even though I have only met many of my colleagues virtually. I was born in Perth, but left when I was 11 months old for Canberra, with my parents' permission. My father helped to set the National Library in Canberra with Sir Harold White. My life has been, therefore, Canberra, and then many other places as a journalist and as an academic. My main passion, my key interest, my main activity, my close to only hobby, is walking. True, I drive, I catch trains and buses, and even ride horses, as my picture shows ... but walking ... there is something about it that is civilized. Not jogging. Not running. It is not because of studies that show jogging can be unhealthy, "A study recently published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology shows that excessive jogging may be as unhealthy as being totally sedentary" or because the famous promoter of jogging, Dr. Fit, died while jogging. I love walking because it slows me down, makes me talk to people when I am travelling, stop at an interesting place, stop to look at a scratch on a pillar in Luxor that says, "Howard Carter was here".

