

THE REED

Fall 2016



The Reed

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Cover photo: Old City, Hoi An, Vietnam by Svetlin Ivanov



I am excited to share with you that the Weatherhead East Asian Institute's 2016-17 year has already been distinguished by significant growth in our Southeast Asia outreach and academics. Before this academic year began, I had the great pleasure of taking part in three major Institute events in Indonesia and Singapore that fostered the growth of Southeast Asia's Columbia alumni networks and promoted the study of Southeast Asia at the university. The widely attended panel discussions and receptions (featured on pages 4 and 5) brought together Columbia faculty, students, and alumni as well as members of other universities and organizations in Singapore and Jakarta. Following the success of these events, I look forward to future collaborations with alumni and institutions in this vitally important region.

After spending the summer broadening our presence within Southeast Asia, I was delighted to begin the academic year by welcoming a distinguished Southeast Asia scholar to our faculty. This fall, Lien-Hang Nguyen joined Columbia as the Dorothy Borg Associate Professor in the History of the United States and East Asia. An award-winning historian of the Cold War relations between Vietnam and the U.S., Professor Nguyen will play a major role in expanding Columbia's Southeast Asia-related course offerings and research opportunities.

The fall also saw the arrival of new faculty members who are already offering innovative courses and sharing their expertise with the Institute community. We are happy to welcome Nicholas

Bartlett, a medical anthropologist who is assistant professor of contemporary Chinese culture and society at Barnard College, Qin Gao, an associate professor of social policy and social work who studies poverty and migration, and Paul Kreitman, assistant professor of Japanese history.

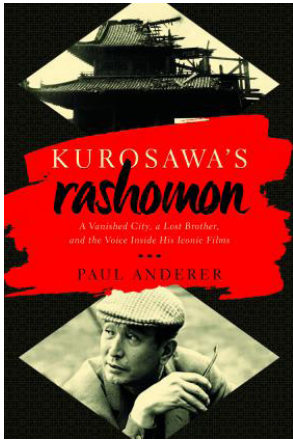
We also greeted a new community of postdoctoral scholars. They include David Brophy, an associate research scholar in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures who specializes in the history of Xinjiang and Inner Asia; Peter E. Hamilton, the Dorothy Borg Postdoctoral Scholar in the Making of the Modern Pacific World; Miki Kaneda, an ethnomusicologist of Japan who is a visiting assistant professor of music; Victor Louzon, an historian of the Cold War in East Asia who is the Institute's INTERACT Postdoctoral Scholar; and Simon Toner, the Dorothy Borg Postdoctoral Scholar in Southeast Asian Studies.

In this *Reed* issue, you will have the opportunity to read more about Professor Nguyen's book projects and teaching interests; Professor Kreitman's groundbreaking research on the environmental and geopolitical history of Japan; the work of Peter E. Hamilton, who studies the global history of Hong Kong; and the work of Simon Toner, who, along with Professor Nguyen, will deepen our understanding of the Vietnam War and its legacies. Please look forward to articles about more of our new community members in our forthcoming editions.

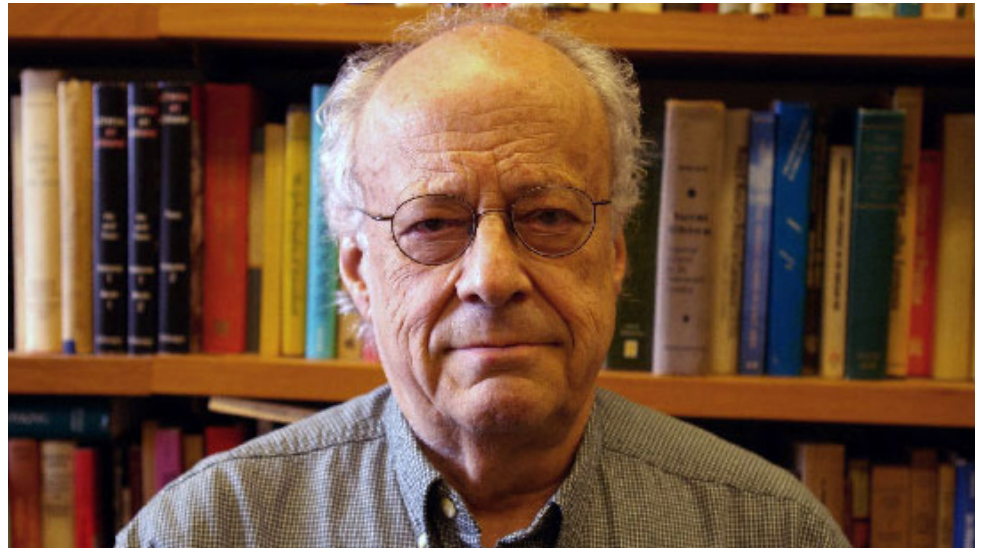
Eugenia Lean
DIRECTOR

Paul Anderer Publishes New Book *Kurosawa's Rashomon*

Paul Anderer, Fred and Fannie Mack Professor of Humanities and professor of Japanese literature, has authored a new book titled *Kurosawa's Rashomon: A Vanished City, a Lost Brother, and the Voice Inside His Iconic Films*. The book, published by Pegasus Books in October 2016, is a groundbreaking investigation into the early life of filmmaker Akira Kurosawa in connection to his celebrated 1950 film *Rashomon*.



Myron L. Cohen Receives First Class Professional Medal in Hakka Affairs



We are pleased to announce that Myron L. Cohen, Professor of Anthropology at Columbia University and former Institute director, received the First Class Professional Medal in Hakka Affairs on September 10, 2016 at the opening ceremony of the Fourth Taiwan International Conference on Hakka Studies.

The Hakka Affairs Council presented Professor Cohen with the award in recognition of his outstanding contributions to Hakka academic research. The award ceremony was held at the International Conference Hall of the College of Hakka Studies, National Chiao Tung University.

Taipei City Hakka Cultural Center is also presenting an immersive exhibit of the anthropological photos and research of Professor Cohen. Running through June 2017, the exhibit introduces visitors to a selection of photographs that Professor Cohen, a preeminent scholar of Hakka family life, took of a village called Daqixia in Meinong Township in the 1960s. Taken when Professor Cohen was a Columbia graduate student, the photographs allow viewers to see how mid-twentieth century life in Daqixia was strongly shaped by traditions and family structures that the first Hakka settlers brought with them from China.



Center for Korean Research Receives Grant from the Academy of Korean Studies

The Weatherhead East Asian Institute's Center for Korean Research has been awarded a five-year Core University Grant by the Academy of Korean Studies, a division of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea.

The Center for Korean Research has allocated the majority of the grant funds to the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures, the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, and the C.V. Starr East Asian Library in the form of graduate fellowships, postdoctoral positions, new courses, and Korean collection cataloging.

WEAI Holds Events

During the summer of 2016, the Weatherhead East Asian Institute held panel discussions in Indonesia and Singapore to foster the growth of Columbia University alumni networks in Southeast Asia and to promote the study of Southeast Asia at Columbia. These events brought together Columbia faculty, students, and alumni as well as academics, students, and members of the public in Singapore and Jakarta.

“Competing Visions for Southeast Asian International and Domestic Politics.” Jakarta, June 29, 2016



The panel discussion in Jakarta was introduced by Eugenia Lean, WEAI Director and Associate Professor of Chinese History at Columbia University, and featured Mari Pangestu, Former Minister of Trade and Former Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy, Republic of Indonesia; Xiaobo Lü, Professor of Political Science, Barnard College; Duncan McCargo, Visiting Professor of Political Science, Columbia University; Ann Marie Murphy, Senior Research Scholar, Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Columbia University; and Andrew J. Nathan, Class of 1919 Professor of Political Science, Columbia University.



in Southeast Asia

“Superpower Rivalries and Regional Interests: Southeast Asia, China and the U.S.”

Co-hosted by the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore, June 27, 2016

The June panel in Singapore featured Eugenia Lean, Xiaobo Lü, Duncan McCargo, Ann Marie Murphy, and Andrew J. Nathan. The discussion was moderated by Suzaina Bte Abdul Kadir, Associate Dean and Deputy Director of Academic Affairs at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy.



“Southeast Asia in Regional and Comparative Perspective: What China and the United States Have to Do with It.” Singapore, July 1, 2016

This discussion was introduced by Eugenia Lean, and featured Xiaobo Lü, Duncan McCargo, Ann Marie Murphy, and Andrew J. Nathan.





LIEN-HANG NGUYEN

Dorothy Borg Associate
Professor in the History of the
United States and East Asia

Professor Nguyen, who received her PhD from Yale University and comes to Columbia from the University of Kentucky, specializes in the Vietnam War, U.S.-Southeast Asian relations, and the global Cold War. Professor Nguyen is currently working on a comprehensive history of the 1968 Tet Offensive to be published by Random House. She is the general editor of the forthcoming Cambridge History of the Vietnam War, as well as co-editor of the Cambridge Studies in U.S. Foreign Relations.

What led you to focus your academic research on the Cold War histories of the United States and Southeast Asia? Are there certain aspects of the Vietnam War that you want to bring to light and to complicate?

My academic research on U.S.-East Asian Relations during the Cold War, and the Vietnam War in particular, stems from my own personal history. My family and I were refugees of the Vietnam War, arriving to the United States in 1975. I remember hearing war stories from a very young age

and wondering what that conflict was all about. When I entered graduate school, there was an effort to use multi-lingual, multi-archival sources to understand the global history of the cold war period. Trained as a historian of U.S. foreign relations, I focused on the impact of American power in Southeast Asia. My scholarship focuses on high-level decision-making in Vietnam, both north and south of the seventeenth parallel, during the Cold War era. I complicate the notion that the United States alone dictated the origins, trajectory, and conclusion of the war in Vietnam.

Can you tell us briefly about your first book, *Hanoi's War*, and your current book on the Tet Offensive?

Although most histories of the Vietnam War focus on the American perspectives and seek to answer the question of why and how Washington lost that war, I asked a slightly different question: How did North Vietnam win the war? To that end, I focused on the Vietnamese communist war effort and challenge much of what we know about Hanoi's war. My current book on the 1968 Tet Offensive chronicles the political

intrigue that pervaded the warring capitals on the eve of the offensive in 1967, the bloody battles fought in South Vietnam and the civil unrest in America in 1968, and the offensive's global ramifications by early 1969. Its central purpose is to change our understanding of the Tet Offensive and its impact on the Vietnam War and the Cold War.

What do you find appealing and what do you find challenging about studying transnational history?

What I find most appealing about studying transnational history is identifying the linkages—on a global stage—of ostensibly “local” or “regional” events of the past. The greatest challenge in doing this is not only the linguistic obstacles but also one of access to archival materials. The rewards, however, are vast. If one just looks at the study of “(insert country)

and the world” within history, this is the direction the field is moving.

What kinds of questions tend to drive your research and your teaching?

The questions that tend to drive my research and teaching include: What role did contingency play in the relationship between United States and East Asia in the 20th century? What were the structural factors at work? How do we take account of local voices when we approach history from a global perspective? How do we account for agency?

What aspects of being at Columbia particularly excite you?

There are so many aspects of being at Columbia that excite me—in fact, it'd make more sense to ask me what

does NOT excite me about being here! The opportunity to work with talented students at the undergraduate and graduate levels and to collaborate with the best faculty in the world is a scholar's dream-come-true. Now add in the fact that all of this unfolds in New York City and I'm not sure if it gets any better than this as an academic.

What classes are you planning to teach in the coming semesters?

I am planning to teach an undergraduate lecture on the Vietnam War and team-teach a methods course on International and Global History next semester. Next year I intend to offer undergraduate and graduate level courses on U.S.-East Asian relations. I would also like to offer courses on gender and diplomacy in Asia as well as a course on transnational people's diplomacy during the Cold War era.



SIMON TONER

Dorothy Borg Postdoctoral Scholar in Southeast Asian Studies

Simon Toner is a Lecturer in Modern American History at the University of Sheffield (on leave 2016-2017). He completed his PhD in International History at the London School of Economics in 2015. Professor Toner is a US historian focusing particularly on the history of the American War in Vietnam and U.S. development projects in Cold War East and Southeast Asia.

What led you to focus your academic research on the Cold War histories of the United States and Southeast Asia?

I was interested in the history of American foreign relations from quite an early age, but my interest in Cold War Asia was sparked during my masters degree program at University College Dublin. During that year, I took a Vietnam War seminar with Robert K. Brigham of Vassar College, who was visiting UCD as the Mary Ball Washington Professor of American History. Bob is one of the top historians of the American War in Vietnam and was one of the first Americans to conduct archival research in Vietnam. I was so taken with his seminar that I decided I was going to do a PhD on the topic. I moved to Hanoi for 18 months to teach English and study Vietnamese. After that, I started a PhD in International History at the London School of Economics, where I was fortunate enough to work with Arne Westad, the doyen of Cold War history.

Can you tell us briefly about your current book project on the final years of the American War in Vietnam? In what ways would you like to complicate or challenge the ways that the Vietnam War has been popularly understood?

I'm currently working on a book manuscript which examines the role of development in the final years of the American War in Vietnam. I argue that global changes in development thought and practice in the late 1960s and early 1970s shaped the United States relationship with its South Vietnamese ally, influenced the nature of development projects on the ground in Vietnam, and ultimately determined the outcome of the war.



I see myself as contributing to an important trend in Vietnam War historiography which takes the South Vietnamese state more seriously. It is typically dismissed as a puppet state in much of the Americanist literature, but a small but growing group of historians using Vietnamese archives, including myself, argues that the actions of the South Vietnamese state mattered.

In particular, I look at the development policies of the Second Republic of Vietnam and the government of Nguyen Van Thieu (1967-1975). Most of the Americanist scholarship more or less ignores Thieu's government, instead focusing on the United States' and North Vietnam's negotiations in Paris and mutual escalation on the battlefield. This was the phase of the war known as 'Vietnamization,' during which the Nixon administration began withdrawing American troops and handing over the burden of fighting to the South Vietnamese military (a process we have also seen in Afghanistan and Iraq in recent years).

Many historians have framed this as the slow abandonment of South Vietnam. But South Vietnamese leaders did not passively await their fate. In addition to taking on a larger share of war-fighting, I reveal that South Vietnam was also a 'developmentalist' state. The government, along with many of its U.S. advisors, viewed development as a crucial component of counterinsurgency warfare and

indeed essential if the state was to survive the U.S. withdrawal. They debated the means and ends of development but generally these projects were designed to stabilize the economy, increase state capacity and legitimacy, and to win allegiance of, or at least control the political identities of the population. Ultimately, these projects were unable to save South Vietnam, and in some cases even amplified the fragility of the state in the face of North Vietnam's final military offensives. So I argue that we cannot understand why the South Vietnamese state fell without studying these projects.

What kinds of questions tend to drive your research and your teaching?

As a historian of the Vietnam War who is attempting to push against orthodox historiography, I try to challenge established truths and encourage my students to do the same. The ways in which we interpret the past are constantly evolving due to new archival discoveries, methodological innovations, and, for better or worse, contemporary concerns. This is why I think it is really important to teach students about historiography quite early on and for them to learn that, ultimately, it is all a matter of interpretation.

As a historian of U.S. foreign relations, my research and teaching also grapples with the question of a U.S. empire. The question of whether the United States is/was an empire is perhaps the key question in the field. Arguably, American-led development programs during the Cold War,



and the attempt to shape the politics and economics of foreign countries, were part of an American imperial project. I think this is true, but I'm also interested in the ways in which 'Third World' actors, even weak and dependent ones like South Vietnam, were able to push back against American designs.

What aspects of being at Columbia this year particularly excite you?

It's an absolute privilege to be based at Columbia for a year. The resources and opportunities for intellectual exchange seem endless. It's particularly exciting for me that Professor Lien-Hang Nguyen, one of the leading lights of the new history of the Vietnam War, is a recent addition to the Columbia faculty. Hang is a great mentor to Vietnam War scholars and I have learned a lot from her. Given my interest in South Vietnamese-Taiwan connections, I've been attending the Weatherhead East Asian Institute's Taiwan lecture series and I'm also looking forward to upcoming workshops on U.S.-Southeast Asian relations.

Can you tell us about the course you plan to offer in the spring?

The course is called "The United States, Asia, and the History of International Development, 1898-present." We'll cover the period from colonial development in the Philippines to contemporary debates about the Transpacific Partnership. The idea is to examine the efforts of the United States government, philanthropic organizations, and private citizens to shape the economic, political, and social development of Asia. But we'll also explore the ways in which Asian actors accepted, reinterpreted or subverted American ideas and how overseas development projects also played out in America's inner cities.

Today, development professionals have a tendency to present development practice as an apolitical, technocratic practice. They also tend to reject any comparison with earlier iterations of development and instead claim development practice is constantly being modified for the better. But if we look at the long sweep of U.S.-led development in twentieth century Asia, from the village level to the international stage, we can see that development shaped and was shaped by political relationships. Furthermore, today's modes of development bear more than a passing resemblance to the earlier development practices. So I would say that we can't understand the political economy of contemporary U.S.-Asian relations without situating it within its proper historical context.

PETER HAMILTON

Dorothy Borg Postdoctoral Scholar in the Making of the Modern Pacific World



Peter E. Hamilton received his PhD in History from the University of Texas at Austin in 2015. He is a historian of China and the modern Pacific. His research explores transpacific networks of migration and business, Sino-US relations, and new histories of East Asian capitalism.

How did your interest in contemporary Chinese history—and specifically the history of Hong Kong—develop?

Chinese history and culture have excited me ever since I was little. I think the interest developed through the Chinese art I saw at my grandparents' house. I even tried to teach myself Chinese characters, which didn't go well! In college, I was finally able to pursue these interests. I was lucky to attend Yale, as its commitment to Sino-U.S. relations and Chinese studies runs very deep. I took Chinese and Japanese history classes and studied Mandarin, including summers in Beijing and Shanghai. After graduation, I immersed myself further by spending two years teaching at The Chinese University of Hong Kong with the Yale-China Association. Hong Kong was a turning point. I really enjoyed the teaching, and studying both Cantonese and Mandarin, but I fell in love with Hong Kong itself.

Its pace made everywhere else in the world seem sleepy, and I've never tired of exploring its cavernous neighborhoods, sampling its diverse cuisines, or learning about its tumultuous past. Today's Hong Kong is a place that seems so new—so fast-paced and commercial—that it's easy to forget the territory's seismic transformations and enormous impact on the world. While still teaching at CUHK, I began interning for two historians, Christopher Munn and May Holdsworth, who were completing an enormous project on the major figures from across Hong Kong history, published in 2013 as *The Dictionary of Hong Kong Biography*. My research on that project convinced me that the history of Hong Kong was not just the history of a minor British colony but instead the history of a key node in globalization that interweaves modern China with Southeast Asia, the British Empire, and the wider Pacific.

As a historian of China, which has such a rich and extensive history, was it challenging to narrow your scope of research to a particular era or facet of Chinese history?

Like many scholars, the path to narrow my interests and my research has been long, but ultimately very rewarding! I consider myself not only a historian of China but also a historian of both capitalism and the Pacific World. I took a lot of different history courses as an undergraduate at Yale—in addition to Chinese and Japanese history, I took U.S. international history, British imperial history, even Iranian history. It gave me a broad perspective that resists the confines of nation-states and instead favors transnational systems. During my doctoral coursework at UT Austin, I actually pursued training in both modern Chinese and U.S. histories. I was stupendously lucky to find in Madeline Hsu an adviser whose own expertise understood a transpacific approach and saw it as critically important. The intellectual breadth of UT's History department allowed us to assemble a team of mentors who could guide my research at the intersection of China and Hong Kong, British imperial history, transpacific migration, the history of capitalism, and the global Cold War. As you might imagine, my comps lists

were enormous and encompassed everything from the Ming-Qing transition to decolonization! But reading too much is never a bad thing. This training gave me the range to pursue an exciting project and to conceive my second project—the first history of the MBA degree’s expansion across the Sinophone world since the 1950s.

What kinds of questions drive your work as a scholar?

Both my manuscript-in-progress and my next project examine how people, capital, and ideas have circulated in the Pacific between Asia and the Americas. Multiple and overlapping histories have erected an artificial and highly politicized boundary down the middle of the Pacific—from Orientalist imaginings of “East” and “West” and Sinocentrism to Chinese Exclusion and even the international dateline.

Until recently, historians largely repeated and reinforced these divisions by breaking the Pacific into more manageable yet bounded geographies and histories: East Asia, Southeast Asia, North America, Latin America, while Polynesia and Oceania routinely disappeared entirely. These silos of historical enquiry marginalized transpacific movement and state systems from an important place in global history. As a wave of new scholars including Elizabeth Sinn and Emma Teng and Gregory Cushman are examining the Pacific more holistically, however, we’re recovering startling aspects of globalization and gaining new insights into the many empires and nation-states that have transected this basin.

More broadly, I’m always excited by scholarship that deconstructs current nation-states and explains current distributions of power and wealth. Chinese history has long distinguished itself in this regard, but I try to read and listen widely. If you look at my

nightstand, you’ll see everything from Edward Baptist’s stunning *The Half Has Never Been Told* to S. Frederick Starr’s *Lost Enlightenment*.

What aspects of being at Columbia this year particularly excite you?

It’s hard to know where to start! I’m tremendously grateful to be immersed in a center of scholarship on East Asia like the Weatherhead East Asian Institute. This community of scholars is unparalleled and the daily conversations and lectures are really helping to fine tune my revisions

on the manuscript. I’m particularly looking forward to the upcoming workshop on Labor Migrations in the Pacific World organized by professor Mae Ngai, one of my mentors here. On top of that, this fellowship’s gift of time is enabling rapid progress on the manuscript and for me to polish and submit several journal articles. It’s a tremendous privilege at the outset of an academic career. Then there are my students! My seminar this term is a genuine highlight of my week because of the enthusiasm and the intellect that they bring to each meeting. And the icing on the whole cake is New York City itself. It almost rivals Hong Kong!



PAUL KREITMAN

Assistant Professor of 20th Century Japanese History,
Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures

Paul Kreitman received his PhD in History from Princeton University in 2015, with a doctoral dissertation entitled "Feathers, Fertilizer and States of Nature: Uses of Albatrosses in the U.S.-Japan Borderlands." He joins Columbia after a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of London's Institute of Historical Research. Professor Kreitman's research interests include environmental, global, and commodity histories, and histories of science and technology.

How did your interest in 20th Century Japanese history develop?

It was a whole stew of ingredients, I could say. I had a childhood friend who was Japanese (in 1990s Britain that was fairly exotic), and took a trip to visit him shortly after high school. The usual fascination with samurai, and also that first apparent contradiction that still fascinates a lot of people, I suspect: how could a non-Western country modernize so successfully, so early on? Eventually, through rigorous training in grad school, I learned to unpick some of the faulty assumptions that underlie that question. But it was definitely one of the things that first got me interested in Japan, that's undeniable.

What particularly interests you about environmental history and the history of technology? What is important about the environment and science to understanding Japan's modern history?

What interests me about environmental history is that it we live in a society that is suffused with the concept of Nature. In the modern world any political question is at some level, a debate about the



nature of Nature. And the obverse is also true: debates about the nature of Nature (scientific debates, in other words) also invariably have political ramifications. But people often talk about concepts like "the environment," "science," and "technology" as if they are value neutral. As I see it, environmental history and STS are simply complementary approaches for unpacking the latent politics that lie buried underneath these blanket terms. And these approaches can be applied to horrendous, headline grabbing catastrophes such as the Fukushima nuclear meltdown of 2011, but also to

the quotidian micro-politics of banal problems such as sewage infrastructure and the politics of excrement disposal.

What questions tend to drive your research and your teaching?

Aside from my interest in the politics of Nature, I am also interested in the question of sovereignty in a globalizing world. One of the most interesting transitions of the past three hundred years has been the shift from a world view that understands sovereignty (for want of a better word) as exercised primarily over people to one that understands sovereignty as exercised over territory. This territorialization of sovereignty has occurred in a highly contested and fragmentary manner, however—with one significant exception being the extraterritoriality clauses inserted into the Unequal Treaties signed between Western and East Asian states in the nineteenth century. To this day, a range of different strategies exist for asserting sovereignty over territory, and new ones are being invented constantly. My research focusses largely on tracing the evolution of these strategies.

In terms of teaching, since coming to Columbia I've been grappling with the

question of how to teach the history of Japan in a truly global way, without losing sight of those particularities that do make the country such an interesting place to study. I've also been lucky enough to teach a graduate methods course titled Japan Bibliography, which is something of a Columbia institution. Here my approach has been very much on learning through doing: training students to conduct research on Japan by wading directly into the libraries and, where possible, archives. The availability of online resources really is transforming the way scholars work, so what's great about Japan Bibliography is that it provides a regular collaborative forum where students can keep each other abreast of the latest advances in the field.

Can you tell us a little about your current book project on Albatrosses in the North Pacific borderlands?

The book takes albatrosses, or more precisely different ways of using albatrosses, as starting point from which to explore some of the issues I just mentioned. It turns out that Japanese sovereignty over many of the far-

flung islands of the North Pacific is intimately bound up with the history of exploiting these rather rare birds. In the late nineteenth century gangs of bird hunters culled the birds for their plumage, which could be sold to Parisian milliners to make ladies' hats. Later, phosphate companies mined the birds' excrement to sell as fertiliser. Later still, Japanese ornithologists mounted campaigns to protect these birds, on what were now uninhabited islands that were nevertheless still putatively Japanese sovereign territory. I want to use the albatross as a lens through which to explore a whole host of interrelated globalised phenomena: commodity production, state-making, Nature-making, and so on.

What aspects of being at Columbia particularly excite you?

Wow, where to begin. There's just such a tremendous crackle of energy that comes with doing research at a sprawling urban university with so much going on all the time. Even on

campus it feels like there is so much happening on any given day, and then there is the whole city lying beyond that. It's just a tremendously exciting place to be.

What classes are you planning to teach in the coming semesters?

Next semester I plan to teach an upper-level undergraduate course entitled Troubled Islands of the Indo-Pacific, which will explore East Asian history (very, very loosely defined) through a series of island and archipelago case studies. The goal is to combine a global approach with a local one to destabilise the usual nation-state-centric narratives that we get in textbooks, and at the same time to interrogate the role played by islands—as laboratories, polities, entrepôts, peripheries—throughout history. The following academic year I will teach a graduate course on sovereignty in East Asia, which in many ways will explore similar themes but at a slightly more theoretical level.



Lina M. Torres

Sasakawa Young Leaders Fellowship Fund 2016

Lina M Torres is a 2017 Masters in Public Affairs candidate at Columbia SIPA.

During the summer I travelled to Myanmar for a two-month internship with Internews. Internews is an international nonprofit organization that works with Myanmar's media community to empower local media, with the aim to establish a strong media ecosystem. The organization provides training for journalists, supports strategic use of traditional and new media by civil society organizations, and creates spaces for civil society and media to engage with each other.

During the summer I was engaged in a series of projects that focused on the Women, Media and Peace program funded by Norwegian aid. I was involved with peace and gender capacity building for journalists. At Internews we created an eleven-day training program designed to provide technical tools for local journalists to report on gender issues and the participation of women in the peace process. I served as trainer and as guest speaker in two specific sessions; one was about basic concepts related to peace and conflict, and the other was about the participation of women in the Colombian peace process.

The training gathered journalists and photographers from various media outlets and regions such as Kayin, Shan, Karen, Shan Ni and Mon. The cohort was selected based on criteria of commitment to the subject, experience, and diversity. As a result of the training, which included a field trip and conversations with different guest speakers, the journalists created more than 30 journalism pieces reflecting women's issues in the context of the peace process.

It was very rewarding to see how the training translated into actual reports, covering topics such as the life of women in

IDP camps and the participation of women in the Panglong Agreement. I was also featured in the Yangon Times in an interview about the Colombian Peace Process and the lessons from the participation of women in that case. From this experience I learned how useful it is to provide training on vital but underrecognized topics such as gender, peace and conflict.

During one training session, I asked the participants to identify in a timeline of Myanmar's last 30 years, the conflict, the peace, the peace-processes and the peacebuilding. The result was astounding: none of them identified peace in the last 30 years. All of them recognized a 30-year-long conflict, all of them could identify the different political peace-processes, but none of them identified the peacebuilding in the timeline.

In the discussion it became evident that "peace building" was considered to start only after the political peace agreement, and that the peace agreement itself is seen as something that happens in a high political sphere, with no direct intervention or participation from the rest of the society. I believe that this speaks to the current stage of transition in Myanmar, and that Internews' most relevant contribution to the 'Peace Writ large' is in starting a conversation about a peace broader than the 21st Century Panglong Conference.

This experience not only allowed me to support Internews Myanmar, but also was very important for my personal development, as I was able to test myself on an international project for the first time. I benefited tremendously from the cultural exchange, and from connecting with a strong network of people working in peacebuilding in Southeast Asia.



Featured in the Yangon Times.



. Conflict timelines exercise.

Ayanda Francis is studying Development Economics and International Development at Columbia SIPA.

This past summer I worked with UN Women Timor-Leste to help with implementing and monitoring the structure of their National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security (NAP-WPS) that had been adopted by the government a month before. This plan is a major step forward for women in Timor-Leste, and is a confirmation of the Timorese government's commitment to strive for gender equality. The driving body is the Timorese Ministry of Interior, and the plan is supplemented by the work of smaller NGOs. My work this summer involved helping to plan for the launch of the NAP-WPS, as well as to meet with the Ministry and the different NGO partners to find ways for collaboration under the action plan. In terms of monitoring the structure, I was tasked with collecting information and developing further questions for the baseline study.

I was also tasked with helping the gender unit of the national police force conduct a self-assessment, as well as developing a gender strategy for their future. In the self-assessment, the different branches evaluated the experience of female officers to get a better idea of how the police force can provide better support and resources for their female officers and officers overall. The gender strategy spans three years (to 2020) and aims to have the police force set relevant and manageable targets towards which they will take action. For example, one of the major issues found was that many female officers were not given the opportunity to attend trainings that were important to promotion to the next rank. In order to address this, the Gender Unit suggested ways to improve their access to these trainings as well as suggested benchmarks for the coming four years.



Ayanda Francis with Senora Umbelina Soares, the head of the Gender Unit of the Timorese National Police force (PNTL).



Members of the UNWomen office dressed in pink to show solidarity for Timor-Leste's first pride festival.



A major consultation that was held with the NGO partners as well as the Timorese government on the NAP-WPS.



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