

Wednesday Evening Seminar Fall 2016 Syllabus

Our Asia-Pacific Neighborhood

Exploring Cultural Communities through Arts, Language and Geopolitics

INTRODUCTION

The East-West Center has assembled an amazing group of international students, striving to build a cohesive community in the Asia-Pacific, and urging us to help strengthen this sense of community. While in residence at EWC we have the chance to make friends, broaden our network, and share our cultural backgrounds — in the kitchens, at intercultural gatherings, and through community service.

The Wednesday Evening Seminar is our opportunity to interact in a more profound way. So this fall term, we focus attention on the Asia-Pacific neighborhood, including the United States, as represented at EWC: emphasizing group discussion, encouraging cooperation through structured group activities, and inviting speakers who can help us share our cultures and deepen our understanding of the region. Ultimately we are here to learn more about our neighbors and ourselves.

GROUNDING PRINCIPLES

- The guest speakers for WES come recommended directly by fellow EWC students and alumni. Likewise each session's topic relates directly to several of East-West Center's constituent cultures.
- Our leadership team has worked closely with guest speakers to plan meaningful group activities and relevant discussions, with the goal of maximizing dialogue and interaction between WES participants.
- For sessions hosted by a University of Hawai'i Mānoa professor, several EWC students affiliated with that professor's department or field have been invited to give their own short presentations during WES — as a way to encourage collaboration between our students and their university departments, but also with the goal of celebrating and sharing the expertise of EWC students.

SEMINAR OVERVIEW and HISTORY

The Wednesday Evening Seminar is a weekly gathering of East-West Center participants in the first two semesters of their program. WES brings together graduate students, researchers and other professionals from diverse academic disciplines, geographic areas, life experiences, and East-West Center programs. Ostensibly its goal is to promote the discussion of issues which impact the Asia-Pacific community, including the United States.

While graduate students tend to focus attention on highly specialized fields of study, WES challenges its participants to explore regional issues and experiences which may extend beyond their range of expertise or comfort zones. Through weekly group discussions and activities, EWC fellows forge bonds and share something of their home cultures and unique perspectives.

As with many innovative activities at East-West Center, WES emerged as a student-led initiative. EWC residents perceived the need early on for a unifying intellectual and cultural experience — a way to foster a shared sense of community. This Seminar started as a series of open discussions to explore the idea of a weekly meeting, and ultimately came to fruition by way of student action.

To this day WES continues as a seminar series planned and organized by East-West Center degree fellows, with the support of EWC's Education program. The Seminar is required for degree fellows and affiliates during their first two semesters, and open to leadership program fellows during the fall semester. Continuing fellows are also welcome to attend, and may opt into group participation for the duration of each semester.

SEMINAR OBJECTIVES

The overall mission of the East-West Center is to contribute to a peaceful, prosperous and collaborative Asia-Pacific community, and to serve as a vigorous hub for cooperative research, education and dialogue on issues of common concern to the Asia-Pacific region including the United States.

WES contributes to this effort by facilitating dialogue between, and mutual understanding among, East-West Center residents. Within this context, the Fall 2016 series will focus on three topics as a platform for considering Our Asia-Pacific Neighborhood:

- The Arts — featuring sessions on painting, dance and music
- Language — featuring sessions on linguistics and storytelling
- Geopolitics — featuring sessions on elections, borders and political expression

REQUIREMENTS

Attendance: Participants must attend all WES sessions and participate in group discussions and activities. Coming to WES should be a meaningful opportunity to engage with students from other cultural backgrounds. Group leaders will take attendance at the beginning and end of every session. If you are unable to attend a session, please contact your Program Coordinator (see below).

Evaluation: Participants must complete a one-page evaluation of this fall semester's program, including both positive reactions and constructive criticism. The evaluation form will be distributed at the Dinner Celebration on November 30th and will not take long to fill out. This feedback will go directly to the Education Program and will inform future efforts at improving the Wednesday Evening Seminar tradition.

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AFFILIATED STAFF

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Fall 2016 Program

ewc-wes.weebly.com

September 14: “Community Music Making”

- Dr. Miguel Felipe, UH Mānoa Director of Choirs
- Kenny Endo, Founder and Artistic Director of Taiko Center of the Pacific

Professor Felipe discusses “Multicultural Choruses in the Pacific” and the importance of communal singing, teaching the audience songs from various Asia-Pacific cultures.

Kenny Endo introduces “The International Taiko Movement” and its philosophy as both a musical and social community, teaching the audience a system of percussion solfège and inviting several participants on-stage to try drumming.

September 21: “WES Community Building”

- Student Presentations: EWC Organizations and Initiatives, Fall 2016
- Inaugural Group Activities

Student presentations include EWCPA discussing upcoming officer elections, APLP presenting goals for their fall program, and student leaders of various EWC-based organizations and initiatives.

WES group members will meet for the first time and take part in icebreaker activities.

September 28: “Art Representing Islands”

- Dr. Jaimey Hamilton Faris, UH Professor of Art History

Professor Hamilton Faris focuses on Hawai'i-based artists as they relate to island issues of cultural identity, land rights, food politics and climate change in the Asia-Pacific. In tandem she invites three EWC students to the stage to compare artworks and iconography from various cultures across the Pacific.

October 5: “Dialogue in Dance”

- Dr. Betsy Fisher & Peiling Kao, UH Professors of Dance
- Onoe Kikunobu & Onoe Kikunobukazu, UH Instructors of Nihon Buyô
- Ellen Cho, Instructor of Traditional Korean Dance

Korean dance, Japanese dance, Modern dance... Three contrasting dance traditions will be examined, each with a discussion of its relevance to society overseas and in Hawai'i. Audience members will learn gestures and steps for each dance, and each instructor will close with a dance performance accompanied by live music.

October 12: “The Migration of Languages”

- Dr. Robert Blust, UH Professor of Linguistics

Professor Blust introduces unique qualities and eccentricities of multiple Asia-Pacific languages, particularly in reference to the migration of Austronesian languages across the Pacific, which is his specialty. Together with Dr. Blust, a team of students will share poetry, quirky phrases, philosophy and humor from their mother tongues.

October 19: “Chinese Identity Politics”

- Dr. Cathryn Clayton, UH Professor of Asian Studies
- Dr. Frederick Lau, UH Professor of Asian Studies and Ethnomusicology

Professor Clayton presents "We Don't Need an Identity, We Are Chinese: On (not) Talking about Identity (in) Politics," drawing on her fieldwork experience in Macau in the late 1990s. During this period, the very notion of “Macau Identity” was to many a new and troubling concept. She will ask us to consider what makes “identity” something people think about, care about, and fight for... or not.

Trained in both Western and Chinese music, Professor Lau examines notions of Chinese-ness by looking at Chinese musical expressions in various locales. Led by the question "What does it mean to be Chinese?" in his research, Lau's perspective on straddling cultures addresses a perennial issue that confronts all of us in the age of globalism.

October 26: “Hawaiian Stories: Future & Past”

- Solomon Enos, Native Hawaiian Artist

Solomon Enos is a muralist, book illustrator and the renowned painter of Kamapua‘a. His work, which focuses on mythology, storytelling, and the natural world, has been featured at the Smithsonian and praised by the Washington Post. Enos will offer WES participants a workshop in storytelling and re-imagining the future through art.

November 2: “The US Election”

- Dr. Neal Milner, UH Professor Emeritus of Political Science

Professor Milner examines the US election in November, placing this year’s politics in historical context and discussing the nuts and bolts of the American electoral system. Student groups will compare American “election culture” with their home countries’ systems, and will have the opportunity to engage Professor Milner in Q&A.

November 9: “The Geopolitics of Borders and Walls”

- Dr. Reece Jones, UH Professor of Geography
- Dr. Nandita Sharma, UH Professor of Sociology

Professor Jones talks about people on the move globally, and state efforts to contain migration, based on his new book *Violent Borders: Refugees and the Right to Move*. Forty thousand people died trying to cross international borders in the past decade, and Jones argues that these deaths are not exceptional, but rather the result of state attempts to contain populations and control access to resources and opportunities.

Professor Sharma presents "Dispossessing Citizenship," calling into question the definition of societies and individuals. She writes, "the bourgeois fantasy of a self-sufficient, independent self arose alongside the notion that national states were self-contained societies. Such fantasies gave form to the idea that 'citizen' and 'migrant' inhabit and mark different spaces, most often delineated as 'national' versus 'foreign.' Such ideas carry great material force: they naturalize the legal and social subordination of those who are cast as 'migrants,' a category which insinuates more than the simple act of migrating, embodying instead an ideology formed through racialized, gendered, classed and sexualized imaginings of social belonging."

November 30: Dinner Celebration and Final Reflections

- Catered dinner in the Wailana Room starting at 6:30 pm
- Announcements for Spring 2017
- WES Evaluations and Closing Remarks