



Wednesday Evening Seminar Spring 2014 Syllabus

Defrosting The Imagination: *Innovation, Passion, and Creative Thinking in Oceania, Asia and the United States*

**Garden level
Hawai'i Imin International Conference Center
February 19, -April 16, 2014
6:30 - 8:30 pm**

INTRODUCTION

The Chamorro human rights attorney/writer and EWC Graduate Degree Fellow (2007-2009), Julian Aguon once said that one of the most important things for people to do is to “defrost their imaginations.” In this instance, Mr. Aguon was referring to realizing that the answers to problems are not just given to us and that there are not particular blueprints that we must absolutely follow in order to achieve these answers. He calls for people to use their particular experience, knowledge, and creativity to come up with different ways of thinking about the world. He warns against the homogeneity of thought and expression. His simple yet beautiful phrase should resonate within each and every one of us.

In almost every field of study or thought, there have been developments and changes that occur from these “defrosting the imagination” processes. For example, it was through imagining alternatives and reasoned logic that Steve Jobs and his team were able to create the breakthrough iphone or that Larry Page and Sergey Brin invented Google. It was through imagining better futures and different societies that Aung San Suu Kyi stood for democracy and human rights in Myanmar or that Jean-Marie Tjibaou fought for indigenous rights and independence from France in his home country of New Caledonia. All of these people and ideas revolutionized the world for those of us living today. They all created a “present” for us different from the “present” in which they lived. This is the power of imagination. It can be the fuel for greater things to come. It is the motivation for hard work. It is the inspiration when things seem to be at all-time low. For these reasons, it is important that we free our imaginations to help bring about positive change in the world. We must let our hearts long to dream and let those dreams start a fire within us.

Both the Wednesday Evening Seminar and the East-West Center community are examples of a community which engages in this defrosting of the imagination. As one of the core components

of the community is diversity, this community can serve as a breeding ground for soaring imaginations and innovative thinking. This semester's seminar will hopefully produce treasured talk stories, intellectual conversations, and new perspectives and understanding of Oceania, Asia and the US, to all involved.

OVERVIEW OF THE WEDNESDAY EVENING SEMINAR

The Wednesday Evening Seminar (WES) is a weekly gathering of East West Center fellows in their first fall and spring semester. WES brings together students and researchers from diverse academic disciplines, geographic areas, life experiences, and East-West Center programs to learn and dialogue on issues of common concern that impact Asia, the U.S., and Oceania.

While the graduate student experience tends to focus attention on highly specialized fields of study at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, the WES challenges EWC fellows to explore regional issues that may extend beyond their range of expertise or comfort zones. Issues are explored through invited speakers, films and facilitated small group discussions and activities. Through this process EWC fellows forge bonds among themselves through relating their personal or community concerns and experiences that ultimately strengthen the Center's diverse global community.

As with many innovative activities at the East-West Center, WES emerged from student recommendations and student-led action. EWC fellows perceived the need for a unifying intellectual experience in an increasingly diversified student program. WES began as a series of East-West Center-wide discussions to explore the concept, and emerged as a student leadership project that developed into a distinctive, on-going feature of the student program.

Currently, the seminar is planned and organized by East-West Center degree-fellow interns, with the support of the Center's Education staff. The Seminar is required for degree student fellows during their first fall and spring semesters, and fall semester for Asia Pacific Leadership Program fellows. Continuing fellows are welcome to attend and often continue to participate in the seminar series.

OBJECTIVES

The goal of the East-West Center is to contribute to a peaceful, prosperous, and just Asian and Oceanic community, thus serving as a vigorous hub for cooperative research, education, and dialogue on critical issues of common concern to Asia, the U.S., and Oceania. The Wednesday Evening Seminar helps reach this goal by facilitating dialogue and mutual understanding among the students of the United States, Asia, and Oceania who study together at the East-West Center.

REQUIREMENTS: ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

Students must attend all WES sessions and participate in group discussions and activities. If you are unable to attend a session, please contact Mendl Djunaidy (DjunaidM@eastwestcenter.org). Attendance will be kept.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Terance Bigalke
Director, Education Program
bigalke@eastwestcenter.org

Mary Hammond
Dean, Education Program
HammondM@eastwestcenter.org

Mendl Djunaidy
Associate Dean, Education Program
DjunaidM@eastwestcenter.org

Kenneth Gofigan Kuper
WES Planning Intern
kdgk@hawaii.edu

Yejin Park
WES Facilitator Intern
yejin@hawaii.edu

Phillip Waisen
WES Administrative/Technical Intern
pwaisen31@gmail.com