

**CONFERENCE ON  
INTER-ASIAN CONNECTIONS III: HONG KONG  
JUNE 6-8, 2012**

**CALL FOR WORKSHOP PROPOSALS  
DEADLINE: Thursday, March 10, 2011**

The Hong Kong Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences (HKIHSS), the University of Hong Kong, the National University of Singapore (NUS), and the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) (the Organizers) are pleased to announce an open call for proposals from faculty members at accredited universities and colleges in any world region, to organize and direct one of 4 thematic workshops at a 3-day international conference entitled "Inter-Asian Connections III." Following on successful conferences held in Dubai in February 2008 and Singapore in December 2010, this conference will be held in Hong Kong in June 2012. The conference aims to showcase innovative research from across the social sciences and related disciplines on themes of particular relevance to Asia, re-conceptualized as a dynamic and interconnected historical, geographical, and cultural formation stretching from the Middle East through Eurasia, South Asia and Southeast Asia, to East Asia.

**WORKSHOP THEMES**

Proposals are invited from faculty interested in organizing and directing a workshop on one of the following 4 themes:

**1) New Politics of Inequality**

Economic and political repercussions of economic growth and collapse, regime change, wars, natural disasters, continually transform social hierarchies in Asia. Focusing on the last quarter century, this workshop would explore the resulting "new politics of inequality": the new identities, interests, conflicts, and forms of political agency that accompany the recent and ongoing changes in the social relations and structures of different Asian contexts and countries. Specific topics could include:

- Situating the new middle classes
- New processes of social mobility and marginalization
- The spatial reproduction of inequality in Asia
- New technologies of mobilization: nationalisms, civic engagements, netizens
- The role of social and religious institutions and practices (for e.g. philanthropy and charity) in addressing inequality

**2) Globalizing Asia**

This workshop would highlight Asia's new global engagements, which have unfolded in diverse arenas ranging from resource extraction and commodity production to media circuits, the modular diffusion of information, and the construction of new cultural assemblages. The aim is to explore how these new engagements transform place and space within Asia, as well as reshape global political economies and cultural orders. A special interest of this workshop would be on the regional and inter-regional geographies arising out of specific geo-political and economic interests and cultural processes. In other words, where is 'Asia' to be located, and researched, in today's global world? Topics could include:

- New intersections: "China in Africa"; "Dubai in Singapore"; "New Russian spheres of influence" etc.
- Old and new media and the making of transnational social and cultural publics
- Sources and technologies of 'hard power' and 'soft power'
- New Inter-Asian youth cultures – work, consumption, sociality, politics

### 3) Security and Insecurity

This workshop would investigate the historical and contemporary dynamics of “security” and “insecurity” in Asia. Taking an interdisciplinary approach that goes beyond the paradigms of security studies and international relations, the papers in this workshop should examine how political, economic, cultural, and social changes in the region affect definitions, paradigms and experiences of insecurity and security at the level of institutions, ideologies, communities and everyday practices. The workshop will also explore the intersection of the international, the regional, the national and the local in understandings and impacts of various (expanding and contracting) global notions of security/insecurity such as "human security," "food security," "environmental security," "virtual security" and so on. Papers should look at how Asia figures in such global discussions and policies as well as how it appropriates/reshapes/reflects such discussions and policies. Research topics could include:

- “Crises,” “Panics” and “Pandemics” in Asia
- Inter-Asian threats and cooperation
- Financial securities/insecurities
- The governance and infrastructures of security: apparatuses, secrecy, communication

### 4) Old Histories, New Geographies

This workshop would examine “re-regionalization” in Asia, that is the ways in which emergent powerful and meaningful units structure new modes of governance, economic transactions, social relations and individual and collective subjectivities. Re-regionalization is produced through, and in turn produces, new kinds of long-distance connections of exchange, reciprocity and communication. Within this broad conception, the focus is more specifically on the following:

- Revisiting standardized histories in order to reveal previously hidden connections, alternative geographies and new periodizations
- Identifying emergent connections that links diverse parts of Asia in ways that contest and reconfigure borders, social boundaries, institutions and identities
- Examining waterways and landmasses and the ways in which they have brought Asia to the world and the world to Asia
- Inter-Asian connections that produce local, and localizing, histories, geographies identifications and communities.

## APPLICATION PROCESS & ELIGIBILITY

Applications are invited from scholars who would like to convene an international workshop that brings together a group of researchers working on one of the aforementioned themes located in an “Inter-Asian” research landscape. Workshop directors are encouraged to think about “Inter-Asia” in the context of connections, convergences and comparisons. We are interested in developing the study of connections - the exploration of historical and/or contemporary transnational/cross-national/trans-regional processes, structures, practices, and flows within and across the territorial and imaginative space of Asia, secondly convergences or the responses of different Asian societies to common processes, and finally comparisons involving the investigation of societies/polities within Asia especially those that explore diverse and innovative units of comparison. In addition to the investigation of particular issues and processes as described in the workshop themes, the conference aims to critically investigate the ways in which fields of knowledge map Asia and imagine alternatives. Workshop directors should encourage papers that promote a conscious inter-Asian project of inquiry. We aim at gathering as broad an international and multi-disciplinary representation of scholars as possible. We also encourage proposals for workshops that will see participation by activists, policymakers, media practitioners, and cultural producers addressing different aspects of the “Inter-Asian” conference theme.

Each workshop should have two directors (with different institutional affiliations and preferably representing different disciplines) and will include 10 participants (senior and junior scholars, graduate students, other researchers) chosen competitively from across relevant disciplines in the social sciences,

humanities and related fields. Workshop Directors selected by the Organizers will be expected to help recruit and select workshop participants, thus they should have sufficient research experience on the region and themes of their proposals and will be selected according to four criteria:

- i. The theoretical and/or empirical contributions of the workshop—i.e. the extent to which the proposed workshop represents an innovative and original contribution to existing scholarship on the subject;
- ii. The “Inter-Asian” relevance of the workshop—i.e. the extent to which the proposed workshop takes forward the intellectual mandate of the conference, of redefining “Asia” as a dynamic and interconnected formation, whether through innovative comparative approaches or through a focus on connections within and across the traditionally defined regions of Asia (Middle East, Eurasia, Central Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and East Asia). Arguments that particular topics imply specific geographic configurations within and across Asia will be welcomed;
- iii. The anticipated composition of the workshop—i.e. the extent to which the workshop will elicit participation from a diverse community of scholars, with preference given to workshops that have multi-disciplinary and international appeal, and that involve scholars and researchers at different stages of their careers;
- iv. The anticipated research outcomes of the workshop—i.e. the extent to which the workshop has the potential to generate new and innovative research agendas and to forge/sustain intra and inter-regional networks of scholarly research and exchange among institutions and individuals working in and on Asia.

Please note: workshop directors from previous Inter-Asian Connections conferences may not apply to serve as workshop directors, but may choose to apply as workshop participants.

The deadline for application submissions is **Thursday, March 10, 2011**. Workshop proposals will be reviewed by a committee convened by the Organizers, and decisions will be announced by mid April.

Following the selection of workshop directors, the Organizers will announce and widely circulate an open call for individual paper submissions for each of the four aforementioned workshops (in addition to two workshops being organized by the host institution, the University of Hong Kong). The responsibilities of the workshop directors will include:

- Collaborating with the Organizers to select 10 participants for their workshop – including attending one meeting to discuss participant selection in early summer 2011;
- Communicating with workshop participants once they have been selected, including providing feedback on participant draft paper submissions approximately three-four months in advance of the conference;
- Ensuring the timely delivery of papers;
- Preparing a workshop agenda and concept note;
- Convening daily meetings of the workshop at the conference as well as participating in plenaries;
- Presenting a research statement at the conclusion of the conference.

In addition to covering the travel, accommodation, and other related costs associated with attending the conference, the Organizers will offer an honorarium of 750 USD to compensate workshop directors for their time and efforts. Limited funds may also be available to cover expenses of some workshop participants, based on an assessment of needs.

For further information, including details on the application process, please see <http://www.ssrc.org/programs/interasia-program/> and contact the Organizers at [interasia@ssrc.org](mailto:interasia@ssrc.org).