Seminar Program

Teaching Southeast Asia to Undergraduates: Burma/Myanmar

Saturday, March 22, 2014

Northern Illinois University-Naperville, Illinois

8:30 AM Check-in and continental breakfast

9:00 Welcome and Introductions

Prof. Judy Ledgerwood, Director, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Northern Illinois University (NIU)

9:15 Beyond Rambo and the Lady: Burma, Media and Democratic Transition

Guest Speaker: Prof. Lisa Brooten, Radio, Television and Digital Media, Southern Illinois University

While the last Rambo movie and international coverage of Aung San Suu Kyi have made headlines, media in and about Burma offer us much more. Burma’s recent rapid changes provide a fascinating case study of a country in transition and of media’s role in that process. Prof. Brooten will discuss the history of Burmese media development, the historical and contemporary struggle of ethnic minority groups to have a voice in the country’s development, and how all of this relates to media and democracy in the US and elsewhere worldwide. She will also offer reflections on her efforts to make Burma’s story, particularly Burmese media and the coverage of the country in global media, interesting and relevant for students living halfway around the world in very different circumstances.

10:15 Break

10:30 History and Literature on Burma: Asking Interdisciplinary Questions

Prof. Tharaphi Than, Burmese Language/History, Foreign Languages and Literatures, NIU

Using popular Burmese short-stories and cartoons translated into English, Prof. Than will share her experience working with students to inquire about Burma’s history through a set of historical and literary questions.

11:15 The History of US Relations with Burma/Myanmar since 1988

Prof. Kenton Clymer, Distinguished Research Professor, History, NIU

An overview of US-Burmese relations since the revolution of 8/8/88, including tensions between Congress and the President over the issues of US sanctions on Burma; the debate over the effectiveness of the sanctions; and the recent thaw in relations marked by President Obama’s visit to Burma in 2012. This past December
Clymer taught a course on the history of US relations with Burma/Myanmar at Yangon University in Yangon (Rangoon).

12:00 Networking luncheon with Southeast Asian studies experts and presenters

1:15 PM Exploring the Art of Burmese Cultures

Prof. Catherine Raymond, Art History and Director, Center for Burma Studies, NIU

This presentation will focus on the art of Burmese cultures from past to present, encompassing not only Buddhism but other religious influences on Burmese cultures. Using the online Burma Art Collection from NIU as well as NIU’s free online course, The Art and Culture of Burma, Prof. Raymond will share the way she uses these various resources to teach her art history classes to her undergraduate students.

2:00 The Lady and Her Letters

Prof. Eric Jones, History, NIU

Using the writings of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Nobel Peace Prize recipient and leader of the National League for Democracy in Burma, educators can teach about global human rights, gender and historical research methods.

2:45 Contemporary Issues: What We Study about Burma/Myanmar and Why

Panel of NIU students

3:45 Conclusion: Putting It All Into Practice

Sharing Your Ideas for the Classroom

4:15 Comments and Evaluations

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