Across the Middle Mekong
New monograph explores Tai history and culture

Standing Buddhas at the Pak Ou caves gaze upon the Mekong River in Laos. Article on page 16

The Peace Corps connection
Early volunteers for Southeast Asia trained at NIU page 3

Endangered Buddhas
Exhibit illuminates art, technique of disappearing images page 4
Director’s Chair

James Collins

In the last days of January I arrived in Washington, D.C., to attend meetings organized by the U.S. Department of Education. That afternoon, I walked from my hotel to Lafayette Square where I realized that the bleachers and stages cluttering the street beside the park were, in fact, the reviewing stands of President Obama’s inauguration a few days before. The emblematic grandstands, once erected and embellished, now disassembled, evoked the sense, the idea of change and movement. Here at NIU, the realities of change are emerging around us. For me personally, the move to NIU has been a momentous change in my life. Shifting from the role of a research scholar with a specific focus on fieldwork and data analyses to the position of an administrator with a broad range of tasks affecting staff, students, Southeast Asianist colleagues, and other NIU administrators remains a challenge.

But the important changes are the ones that affect us all, emanating from Washington and echoing in DeKalb.

At those meetings in Washington, and subsequent meetings there and in Chicago, we learned of changes and opportunities that are already reshaping Southeast Asian studies at NIU. New rules about data-driven assessment of our projects, tracking the careers of our graduates, and ensuring “marketable” products have begun to change how we imagine our roles as scholars of Southeast Asia.

**Student fellowships and grants**

At the same time new funding, new resources, and new grants have opened up our doors to the possibility of significant enhancement of the field of study. For example, because the center followed the priorities stipulated in our Title VI guidelines, the Department of Education added one more Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowship to our total fellowship allotment so that in the 2009–10 academic year CSEAS will have 10 graduate FLAS fellows, not nine. In another new FLAS development, the Department of Education has directed us to use our seven summer FLAS fellowships to fund NIU students taking intensive courses in Southeast Asian languages in Southeast Asia. In the past, our tradition was to send all of our FLAS monies to the Southeast Asia Studies Summer Institute (SEASSI) at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Under the new directive, six of our graduate students will be studying in-country starting in May. They are Sean Dolan, Julie Edmunds, Allison Githens, Jessica Marchetti, Brett McCabe, and Sarah Wiley.

Other program changes will expand options for our undergraduate students as well. Beginning in the summer of 2010, NIU will have nine FLAS fellowships for Southeast Asian language study, and for the first time undergraduates may apply for these fellowships. That means that students who enroll in first-year Southeast Asian language courses in fall 2009 may compete for fellowships to study that language in Southeast Asia the following summer. These changes vastly enlarge the opportunities for NIU undergraduates to become scholars of Southeast Asia.

But not all changes are arriving from the halls of Washington. Three of our political science graduate students—Aaron Johnson, Daniel Pojar, Jr. and Punchada Sirivunnabood—have received funding from the Royal Thai Studies grant to the center (announced in fall 2008) to study in Thailand. Another part of that grant from the Thai government was used to establish a scholarship for undergraduates to study the Thai language at intermediate level. The undergraduate introductory course in Southeast Asian studies (ILAS 225) will again be offered in two sections this fall. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Dean Chris McCord has agreed to give the center a half-time teaching assistant to help coordinate the course. Also this fall, two new undergraduate courses will be offered: Aristotle Who?: the great books of Southeast Asia (HIST 660/ILAS 691) and Language Death (FLST 483/583). To allow more undergraduates to study a Southeast Asian language, a second section of Indonesian (FLIN 103) will be offered in fall. This fits in with the CSEAS initiative to encourage ROTC cadets to enroll in Indonesian through the CLIP allowance (the Cadet Language Incentive Program established by the Department of the Army).

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From 1961 to 1968, Northern Illinois University, and later the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, became part of a national initiative to improve the plight of underdeveloped nations through a new idea: the Peace Corps.

The idea behind the Peace Corps was to bring technical knowledge to underdeveloped countries by sending skilled Americans to those regions to assist in a variety of endeavors, from expanding literacy to improving agricultural practices. The goal was not only to bring expertise directly to those who needed it, but to produce a new set of internationally savvy young Americans who would return from their postings with an intimate knowledge of the places they’d been.

President John F. Kennedy created the Peace Corps by Executive Order 10924 in March 1961. In September of the same year, the program was reaffirmed by Congress with the Peace Corps Act. Sargent Shriver, the Peace Corps’ first director, traveled to South America, Africa, and Asia to assess the needs and desires of countries there. Malaya (now Malaysia) was quickly established as a location for Asia service and the search was on to find the right scholars and institutions in the U.S. to help train volunteers to go there.

The Peace Corps program became a springboard for the creation of CSEAS and fostered connections between the university and Southeast Asia that are still strong today.

NIU had grown rapidly since the end of World War II and had increased its expertise in Southeast Asia, hiring such scholars as Parmer, who later became the Peace Corps Representative to Malaya. Combined with that and NIU’s commitment, the Peace Corps program became a springboard for the creation of CSEAS and fostered connections between the university and Southeast Asia that are still strong today.

In 1961, Parmer, NIU President Leslie Holmes, and NIU’s Peace Corps Program Director J. Patrick White signed a contract with the Peace Corps and began building a curriculum that would utilize top scholars from across the U.S., including NIU faculty from the departments of sociology, anthropology, political science, economics, and history. Malaya I, the first training group, concentrated on Malayan area studies, U.S. and world affairs knowledge, and health and fitness. While the Malaya I program established language readiness, subsequent programs pressed for increasing amounts of language practice throughout volunteer training.

Though the training schedule was intense, the volunteers were also celebrities—“probed, prodded, tested, analyzed, questioned, publicized, immunized”—and their presence was often requested as speakers and honored guests. The university and surrounding DeKalb community “turned themselves out” to continued on page 4
On Display

Exploring Buddhist art and technique from Burma and Thailand

January–May 2009
Arends Hall, NIU School of Art

By Catherine Raymond

This exhibit explores the art and technique as well as the cultural context in which three masterpiece examples of Buddha images from Mainland Southeast Asia were created in bronze, stone, and dry lacquer, respectively. These complex techniques are still commonly practiced in Burma/Myanmar and in Thailand, within a Buddhist context of gaining merit.

In the Burmese tradition, a Buddha image that was damaged, or a Buddha head that had been broken off by either a natural disaster or an act of war, would have been regarded as inauspicious and hence removed from display, while likely retained within the precincts of the pagoda.

Sarah Bekker, Burmese scholar and donor of many of the finest objects in NIU’s Burma Art Collection, noted that prior to 1962, it was nearly impossible for Westerners in Burma to find for public sale a complete Buddha statue, or even a separated head (which most monks would have considered valueless). But soon thereafter, those foreigners in Southeast Asia who wished to acquire Buddha images for scholarly or aesthetic objectives were identified as a potential lucrative market.

In Thailand especially, unscrupulous dealers, sometimes with monastic connections, would actively peddle intact or fragmentary Buddha images—many of which were of Burmese provenance—within the diplomatic enclaves. This was greatly exacerbated when interior design magazines in Europe and the United States began to feature disembodied Buddha heads as the quintessential oriental accent piece.

The demand is so great, and the value of “original antiques” so inflated, that with the weakening of Buddhist belief—and with it the fear of karmic retribution—temple thefts have become rampant. Disembodied Buddha heads have become a prized item in the international art and antiquities market, and seem ever more readily available thanks in part to the Internet. Thus, superb Buddha images in unguarded, outlying shrines are routinely and expertly decapitated by art theft syndicates, with the heads sold online, or ending up—beautifully lit and stunningly priced—at fashionable emporia like River City in Bangkok.

By exploring the artistic and technical creation of these endangered Buddha images, this exhibit may also serve to heighten awareness of their intentional desecration and commoditization.

Catherine Raymond is director of the Center for Burma Studies at NIU.
Participatory leadership
Sixth annual session brings Filipino youths to campus to learn about conflict resolution

By Francis Enrique

Twenty high school-age students and three adult leaders from Mindanao in the Southern Philippines came to NIU this past spring for the sixth ACCESS Philippine Youth Leadership Program.

The April 4–May 6 institute, co-directed by center associates Susan Russell (anthropology) and Lina Davide-Ong (International Training Office), is designed to teach conflict-resolution skills, examine the important role of volunteerism in civil society, and introduce participants to American institutions that advocate tolerance and religious diversity. While in DeKalb, this year’s group participated in capacity-building workshops, lectures, seminars, volunteer work, and made community and cultural trips to Chicago and Indiana. They spent half their time housed at the Holmes Student Center and the other half living with local families.

The $1.2 million program is a project of the U.S. State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Its goals are: (1) to develop a group of community activists who will share their knowledge and skills through positive action; (2) to foster relationships among young people from different ethnic, religious, and national groups; and (4) to promote mutual understanding between the United States and the Filipino people.

“We’re putting more emphasis on leadership development in this program,” Russell says. “We want the students to become advocates for social change, develop partnerships with other groups in their communities, and leverage resources from different sources to fund their projects. So the program works to teach them about organizing and volunteerism when they go back to their respective roots.”

This year, a Filipino journalism crew from the ABS-CBN Network is filming some of the activities for a future television documentary about the program. The documentary is partially funded by the State Department grant.

Francis Enrique (M.B.A., 2009) is one of the center’s 2008–09 graduate assistants.

In the Field

Networking for social change: Celebrating the new year in Cebu

By Susan Russell

On January 4–8, more than 100 Filipino proponents of social change gathered at the Vista Mar Resort on the island of Mactan, Cebu. The meeting was the official follow-on activity of the Cultural Citizens and North–South Dialogue: Building National Identity and Civic Participation in the Philippines project, a U.S. State Department-funded endeavor I direct with NIU International Training Office director Lina Davide-Ong.

The Cultural Citizens project began with a four-month program at NIU six months earlier in June 2008. At that time, participants designed a number of social, political, and environmental action plans to implement upon their return to the Philippines. The Cebu meeting was an opportunity for the project’s thirty participants to meet and assess their progress.

Joining them in Cebu were 30 other young activists from all sectors of society across the country (media, law, academia, religion, business, government, and NGOs). Also on hand were representatives from two other programs Lina and I oversee: the Mindanao youth project, which we’ve been running since 2003, and the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao: Religion, Education, Community and the Political Process project (both of which are funded by the State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs).

Representatives from the International Visitors Program–Philippines Alumni Foundation (IVP) in Manila, the in-country coordinators for the Cultural Citizens project, also were at the

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meeting, as was John McGuire, assistant to the cultural affairs officer of the U.S. Embassy in Manila.

The Cebu gathering opened with a variety of Cebuano songs and dances, followed by a short documentary film about the group’s experiences in June at NIU and in Chicago. The next day, participants presented the progress of their action plans in thematic groups, followed by several teambuilding and training sessions on partnership development, networking, and fundraising. One highlight of the program was a donor forum during which various agencies and organizations explained their funding procedures and the kinds of projects they would be interested in supporting. Another highlight was the development of a sort of “Yellow Pages” for the project, a collective database of attendees’ names, contact information, special interests, and skills. Rounding out the meeting was a lively discussion on electoral reform and voter education measures needed for the 2010 elections, delivered by an IVP member who works for the Commission on Elections.

One exciting outcome of the Cebu gathering was the decision by participating groups to develop a ‘Network for Social Change’ in which representatives of each overall project would be equal members. The network would allow participants to advocate for various issues (electoral reform and voter education is one overall topic around which they hope to coordinate actions) and to share best practices. The Cultural Citizens group is also developing a website and already has set up a Yahoo Groups listserve to exchange information and schedule meetings.

Among the Americans who traveled to the Philippines to participate in the Cebu program (including myself) were a few of the local experts involved in the June program at NIU. These included Robert Zerwekh (computer science) as a database specialist; Laurel Jeris (counseling, adult, and higher education) as a specialist on leadership; Garth Katner (Great Lakes regional director of the Jane Goodall Institute’s Roots & Shoots Program) as a networking and youth programs specialist; and Christina Abraham, civil rights director of the Council on American–Islamic Relations in Chicago.

Deborah Pierce, associate provost for International Programs; Christopher McCord, dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; and CSEAS director Jim Collins also attended the Cebu gathering on their way to meet with officials at the University of San Carlos.

Susan Russell is a professor in the Department of Anthropology.
The colloquium “Islam at the Edges” was hosted by CSEAS, in collaboration with the Center for East European and Russian/Eurasian Studies (CEERES) at the University of Chicago (UC). The March 30 colloquium—held on the heels of the Association for Asian Studies conference in Chicago—drew an audience of about 80 scholars and students, including specialists from England, Russia, Indonesia, as well as Ohio, South Carolina, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Chicago. The event was the first in a series of annual colloquia examining Islam in Southeast Europe and Southeast Asia.

As CEERES director Victor Friedman noted in a written introductory address (he was conducting research abroad and could not attend), the series’ purpose is to begin to ameliorate the relative neglect of comparative research between Southeast Asia and Southeast Europe. Presentations included papers from established scholars from universities in Malaysia, the Philippines, France, and the United States as well as graduate students from both NIU and UC. Topics ranged from the politics of identity and conflict in Burma, Cyprus, Turkey, and insular Southeast Asia to popular culture, consumerism, and medical practices in Croatia, Bosnia, and Malaysia.

In opening remarks during the morning session, Christopher McCord, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, NIU, reflected that the colloquium provided an opportunity to rethink the received map of the Muslim world and to suggest possible alternative versions. CSEAS director Jim Collins echoed the dean’s comments, remarking that the colloquium papers emphasized the fluidity of identities, relationships, and boundaries in these two regions, challenging the notion of fixed and inflexible borders between and within Muslim and non-Muslim worlds.

Two parallel sessions were offered in the afternoon. One was a panel discussion led by NIU and UC graduate students concerning new directions and methods within scholarship about Islam. Discussants described blending methodologies traditionally separated by disciplines, discovering key insights during chance encounters, and challenging notions of the fixity of Southeast European and Southeast Asian identities.

The other afternoon session was directed to K–16 educators interested in including a component about Islam in their curricula. Graduate students from NIU and UC led discussions about the general tenets of Islam as well as the distinctive elements of Islam in Southeast Asia and its history in the Balkans. CSEAS outreach coordinator Julia Lamb also led a discussion about possible strategies educators could use for including information from the session in their schools’ curricula.

A final session brought all the participants together to discuss ways in which future colloquia could be enhanced. Suggestions ranged from improving the format of presentations, expanding the topics addressed, and including such components as a film festival and an art exhibit as well as cooperating with other area studies programs at both UC and NIU. The possibility of having future colloquia at different venues, including international venues, was also discussed.

Colloquium details, including abstracts of the papers presented, are available at www.cseas.niu.edu/outreach/islamedges/.

Sean Dolan is a master’s candidate in anthropology.
Distinguished Thai scholar speaks at student conference

By Julie Edmunds

Student conference keynote speaker Thongchai Winichakul, third from left, joins NIU students Julie Edmunds, Matthew Jagel, Jessica Marchetti, Sarah Wiley, and Lily Ann Villaraza at this year’s Southeast Asia Club Student Conference.

Nineteen NIU graduate and undergraduate students presented research papers March 21 at the Southeast Asia Club Student Conference: “Blending Borders, Mixing Margins: Hybridity and Fluidity in Southeast Asia.”

The conference’s keynote speaker was University of Wisconsin–Madison historian Thongchai Winichakul, a specialist in Thai history and culture with a particular interest in the development of Thai nationhood. His talk focused on issues of belonging and the construction of identity within historical and modern political constructs. In reference to the conference theme, he spoke specifically on the issue of identity construction among marginalized populations in southern Thailand, and offered a touching personal account of what it means to marginalized people to feel that they have a sense of ‘home.’

After opening remarks by CSEAS assistant director Katharine Wiegele (anthropology), students presented their papers in three sets of concurrent panels. Topics ranged from informal credit systems in Cambodia to the survival of Ahmadiyya Muslims in Indonesia. Presenting papers were LeAnn Pearson Capener, Frank R. Chappell, Billy Clem, Sean Dolan, Julie Edmunds, Allison Githens, Michael Hawkins, Yuliana Hermanto, Laura Iandola, Matthew Jagel, Sagung M. Kertayuda, Scott T. LaDeur, Jessica Marchetti, Pinitbhand Paribatra, Pisith Phlong, Daniel Pojar, Jr., Joseph M. Scanlon, Lily Ann B. Villaraza, and Rachel E. Walters.

The papers were evaluated by a panel of five faculty members—with the authors of the top two papers awarded prize money for their work. This year’s winners were Matthew Jagel (Ph.D. candidate, political science) for his paper, “The Fight for the Cao Dai,” and Michael Hawkins (Ph.D. candidate, history) for his paper, “Imperial Taxonomies in the Philippines’ Muslim South, 1898–1913.”

This year’s conference attracted 12 more papers than last year, thanks in large part to the efforts of conference coordinator Sarah Wiley (master’s candidate, history). Special appreciation goes to keynote speaker Thongchai, and to all panel participants and student volunteers.

The event was funded and supported by CSEAS and the Southeast Asia Club with funds from the U.S. Department of Education Title VI program and the NIU Student Association.

Julie Edmunds is a master’s candidate in anthropology and vice president of the Southeast Asia Club.

Upcoming Institute

Southeast Asia Summer Institute, June 21–23, NIU

Teaching about genocide and human rights in Southeast Asia, with special emphasis on Burma, Cambodia, East Timor, and Indonesia, will be the focus of this institute for K–12 educators. The institute will begin with dinner and a keynote speaker at 6 p.m. on Sunday, June 21, and concludes at 3 p.m. on Tuesday, June 23. There will also be a special showing of the film 40 Years of Silence. The registration fee is $65, which includes meals, lodging (double occupancy), all materials, and 17 to 20 CPDUs for current K–12 Illinois educators. Stipends and lodging are available to the first 20 participants. Resource and curriculum materials will focus on the middle/high school/community college levels. For information, see www.cseas.niu.edu/outreach/ghri2009 or contact CSEAS outreach coordinator Julia Lamb at jlamb@niu.edu or 815-753-1595.
**Museum Notes**

*Khmer Spirit: Arts and Culture of Cambodia*, the exhibit that opened at the Anthropology Museum in October and will run through August, has drawn good attendance throughout the year, reports museum director Ann Wright-Parsons. It will be followed in the fall by an exhibition on tourist art. “Our finest examples of tourist art from the NIU Southeast Asia collection as well as other parts of the world will be on display,” Parsons said.

As part of the exhibit, the museum will host a MySpace site where visitors can post a photo of their favorite souvenir along with their comments. The show will complement a School of Art exhibit featuring contemporary wood carvings from Oaxaca, Mexico. Professor Jeff Kowalski of the NIU School of Art will host a symposium on tourist art on September 19 in conjunction with both exhibits.

The film *Cambodia Born Anew*, which was funded by the DeKalb County Community Foundation, has been shown to elementary education and museum studies students at NIU and to local community schools and classes at Harper and Kishwaukee community colleges. The film was also screened at a recent Cambodia exhibit at the University of California–Santa Cruz. Educators participating in the Association of Asian Studies’ “Teaching about Asia” project viewed the film in March during a field trip to the Cambodian American Heritage Museum in Chicago.

**Calls for Papers Elsewhere**

**EuroSEAS Conference, Aug. 26–28, Gothenburg, Sweden**
June 1 is the deadline to submit panels for this conference to be held at the School of Global Studies at Gothenburg University. All scholars with an interest in Southeast Asia are invited to submit proposals in the areas of social sciences and humanities. For information, see [www.globalstudies.gu.se](http://www.globalstudies.gu.se) or send proposals to jorgen.hellman@globalstudies.gu.se.

**Southeast Asia: Text, Ritual, and Performance, Oct. 2–4, University of California, Riverside**
Graduate students, artists, scholars, and community/cultural workers are invited to submit papers and panels based on the theme of **Viral Ports, Virtual Currents: Interconnections of Media, the Arts, and the Everyday in Southeast Asia and its Diasporas**. Papers may be submitted individually or as part of organized panels. Creative panel formats that encourage discussion and exchange are especially welcomed. Submission deadline: June 15. For information, see [www.seatrip.ucr.edu](http://www.seatrip.ucr.edu).

**Upcoming Conference**

**Council on Thai Studies (COTS), Oct. 23–24, NIU**

The council’s annual conference will explore the theme of Thailand’s responses to globalization—economic, environmental, socio-political and others—and the interplay of globalization, regionalism, and traditionalism in the country. Organizers are currently accepting 350-word abstracts from presenters on this and other topics for either a panel discussion or roundtable. Graduate students are encouraged to submit. The group’s annual conference is an opportunity to present preliminary findings and get pre-publication feedback. The submission deadline is Aug. 20. Acceptance notices will be sent out by Sept. 4. The registration deadline is Oct. 9. A block of rooms at the Holmes Student Center has been reserved for conference attendees. For reservations, submission guidelines, and other conference information, see [www.cseas.niu.edu/outreach/COTS2009](http://www.cseas.niu.edu/outreach/COTS2009) or contact Andrea Molnar at akmolnar@niu.edu. The Council on Thai Studies is an informal organization of scholars; membership in the group is free.
CSEAS is pleased to announce the 11 graduate students who will receive fellowships for the 2009–10 academic year. Ten are recipients of Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships and one will receive the Clark and Arlene Neher Graduate Fellowship for the Study of Southeast Asia. The annual fellowships are coordinated by the center: see Fellowship Facts box (page 11) for details.

Following is a snapshot of the 2009–10 recipients.

**FLAS Fellowships 2009–10**

**Coral Carlson** (Ph.D. candidate, history)  
- research explores cross-cultural trade and contacts in two time periods: the ceramics trade from China and Southeast Asia to Europe between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, and the fashion for Khmer sculpture in the West during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. She is studying Khmer.

**Julie Edmunds** (master’s candidate, anthropology; certificate, museum studies)  
- research interests include the extension of symbolic anthropology into globalizing Southeast Asian market systems, with particular interest in micro-financing in Bali. She is studying Indonesian.  
- vice president, Southeast Asia Club; adviser, Mortar Board Senior Honor Society.

**Theresa Eckard** (Ph.D. candidate, political science)  
- research interests include successful counterterrorism programs in Indonesia using effective police work instead of military force. She is studying Indonesian.  
- U.S. Air Force reservist and linguist deployed in Iraq; returning to NIU in fall 2009.

**Matthew Jagel** (Ph.D. candidate, history)  
- research focus is U.S. and Southeast Asia diplomacy in Indochina during the Cold War and the impact of U.S. actions on the transformation of the region, in particular Cambodia. He is studying Khmer.

**Aaron Johnson** (Ph.D. candidate, political science)  
- research interest is comparative politics and international relations. He is studying Thai and Khmer.

**Wendy Sachiko Kraft** (master’s candidate, applied family and child studies)  
- research interest is refugee and immigrant families from Southeast Asian countries, especially Myanmar. She is studying Burmese.

**Scott LaDeur** (Ph.D. candidate, political science)  
- research interest is the role of middle-power states, in particular in Southeast Asia with an emphasis on Thailand, in influencing U.S. foreign policies on counterterrorism, trade relations, military strategy, and human rights. He is studying Thai.

**Jessica Marchetti** (master’s candidate, anthropology)  
- research interest is relationships between gender and ideologies and lived reality for Muslims in Indonesia. She is studying Indonesian.  
- outreach coordinator, Southeast Asia Club.

**Brett McCabe** (master’s candidate, anthropology)  
- research interest is the role of Jawi (adapted Arabic) script in contemporary Malay society. He is studying Indonesian.

**Sarah Wiley** (master’s candidate, history)  
- research interest is native conceptualization of space and resulting interactions between colonial powers and native peoples. She is studying Indonesian.  
- conference coordinator, Southeast Asia Club.

**Clark and Arlene Neher Graduate Fellowship for the Study of Southeast Asia 2009–10**

**Lily Ann Bolo Villaraza** (Ph.D. candidate, history)  
- research interest is tracing the articulation of nationalism through theater in the Philippines during the twentieth century.  
- president, Southeast Asia Club; coordinator, Filipino American Arts and Culture Festival, San Diego, California.
Fellowship Notes (continued)

Making it clear
This year’s Fulbright foreign language teaching assistants at NIU are, from left, Payungsak Kaenchan (Thai), Maria Angeles Dano (Tagalog), Silvia Ginting (Indonesian), and Ahmad Fitri (Malay).

Fellowship Facts
The FLAS grants are funded by the center’s Title VI National Resource Center grant from the U.S. Department of Education. They provide for the study of one of five Southeast Asian languages taught at NIU: Burmese, Indonesian, Khmer, Tagalog, and Thai. Applications for the 2010–11 academic year are due Feb. 1, 2010.

The Graduate Fellowship for the Study of Southeast Asia is funded through an endowment established by Clark Neher (professor emeritus, political science) and Arlene Neher (former director, external programming, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences). Applicant must be a graduate student able to demonstrate commitment to a career involving Southeast Asian studies. Applications for the 2010–11 academic year are due Feb. 1, 2010.

Jobs well done

Susan Russell (anthropology) has received the 2009 Faculty Award for Outstanding Contributions to International Education from Phi Beta Delta, the honor society for international scholars. She was invited to accept the award at the group’s 23rd annual international conference in April in Miami. Russell, who led CSEAS from 1999 to 2005 and was named NIU’s International Educator of the Year in 2003, has directed a $1.5 million U.S. Department of State-funded initiative to bring peace to the conflict-torn Mindanao region of the southern Philippines. For the past six years, she and International Training Office director Davide-Ong have run the month-long Philippine Youth Leadership Program at NIU for adult leaders and youth activists from Moro, Catholic, and Lumad backgrounds to learn peace-building methods to take back to their communities in the Philippines. See page 5 for an update.

Davide-Ong received kudos this spring as one of four recipients of NIU’s Presidential Supportive Professional Staff Awards for Excellence. The award recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to the university and is the highest campus award given to an SPS staff member. In addition to directing the International Training Office, Davide-Ong mentors graduate students, two of whom have held internships at the United Nations headquarters in New York.

April accolades

Julie Edmunds (master’s candidate, anthropology) received the Honors Young Alumnus Award for 2008–09 at NIU’s honors recognition ceremony on April 19. Edmunds was recognized for her “contributions to the Honors Program and to NIU while pursuing excellence in the academic or private sector.”

Sean Dolan (master’s candidate, anthropology) was recognized as an “outstanding graduate student” by the anthropology department and the Division of Graduate Research and Graduate Studies at April 17 and April 22 ceremonies respectively.
Rhodalyne Crail (foreign languages and literatures)
- new editor of the online Journal for Southeast Asian Language Teaching (JSEALT) and organizer of the JSEALT Forum.

Kikue Hamayotsu (political science)
- invited to present at The Collective Context of Islamic Identity: Intersections Between Community, Gender, and Religion conference at the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Cambridge.
- spoke on Islamist party mobilization in Southeast Asia at Cornell University’s Brown Bag Lecture Series.

John Hartmann (foreign languages and literatures)
- invited to give two-day graduate seminar on comparative-historical Tai toponyms research in Nanning, China. Also invited to give lecture series on Tai-Kadai linguistics at Mahidol University, Thailand.
- gave keynote speech, “Tai Toponymic Analysis: GIS Insights into Migration and Settlement Patterns,” at the Conference on Languages of Southeast Asia at the University of California–Los Angeles.
- presented “The Chain of Chiang and Viang: Questions for Linguistics and Archaeology,” at the International Conference on Burma Studies at NIU.

Judy Ledgerwood (chair, anthropology)
- accepted the position as director of the Division of Public Administration. He brings experience from the University of Kansas and M.P.A. director at Iowa State University, as well as service as director of graduate studies in the Department of Political Science.

Kurt Thurmaier (public administration)
- accepted the position as director of the Division of Public Administration. He brings experience from the University of Kansas and M.P.A. director at Iowa State University, as well as service as director of graduate studies in the Department of Political Science.

Alicia Turner (history)
- will join the Humanities Department at York University in Toronto, Ontario, as associate professor. She will teach courses on Buddhism, the study of religion, and Asian religions and Orientalism.

Kheang Un (political science; currently a one-year visiting scholar at University of Kentucky–Louisville)
- presented “The Politics of Natural Resource Use in Cambodia” at SEAL Speaker Series at the University of California–San Diego.
- co-edited and co-authored with Caroline Hughes (Murdoch University, Australia) the forthcoming book Reform and Transformation in Cambodia (Copenhagen: NIAS Press).
- presented “China’s Foreign Investment and Assistance: Implications for Cambodia Development and Democratization” at the China’s Rise and its Impact on Asia conference, University of Louisville, Kentucky.
- consulted for the U.K. Department for International Development, co-authoring with Caroline Hughes “A Narrative of Four Future Scenarios for Cambodia.” Also presented an analysis of Cambodian governance and served as discussant for the department’s Cambodia country planning meeting.
- co-organized Political Economy of Cambodia workshop with Caroline Hughes in Phnom Penh.

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Jui-Ching Wang (music)
- presented “Gamelan in the Music Classroom” session for pre-service and in-service music educators at Illinois Collegiate Music Educators Association conference at the University of Illinois School of Music, Urbana–Champaign.

Kate Wiegele (anthropology)

Ann Wright-Parsons (anthropology)
- organized the Anthropology Museum’s participation in Kishwaukee Community College’s Asian-American month.

New faces
The center welcomes two new faculty members who will join NIU in the fall.
Michael Buehler, currently on sabbatical at Columbia University, will join the political science department as assistant professor. Buehler focuses on Indonesia.
Trudy Jacobsen, most recently a teaching fellow at the School of Oriental Studies at the University of London, will join the history department as assistant professor. Jacobsen focuses on Cambodia.

Celebrating a milestone
Professor Emeritus M. Ladd Thomas celebrated his 80th birthday March 14 at the home of Andrea Molnar. The festive gathering was attended by center associates Catherine Raymond, Alan Potkin, Susan Russell, and Bob Zerwekh; NIU alumni Porter and Tipiwat Reed, both former students of Thomas and parents of recent center graduate Tiffany Reed; Cyril Embil; Nico Harjanto, Ph.D. candidate in political science; and Thai Consul General Narong Sasitorn, his wife, Chantana, and son Sira. Sihanouk became king of Cambodia in 1941, then abdicated the throne in 1955 so that he could take a more active role in politics. He became king again in 1993 and abdicated again in 2004.
Club Notes

Southeast Asia Club
Cultural events lead this year’s efforts to bring Southeast Asia to NIU

By Julie Edmunds

The Southeast Asia Club has seen some big changes this year as the group strives to promote an understanding and appreciation of Southeast Asia at NIU. With the help of culture night coordinator Sagung M. Kertayuda (undergraduate, political science), the club injected new life into its fall and spring cultural events. Both featured cultural performances from the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam. Danny Nicky was master of ceremonies for both events. Delicious food from the Thai Pavilion restaurant in DeKalb was served, and decorations were provided by club member Sarah Wiley and the Indonesian Consulate of Chicago.

This year’s cultural and social activities also included several Southeast Asia movie nights, a Halloween party, and a fall orchard trip. The club also was active in academic and service endeavors. In March, the club presented its annual spring student conference (see page 8), which featured a keynote address by Thai historian Thongchai Winichakul and papers presented by 19 graduate and undergraduate students.

The club also developed a new Global Ambassador program aimed at training NIU students to speak on a variety of Southeast Asian topics to student and community groups (stay tuned).

Motivated and enthusiastic individuals with a passion for learning about the 11 countries of Southeast Asia (Brunei, Burma/Myanmar, Cambodia, East Timor, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam) are always welcome to join the club or to participate in its activities. The club’s dual goals are to promote awareness and understanding of Southeast Asia throughout the entire NIU community, and to build relationships and foster the exchange of information between Southeast Asians and those interested in the region. For information, contact seaclubniu@yahoo.com.

Julie Edmunds (master’s candidate, anthropology) is vice president of SEA Club.

Burma Interest Group of NIU
Burma/Myanmar takes its place on ‘international’ stage at ETHNOTOPIA 2009

By Zaw Htut

NIU’s Burma Interest Group (BIG–NIU) was founded during the 2003–04 academic year to promote understanding and exchange of information through cultural and educational activities related to Burma/Myanmar. Since then, BIG–NIU has been actively expanding its reach.

The club has sponsored Burma culture nights and participated in a variety of activities, such as the Student Association Organizational Expo, Insular Southeast Asia Culture Night, Mainland Southeast Asia Culture Night, the Asian-American Association Fall Fest, Taste of Asia, and Dialogue on Diversity Initiative. The continued on page 15
Outreach Update

Thinking globally, learning locally, at ‘Islam at the Edges’ and GlobalFest

By Julia Lamb

Center outreach over the past few months has been focused on expanding educators’ knowledge of Islam in Southeast Asia and introducing junior high and high school students to the arts and culture of the region.

During the March 30 “Islam at the Edges” colloquium at NIU (see page 7), ten K–16 educators attended an afternoon teacher workshop held in conjunction with the colloquium, exploring Islam in Southeast Asia and Southeast Europe. Three participants were from Chicago public schools, four from Western Michigan University, and the rest from the conference co-sponsors, CSEAS and the Center for East European and Eurasian Studies at the University of Chicago.

Teachers were introduced to the basic tenets of Islam and how it is practiced in both regions, followed by a discussion of possible curriculum activities teachers could use in the classroom. Presenters were Julia Lamb, Srie Ramli (Ph.D. candidate, political science, NIU), and Nikolay Antov (Ph.D. candidate, University of Chicago).

GlobalFest

The center took its show on the road March 13–14 to GlobalFest in Urbana, Illinois, an annual event geared toward junior high and high school students promoting the study of world languages and international studies.

The event was sponsored by the University of Illinois, the Illinois GlobalFest Committee, Urbana High School, Rotary International, and the Illinois Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. Two of the center’s Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistants, Maria Angeles Dano (Philippines) and Silvia Ginting (Indonesia), taught Tagalog and Indonesian classes, respectively. The center also set up an information and crafts table at the event for the approximately 800 students, teachers, and parents who attended.

Minors note

The center currently has 54 undergraduate minors in Southeast Asian studies. Three of them aim to pursue a contract major in SEA studies.

Julia Lamb is CSEAS outreach coordinator.
“For the people who live along the great river” is the dedication NIU historian emeritus Constance M. Wilson chose for her edited volume, The Middle Mekong River Basin: Studies in Tai History and Culture, which Southeast Asia Publications was pleased to publish as the ninth in its monograph series on Southeast Asia. The book explores the history, art, literature, religious beliefs, and social urbanization of the Tai peoples living along the Mekong River before the onset of European influence in the nineteenth century. Wilson wrote three chapters and the introduction. Other contributors include center associate John Hartmann (foreign languages and literatures), University of Melbourne ethnographer and historian Marc Askew, and Payap University historian Ratanaporn Sethakul. Pre-publication reviews have been favorable. “This volume greatly enhances our knowledge of the pre-colonial political, social, and cultural history of what is nowadays called ‘the Greater Mekong Subregion,’” wrote Volker Grabowsky in his review. Wilson, who moved to Seattle after leaving DeKalb, relocated to Maine in 2008. She was recently appointed by CSEAS director Jim Collins to the newly created CSEAS Board of Advisors.

Burmese on CD at last
It took weeks if not months of work, but Foreign Language Lab supervisor and center associate Grant Olson has succeeded in converting 12 cassettes to digital CDs for book one of John Okell’s four-volume Burmese course. Olson worked closely with Okell to adapt the tapes to CD format. Okell’s Burmese course continues to lead the field and has been a regular seller for the center on Amazon.com.

Lao studies journal in the works
The San Francisco-based Center for Lao Studies reports that it will soon be launching the first peer-reviewed journal focusing exclusively on Lao studies. Please address all editorial correspondence and submissions of articles and book reviews to Justin McDaniel at 3046 INTN, University of California–Riverside, Riverside, CA 92521 (phone: 951-827-4530). For more information, see www.laojournal.org.

Rob Batey (B.S., political science, 2008) braved one of DeKalb’s January blizzards to visit the Beginning Thai class to share his lively experiences teaching English in Thailand. He assumed an instructor’s position at Rangsit University in fall 2008. The post was previously held by another NIU alum, Scott Ferstand (B.A., corporate communications with Southeast Asia minor, 2003), who now works at the Thai Embassy in Washington, D.C. Batey joined last year’s Foreign Language Teaching Assistant, Bussra Thongthai, for a weekend English camp for kids in Nakorn Sawan in Southern Thailand. He says it didn’t take him long to discover the white sand beaches and excellent scuba diving there.

Sokbunthoeun So is the third Ph.D. candidate from NIU’s political science department to be chosen for a fellowship from the East-West Center in Washington, D.C. The fellowship provides for six weeks of research, two months in Singapore at the Institute of Security and International Studies, and three months back in the U.S. at the East-West Center. Previous NIU recipients of this grant were Chandranuj Mahakanjana (Ph.D., political science, 2004), who is now teaching at the National Institute of Development

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Administration, and Napisa Waitoolkiat (Ph.D., political science, 2005), who is currently on the faculty at Naresuan University.

Alumni couple Ketut Erawan (Ph.D., political science, 2003) and Ayu Wijaya, (M.A., anthropology, 2003) are living in Bali, Indonesia, where Ketut will be the executive director of the brand-new Institute for Peace and Democracy. The institute, which will be located at Udayana University in Bali when it is built, was established by Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and the Department of Foreign Affairs. Ketut and Ayu received the news in January; construction is expected to begin this year, reports Ayu, who will be on the institute’s research staff. The facility is designed to have an office, library, and guesthouse for researchers. The Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has appointed Ketut as his Staff Khusus (special staff), which is eselon satu (first class).

Notrida Baso Mandica (Ph.D., political science, 2006), director of the Indonesian Research and Development Institute in Jakarta, recently ran for a seat in the DPR, the National House of Representatives, as a candidate from the Golkar Party in South Sulawesi. Thirty-eight political parties competed for 560 seats in the April elections. The province of South Sulawesi has three electoral districts (SS I, SS II, and SS III) and 24 DPR seats. There were 464 candidates competing for the seats. Ida, who was unsuccessful in her bid, ran for one of eight seats in the First Electoral District.

Making introductions
Philippines Ambassador MacArthur Corsino (Ph.D., political science, 1977), second from left, presented his credentials as non-resident Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Jamaica in January during Diplomatic Week at the King’s House in the capital city of Kingston. Jamaican Finance Minister and fellow NIU alumnus Audley Fitz-Albert Shaw, center, introduced Corsino, one of 13 diplomats presenting credentials. On behalf of his Southeast Asian counterparts, Corsino greeted the entire diplomatic corps later in the week at a joint reception hosted by the Southeast Asians.

Tiffany Reed (M.A., anthropology, 2008) is living in Aiken, S.C., and working as a project coordinator for E2, an environmental contracting company, to develop job training at the Savannah River Site in South Carolina. “It is my job to find out which jobs are available and design and implement a training program for underserved individuals in the surrounding area,” Reed says. “The training, which will most likely be in hazardous waste removal (SRS has several nuclear reactors) will be free for 15 to 20 excellent candidates and will be followed by help in job placement and follow-up for several months with the employers as well.”

Jenn Weidman (M.A., anthropology, 2005) has moved to Bangkok, where she is working as deputy director of the Rotary Center for International Studies in peace and conflict resolution at Chulalongkorn University. The program is a joint project of the school and Rotary International (see www.rotary-chula.org or www.rotary.org/rotarycenters). A video feature about the program has been posted on YouTube (see www.youtube.com/watch?v=JvPlvXqt6rc&feature=channel_page).
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**Undergraduate initiatives**

Besides offering new courses and new sections of existing courses, in March CSEAS launched two undergraduate curriculum initiatives. A committee was appointed to establish an undergraduate major in Southeast Asian studies, as a component of the CSEAS curriculum. In the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, another committee has drafted a proposal to set up an undergraduate minor in Southeast Asian languages and literatures. The next step will be to explore undergraduate interdisciplinary certificates in Southeast Asian studies. Last spring a graduate seminar on the teaching of Southeast Asian studies to undergraduates (ILAS 691) was conducted in tandem with the ILAS 225 introductory course on Southeast Asia for undergraduates. This produced detailed critiques and suggestions for improvement in the course design, as well as offering graduate students insights into undergraduate area studies. All these efforts are in keeping with NIU's mandate to serve as an undergraduate national resource center for Southeast Asian Studies.

**New Board of Directors**

To fulfill our national responsibility, we are beginning to restructure CSEAS to increase its efficiency and impact. On March 30, Dean McCord inducted six scholars into a new CSEAS Board of Advisors: former CSEAS Directors Ron Provencher, Clark Neher, and Dwight King, as well as the former Center for Burma Studies director Richard Cooler and long-time emeritus faculty members Constance Wilson (history) and M. Ladd Thomas (political science). These distinguished leaders will assist the director and associates in forming long-range plans to enhance the center’s effectiveness. In the day-to-day organization of the center, two new committees were set up to focus on specific regions and countries of Southeast Asia. In addition to the Thai Studies Committee formed late in 2008, the Cambodian Studies Committee and the Committee on the Study of Malaysia and Brunei were established to increase academic activities about these three countries of Southeast Asia.

**Cambodia**

Cambodian studies have emerged as one of the leading strengths of NIU. Our anthropologist specializing on Cambodia, Judy Ledgerwood, has been joined by two new tenure-track colleagues focused on Cambodian studies: Trudy Jacobsen (history) and Kheang Un (political science). These two new hires mean that Cambodian studies have become a major strength of CSEAS. Kenton Clymer (history) also has a strong commitment to Cambodia, demonstrated by his recent book on American foreign policy in Cambodia and his June audience with the King Father Norodom Sihanouk (see Center Council News on page 12). Steps are now underway to strengthen our Khmer language program to match the area studies strength in Cambodian studies.

**Malaysia**

We are rekindling our ties with Malaysia as well. The study of Southeast Asia at NIU actually began with the study of Malaysia more than 50 years ago when J. Norman Parmer, a specialist on the new nation of Malaya, was hired to chair the new department of history. He then worked to train the first batch of Peace Corps volunteers to go to the region at NIU in 1961 (see page 3). This early linkage of NIU with Malaysia and the Malay world was renewed when I accompanied an NIU delegation, including Dean McCord and Associate Provost Deb Pierce (international programs), and two historians (Kenton Clymer and Eric Jones), on a visit to government officials and university presidents and deans in both Brunei and Malaysia last January. Moreover, Malaysia Study Abroad, led by Eric Jones (history), will study Malaysian history in Malaysia. Unlike the preceding three programs (2006-2008), the 2009 program will include study in Brunei as well as Malaysia. Recently, a team of five CSEAS associates submitted a proposal to the Department of Education to develop a multimedia online learner’s dictionary of Malay. If funded, this will significantly strengthen NIU’s ability to carry out its national mission by developing expertise in these two countries, Malaysia and Brunei, both severely understudied in the United States.

**New collaborations**

Other structural changes at CSEAS involve the allocation of resources within the center itself. The long-standing aim of collaborating with NIU Press to publish quality monographs about Southeast Asia has finally been achieved. Meetings with NIU Press director Alex Schwartz have led to setting up an international editorial board of distinguished scholars. The first monograph of the new Southeast Asian Studies series, appearing under a joint CSEAS and NIU Press imprint, will be Eric Jones’ *Wives, Slaves and Concubines: A History of the Female Underclass in Dutch Asia*, which is scheduled for launch in October 2009. Negotiations with other authors are now underway.

Part of the center’s intensification of outreach and collaboration is the newly established Mid-America Consortium of Southeast Asian Studies (MAXIS).

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Tentative agreements have been reached with the University of Wisconsin and Ohio University to cooperate in channeling visiting scholars, facilitating student exchange, organizing joint workshops, exploring distance education, and reaching out to community colleges and independent scholars as well as K–16 educators. In cooperation with the NIU Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Resource Center, early plans are for MAXIS to invite a leading Indonesian scholar and gay activist, Dédé Oetomo, to lecture on gay and lesbian issues in Indonesia and to interact at various schools and community groups in the Midwest early next fall.

The center’s role as a truly national resource center has been underlined in just the past few weeks. Hamline University in St. Paul has asked us to find a graduate student in anthropology to co-teach a course on the music and culture of Indonesia during their intensive January term. The University of Texas at San Marcos appointed two of our faculty members as resource persons and evaluators of their new program for a certificate in Southeast Asian Studies. Thomas Hudak (Arizona State University) is exploring the possibility of putting digitized recordings of Thailand’s languages on NIU’s SEAsite.

Center reorganization
The strategic collaboration with NIU Press means that resources hitherto tied to our Publications unit can now be realigned to expand and improve other CSEAS units. In April, CSEAS organized a new unit, Outreach, Community Linkage, and Student Development (OCELOT), to commit the center to a broader, more intense outreach engagement with the university community, the region, and the nation. Most of the center’s human resources will now be invested in OCELOT in order to follow more closely the directives of the Department of Education to bring Southeast Asian studies to American society. Administrative and organizational details are still being worked out, but we expect OCELOT to carry out that mandate. CSEAS already has a solid reputation for materials production and distribution, most notably our well-known SEAsite resource, and our organization of educators’ workshops, such as the recent workshop on teaching about Islam. OCELOT, in cooperation with NIU faculty and the Southeast Asia Club, will build on those proven strengths.

The center’s long-standing reputation for excellence continues to attract new projects and new possibilities. The trust in our expertise and scholarship, built up through the almost 50 years since the center’s establishment, is the solid foundation that all the current and future changes in structure and focus rest on. Grandstands come apart and parades pass by, but our shared commitment to teaching and research remains the intangible strength of this national resource center. It is an honor to be a part of this project: Southeast Asian studies at NIU.

CSEAS says thank you to Kate Wiegele (anthropology), who served as the center’s interim assistant director during the 2008–09 academic year. Not only did she ably oversee the addition of a second section of our SEA survey course (ILAS 225) in spring and a new teaching assistant, but she added new material and new faculty guest speakers to the mix, including Mace Bentley (geography) and Rhodalyne Crail (foreign languages and literatures). She also worked closely with the Southeast Asia Club on its annual student conference and culture night activities. Kate did all this while teaching her regular courses and conducting her own research and writing. We appreciate her diligence and good cheer, and look forward to future collaborations as she continues her regular routine in the anthropology department.

Kheang Un will resume his position as assistant director in fall. Kheang, who spent the past year at the University of Louisville in Kentucky, returns to NIU as a new tenure-track assistant professor in the political science department. He will be teaching POLS 362 and 383, and coordinating ILAS 225. For the past year, Kheang has traveled in Europe and Asia, consulted with various entities, co-authored a book, and presented papers at several conferences while commuting back and forth to DeKalb to spend time with his family. We warmly welcome him back to campus.

—Jim Collins, Director
Genocide workshop for teachers
June 21–23
Teaching about genocide and human rights in Southeast Asia, with special emphasis on Burma, Cambodia, East Timor, and Indonesia, will be the focus of this institute at the Holmes Student Center for K–16 educators. The film 40 Years of Silence will be presented as part of the conference. For details, see page 8.

Online geography
New summer study course
Geography professor and center associate Mace Bentley teaches this online class (GEOG 408/508, crosslisted as ILAS 691) examining the natural hazards of Southeast Asia, including tsunamis, monsoons, typhoons, flooding, droughts, and urban hazards.

New SEA fall courses
Now enrolling
FLST 483/583: Language Death. This class explores the declining number of unique languages and explores cases of language maintenance. Professor James Collins, instructor
HIST 660/ILAS 691: Aristotle Who? This reading seminar delves into the great books of Southeast Asia. Assistant Professor Eric Jones, instructor
ANTH 363: Globalization and Corporate Cultures. This class is a broad overview of anthropological perspectives on development, globalization, and corporate culture in the international setting. Professor Susan Russell, instructor
ANTH 591, Section 2: Anthropology of Violence. This graduate seminar will review theoretical and ethnographic literature on the topic of human violence, including political violence, religious violence, state sanctioned violence, war, and genocide. We will use case study readings from several world areas with a 25% focus on Southeast Asia. Associate Professor Judy Ledgerwood, instructor

For details on any of these courses, contact CSEAS at 815-753-1771 or e-mail cseas@niu.edu.

Council on Thai Studies conference (COTS)
Oct. 23–24
The council’s annual conference at NIU will address the theme of Thailand’s response to and interaction with the forces of globalization. Deadline for papers is Aug. 20. Deadline for registration is Oct. 9. For details, see page 9.

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