



# Workshop: Doing fieldwork in the time of COVID-19

Thursday 6 August 2020

Online event via Zoom



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SYDNEY**

—  
Sydney Southeast  
Asia Centre

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# Overview

## What does fieldwork look like in the absence of a field?



Researchers who rely on fieldwork for their data collection have been seriously affected by the combination of travel restrictions, reduced budgets and health considerations associated with the global pandemic. While some scholars have been able to shift their projects online, many others have had to re-evaluate the feasibility of their research plans altogether.

This workshop recognises the challenges and limitations of using field-based methods in the present, and the uncertainty around when fieldwork may be possible again, and in what form. But it also asks what opportunities might present themselves as a result of the changes we've experienced in 2020, what strategies researchers can use to identify and capitalise on new research methods, and what this might mean for the production of knowledge in the future.

# Schedule

| Time        | Session                                                   | Speakers                                                  |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| 13:00-13:20 | <b>Session One: Adapting your research</b>                | Prof David Guest<br>A/Prof Jeff Neilson<br>Dr Aim Sinpeng |
| 13:20-13:35 | Breakout group discussions and report back                |                                                           |
| 13:35-13:40 | <i>Break</i>                                              |                                                           |
| 13:40-14:00 | <b>Session Two: Alternatives to traditional fieldwork</b> | Dr Justin Beardsley<br>Dr Sophie Chao<br>Dr Josh Stenberg |
| 14:00-14:20 | Breakout group discussions and report back                |                                                           |
| 14:20-14:40 | <b>Session Three: Long-term impact</b>                    | Prof Michele Ford<br>A/Prof Holly High<br>Dr Aaron Opdyke |
| 14:40-15:00 | Breakout group discussions and report back<br>Wrap-up     |                                                           |

# Biographies



## Dr Justin Beardsley

Justin Beardsley is a New Zealand trained infectious disease specialist, fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians, and clinical researcher. He completed his PhD in 2017 through the Oxford University Clinical Research Unit in Ho Chi Minh City. His research in Vietnam was focussed on fungal infections. He conducted a multi-national randomised clinical trial into adjunctive steroid therapy for Cryptococcal Meningitis in Southeast Asia and Africa (Beardlsey et al, NEJM 2016). His other core research focussed on epidemiology of fungal infections, immune responses in Cryptococcal Meningitis, pharmacokinetics of anti-fungal drugs in the central nervous system, and temporal trends in cryptococcal drug susceptibility.



## Dr Sophie Chao

Sophie Chao is a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the University of Sydney's School of Philosophical and Historical Inquiry and the Charles Perkins Centre. Her research explores the intersections of capitalism, ecology, indigeneity, and health in Southeast Asia. Sophie previously worked for indigenous rights organization Forest Peoples Programme in Indonesia.

For more information, please visit her website:

[www.morethanhumanworlds.com](http://www.morethanhumanworlds.com).

# Biographies



## Professor Michele Ford

Michele Ford is Director of the Sydney Southeast Asia Centre. Her research focuses on Southeast Asian labour movements, labour migration and trade union aid. Michele's work has been supported by a number of Australian Research Council Discovery Project grants related to these and other topics. She has also been involved in extensive consultancy work for the International Labour Organisation, the international labour movement and the Australian Government.



## Professor David Guest

David Guest AM is Professor of Horticultural Science, then Plant Pathology, in 2004. His current research focuses on the constraints faced by smallholder farmers in tropical horticulture that limit adoption of improved crop management and family livelihoods. He has supervised over 40 postgraduate research students, published over 100 research articles, three books, 19 chapters and peer-reviewed articles and been awarded over \$17 million in research funding. He is a Fellow of the Australasian Plant Pathology Society, Past-President of the Asian Association of Societies for Plant Pathology recipient of a Career Medal for Agriculture and Rural Development from the Government of Vietnam and is a Member of the Order of Australia.

# Biographies



## Associate Professor Holly High

Holly High is an anthropologist. She uses ethnographic methods and anthropological analysis to understand human experience. She has written about anthropological approaches to debt, power and desire; psychoanalytic theory and anthropology; Lao policy (including cultural, poverty, health and agricultural policies) in relation to lived experience in that country; everyday politics in Laos; emerging infectious disease as an intercultural zone; and religion in Laos. She is currently investigating transformations in pregnancy, birth and early childhood in Laos.



## Associate Professor Jeffrey Neilson

Jeff Neilson is an Associate Professor in Geography at the University of Sydney. He is also the Indonesia Country Coordinator for the Sydney Southeast Asia Centre. Jeff's research focuses on economic geography, environmental governance and rural development in Southeast Asia, with specific area expertise on Indonesia. Jeff's research interests are diverse and include issues of food security and food sovereignty, the global coffee industry, the global cocoa-chocolate industry, agrarian reform movements, sustainable livelihoods and alternative measures of well-being, agroecology, and environmental governance.

# Biographies



## Dr Aaron Opdyke

Aaron Opdyke is a Lecturer in Humanitarian Engineering in the School of Civil Engineering. His research seeks to improve international humanitarian responses to better assist developing communities to recover in the aftermath of disaster and conflict, with a particular focus on safe and equitable shelter. In 2018, Aaron received a SSEAC Conference Grant and a SSEAC Partnership Grant to support his research on informal sheltering practices and adaptive urban resilience processes in the Philippines.



## Dr Aim Sinpeng

Aim Sinpeng is a Lecturer in Comparative Politics. An award-winning educator, her research interests centre on the relationships between digital media, political participation and political regimes in Southeast Asia. Aim is particularly interested in the role of social media in shaping state-society relations and inducing political and social change. Together with Dr Fiona Martin, Aim was recently awarded funding by Facebook to help the social media giant understand how better to regulate hate speech online in the Asia-Pacific region. Her other scholarly works examine popular movements against democracy in democratising states, particularly in Thailand. Aim is the co-founder of the Sydney Cyber Security Network and has served as the Expert Contributor for Varieties of Democracy and the Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index, which measure degrees and types of democracy.

## Biographies



Dr Josh Stenberg

Josh Stenberg is a Senior Lecturer in Chinese Studies. He obtained his BA from Harvard College, his MA from the University of British Columbia, and his PhD in Chinese Theatre from Nanjing University. He was a Fulbright Taiwan Fellow and a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Postdoctoral Fellow in Theatre and Film before taking up his current position at the University of Sydney.





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