

METHODOLOGIES WORKSHOP

DIGITAL RELIGION

Social, Political &
Legal Implications

28 September 2023
Block AS8, Room 04-04

For more information, visit ari.nus.edu.sg/events/digital-religion

This workshop is jointly organized by the Asia Research Institute, and the Centre for Asian Legal Studies, National University of Singapore.

As religious community and practice continue to evolve, so must the methods used for their analysis. As part of the pilot project *LaPIDoR* (Legal and Political Implications of the Digitalization of Religion) and generously sponsored by the NUS HSS (Humanities and Social Sciences) Seed Fund, the NUS Centre for Asian Legal Studies (CALs), in conjunction with the Asia Research Institute (ARI), brings together speakers representing diverse disciplines and sub-disciplines from within the social sciences and humanities for *Digital Religion: Social, Political and Legal Implications*, a closed-door methods workshop in which speakers are invited to share about and elaborate upon the methodological challenges faced when unpacking digital religion – a global phenomenon that has impacted religious community and practice to various degrees and extents since the turn of the millennium. During their presentations, speakers first introduce the main methodological approaches they have been using in recent years, elaborate upon how they have been applied with respect to the substantive topics of their research, and reflect upon how these methodological approaches have been or may be applied to the study of digital religion its effects on religious community and practice in the digital age. At the end of the event, a “brainstorming session” takes place in the form of a discussion panel in which speakers consider and discuss what was shared during the workshop’s proceedings, in the process identifying potentially fruitful avenues of research moving forward, clarifying the directions *LaPIDoR* might take in the near future, and the potential implications for the next phase of funding applications the project is slated to participate in.

WORKSHOP CONVENORS

Dr Erica M. LARSON

Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore

Prof Kenneth DEAN

Asia Research Institute, and Department of Chinese Studies, National University of Singapore

Assoc Prof Jaclyn NEO

Centre for Asian Legal Studies, National University of Singapore

Mr Benjamin LOW

Centre for Asian Legal Studies, National University of Singapore

28 SEPTEMBER 2023 • THURSDAY

10:00 – 10:10	WELCOME REMARKS
10:00	JACLYN NEO , Centre for Asian Legal Studies, National University of Singapore ERICA M. LARSON , Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore
10:10 – 11:10	PANEL 1
<i>Chairperson</i>	BENJAMIN LOW , Centre for Asian Legal Studies, National University of Singapore
10:10	Quantifying Faith: Experimental and Correlational Research in the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality JONATHAN E. RAMSAY , Department of Psychology, James Cook University – Singapore
10:30	Types of Digital Entanglements among Christian Megachurches in Southeast Asia DANIEL P.S. GOH , Department of Sociology and Anthropology, National University of Singapore
10:50	Questions & Answers
11:10 – 11:15	BREAK
11:15 – 12:15	PANEL 2
<i>Chairperson</i>	MICHEL CHAMBON , Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore
11:15	Studying Digital Religion: Challenges for Law and Policy JACLYN NEO , Centre for Asian Legal Studies, National University of Singapore
11:35	Hermeneutical Pluralism in Complex Networks: Intra-Community Diversity and Innovation among Cultural Producers BENJAMIN LOW , Centre for Asian Legal Studies, National University of Singapore
11:55	Questions & Answers
12:15 – 13:15	LUNCH
13:15 – 14:15	PANEL 3
<i>Chairperson</i>	ERICA M. LARSON , Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore
13:15	Practical Web Scraping RONGXIN OUYANG , Department of Communications and New Media, National University of Singapore
13:35	Religious Identity and Politics in Indonesia: A Study of Candidate Statements from the 2019 Elections NICHOLAS KUIPERS , Department of Political Science, National University of Singapore
13:55	Questions & Answers
14:15 – 14:20	BREAK

14:20 – 15:20	PANEL 4
<i>Chairperson</i>	QI WU , Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore
<i>14:20</i>	Digital Humanities Platforms for Research on Religion in Southeast Asia: Chinese Temples and Associations KENNETH DEAN , Asia Research Institute, and Department of Chinese Studies, National University of Singapore
<i>14:40</i>	Data Management in Digital Humanities Projects MARCUS BINGENHEIMER , Asia Research Institute, and Department of Chinese Studies, National University of Singapore
<i>15:00</i>	Questions & Answers
15:20 – 15:30	BREAK
15:30 – 16:30	CLOSING REMARKS & OPEN DISCUSSION
<i>15:30</i>	JACLYN NEO , Centre for Asian Legal Studies, National University of Singapore KENNETH DEAN , Asia Research Institute, and Department of Chinese Studies, National University of Singapore
16:30	END OF WORKSHOP

ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

Benjamin Low is completing his doctoral studies in the Department of Sociology at University of Oxford. A National Arts Council Arts Scholar and practicing jazz musician, his master's thesis project explored the social dynamics of intercultural learning in jazz music through focusing on processes through which knowledge and practice in jazz performance are diffused in peer-to-peer online learning environments. His master's thesis work provided the basis for his doctoral research project where, using the Singapore jazz musician community as a case study, he investigates the network bases through which genre evolution and emergence occur in communities of cultural producers. Currently affiliated with the Centre for Asian Legal Studies as a postdoctoral researcher, his research interests include cultural production, innovation, symbolic boundary-work, and valuation.

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Daniel P.S. Goh is Associate Professor of Sociology and Associate Provost (Undergraduate Education), National University of Singapore (NUS), and is also Vice Dean (Special Programmes) at NUS College. He specializes in comparative-historical sociology and studies state formation, race and multiculturalism, urbanisms, and religion in Southeast Asia. His edited books include *Urban Asias: Essays on Futurity Past and Present* (JOVIS Verlag, 2018), and *Regulating Religion in Asia* (Cambridge, 2019). He has also co-edited special issues on religion in *Asian Journal of Social Science* and *International Sociology*. He is currently Principal Investigator of the MOE Academic Research Fund Tier 2 research project on “Capitals of the Future: Place, Power and Possibility in Southeast Asia” at Asia Research Institute.

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Erica M. Larson is Research Fellow in the Religion and Globalisation Cluster at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. She holds a PhD in Cultural Anthropology from Boston University, USA. Her research interests include education, religion, ethics, and politics in Indonesia and Southeast Asia more broadly. She has examined how education becomes an arena of deliberation about the ethics and politics of plural coexistence through ethnographic research in North Sulawesi, Indonesia. Her current research engages Indonesian youth active in religious organizations and their attitudes and beliefs about corruption as a lens on normative state-society relations and notions of ethics, piety, and responsibility.

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Jaclyn Neo is Associate Professor and Director of the Centre for Asian Legal Studies in Faculty of Law at the National University of Singapore (NUS). She graduated from the NUS Faculty of Law (LLB) and Yale Law School (LLM and JSD) on multiple academic scholarships from NUS. An award-winning scholar of comparative constitutional law, as well as law and religion, Jaclyn has held several visiting positions, including at the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs, the University of Münster, Melbourne Law School, the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity; and The University of Texas-Austin School of Law. Jaclyn serves on multiple advisory boards of overseas academic institutions, including the North-Rhein Westphalia (Germany) Academy of International Affairs, the Chinese University of Hong Kong's Centre for Comparative and Transnational Law, and the University of Otago's Centre for Law and Society. As Professorial Fellow of the Singapore Attorney-General Chambers (AGC) Academy, Jaclyn provides training to government lawyers. She has also served on the SAL Law Reform Committee and is an Executive Committee member of the ASEAN Law Association (Singapore).

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Jonathan E. Ramsay moved from the United Kingdom to Asia in 2009 and is now Associate Professor of Psychology and Associate Dean for Student Engagement at James Cook University (JCU). He received a PhD in psychology from Nanyang Technological University in 2014, and a BA in psychology and physiology from the University of Oxford in 2005. Prior to joining JCU he was a lecturer and then a senior lecturer at the Singapore University of Social Science. His research interests span areas of personality and social psychology, with a particular emphasis on the psychology of religion and spirituality. His current research projects examine the ways in which religion influences supernatural explanations of events, as well the ways in which scared experiences and their consequences differ across religious, spiritual, and non-religious groups. Jonathan has published in many international peer-reviewed journals, such as *Nature Human Behaviour*, *Journal of Personality*, *Political Psychology*, and *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*. He is an editorial board member for *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, and *Frontiers in Psychology*. He is also the recipient of several internal and external research grants.

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Kenneth Dean is Kwan Im Thong Hood Cho Professor in Yale-NUS College, Research Cluster Leader for Religion and Globalisation in Asia Research Institute at National University of Singapore (NUS), and Director of Wan Boo-Sow Centre for Chinese Culture in Department of Chinese Studies at NUS. He is the author of several books on Taoism and popular religion in Southeast China. He has published several volumes of epigraphic sources on the history of religion in Fujian and Singapore. He directed *Bored in Heaven: A Film about Ritual Sensation* (2010) and has developed websites and digital platforms including the Singapore Historical GIS and the Singapore Biographical Databases.

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Marcus Bingenheimer was born in Germany. He obtained an MA (Sinology) and Dr.phil (History of Religions) from Würzburg University, and an MA (Communication Studies) from Nagoya University. Marcus works as Associate Professor in the Department of Religion at Temple University in Philadelphia, but is currently (AY 2023-2024) visiting at the Department of Chinese Studies and the Asia Research Institute at the National University of Singapore. He taught Buddhism and Digital Humanities in Taiwan at Dharma Drum (2005 to 2011), and held visiting positions and fellowships at universities in Korea, Japan, Thailand, Singapore, and France. Since 2001 he has supervised various projects concerning the digitization of Buddhist culture. His main research interests are the history and historiography of Buddhism, early sūtra literature, and how to apply computational approaches to research in the humanities.

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Michel Chambon is a French theologian and a cultural anthropologist working on Christianity in Chinese worlds. As a research fellow at the Asia Research Institute in National University of Singapore, he coordinates the Initiative for the Study of Asian Catholics (ISAC), an international scholarly network developing and promoting social scientific research on Asian Catholics in contemporary societies.

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Nicholas Kuipers is Assistant Professor of Political Science and Presidential Young Professor at the National University of Singapore. His research is interested in understanding how institutions structure political attitudes and has been published or is forthcoming in journals such as *American Political Science Review*, *British Journal of Political Science*, *Perspectives on Politics*, and *World Politics*. Nicholas received his PhD from the University of California, Berkeley and was previously a pre-doctoral scholar at the Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law at Stanford University.

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Qi Wu is Research Fellow in the Religion and Globalisation Cluster at the Asia Research Institute (ARI), National University of Singapore (NUS). She has a PhD in Chinese Studies from NUS and her research interests relate to overseas Chinese society and Chinese religion. She is particularly interested in the transregional network of Chinese religious and charity organisations. At ARI, her research focuses on Dejiachui and its transregional network. Her PhD thesis is currently under publication.

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Rongxin Ouyang is a PhD student in the Department of Communications and New Media at National University of Singapore. He uses computational methods to explore questions spanning from social impacts of technology to political communication. He holds an MA in Journalism and Communication from Peking University. He has published a journal article indexed by CSSCI, reprinted by China Social Science Excellence (Economy Theory), earning him a national-wide academic prize. He delivers oral or poster presentations at various conferences, such as IAMCR, PolyMeth, and the Annual Conference of Computational Communication Research Association. He also serves as a reviewer of *New Media & Society*.

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