

Summation of the NASSS International  
Graduate Students Seminar  
Politics and International Relations Workshop  
July 27, 2010

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Seven students attended the Politics and International Relations Workshop on July 27th, 2010. The workshop ran from 9:00 am to 17:20 pm and included students from the United States, Japan, Thailand and the Philippines. Professors and mentors in this section included David Potter, Yamagishi Takakazu, Masami Fukito and Ichiro Iwano.

Each student was given 15 minutes to present their topic and 20 minutes was reserved for the new lengthy Q&A section. This allowed ample time for comments and questions from the mentors and students alike to fully voice their reactions to the presentation as well as to offer useful constructive criticism and advice. All feedback was positive and created an atmosphere of learning for the entire workshop.

The morning session was presided over by Professor Yamagishi Takakazu and the first student presentation of the day was Mr. Ryan Irwin. He presented the title, "One World? The United Nations and Decolonization," and focuses with the struggle of the ambiguity of terms of multilocalism and globalization in today's post-liberal world. This paper derives from his dissertation with a theme, "The Gordian Knot: Apartheid and the Unmaking of the Liberal World Order, 1960-1970" and is predominantly based on archival evidence from Africa, Europe and North America. He attempted to answer the question of where did the idea of a singular world community come from and how has it changed in the recent past?

The second presentation of the day was Mr. Hideaki Kami whose presentation scrutinizes U.S. Cuban policy between 1980 and 1992, and examines the changing importance of these non-state actors within the broader context of Cold War history. Consequently, with newly obtained documents at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and two Cuban exiles' archives in Miami, Florida, this paper unearths the previously neglected aspects of the interactions between U.S. government and anti-Castro exiles. As a whole, he successfully presented a fresh explanation about why U.S. Cuban policy remained hostile even after the Cold War ended.

The third presenter of the day, Mr. Alex Barder, presented his essay which was an exegesis of Hannah Arendt's understanding of history, time and the event throughout her writings. He argued that Arendt allows us to better understand

how remembrance is central to a concept of political action of natality. He also attempted to show how Arendt adumbrates a theory of the event that challenges positivist conceptions of historical research.

The last presenter of the morning was Ms. Sumphaongern Kulthida, a Nanzan graduate student from Thailand. Her paper looked at the issue of the importance and closeness of aid affect on Thailand's development. She especially focused on the Eastern Seaboard Development Plan (ESDP), an integrated development program during Thailand's 5th and 6th National Economic and Social Development Plans in the 1980s, and the fact that it represents a transition from World Bank aid to Japanese aid. This also paralleled the decline of the United States' aid to Thailand and the rise of Japan aid as a dominant donor in Asia. She argues that this marked a turning point in Thai foreign policy.

The afternoon session was presided over by Professor David Potter and the first presenter of the afternoon was Ms. Christina Owens whose paper examines the privatization of the Assistant Language Teaching (ALT) industry in Japan, and asked how we should read the worsening ALT working conditions against the backdrop of U.S.-Japan relations and the transnational expansion of neoliberal policies. Combining popular political commentary with fieldwork and interview data, she explored how direct-hire and dispatch ALTs in the Nagoya region analyze their own situations in light of these macro-level economic and geopolitical structures.

The second presenter of the afternoon was Mr. Erika Tominaga. She aimed to explain why the U.S.-Israeli relationship accelerated during the Johnson administration, as well as to examine the origins of the close connection between the two countries by using a case study approach, the Johnson administration's sales of tanks toward Israel. Through demonstrating the U.S. decision making process, she concluded that the U.S. military assurance to Israel was not given willingly by the United States, but rather invited by Israel. Additionally, she commented that the Johnson administration's arms sale completed U.S. material support for Israel and was instrumental in creating the U.S.-Israeli relationship of today.

The third presenter of the afternoon was Mr. Arnel Joven. His study sought to address the problem of how health-seeking behavior, fuelled by the realities of the Japanese occupation in the lowland Luzon area, directed common paths along the people's interaction with each other, the political-economic atmosphere, and their natural environment. This took a fresh look at available written materials on medicine and health, as well as an ear into the oral history of living survivors in clarifying and focusing on the significance of the people's health during the occupation period. The research orbits around the centrality of health and illness as determinants of a history and culture in which the people were largely affected.

The fourth presenter was Ms. Maiko Takano. She presented her work, "The Fluctuation of the Canadian Parliamentary System: The Emergence of Minority

Government and the Absence of Coalition in the 1920s.” Her presentation also addressed the question of why a leader of the Liberal Party, Mackenzie King, chose a single-party minority government rather than a majority coalition government despite the likely result of governmental instability. Although scholars have generally focused on the political conditions surrounding each election in explaining politicians’ behavior, she argued that a historically entrenched political culture, rather than the political conditions, largely affected the choice made by Mackenzie King.

As there were fewer students than in previous years, there was more time to analyze each paper in depth, and overall the workshop can be gauged as an overall success. We hope that this experience has greatly enhanced not only the presentation skills of the graduate students in an international setting, but also added value to their overall NASSS experience.