

“FOR WHITES ONLY”

Queer Desires for Respect in Asianizing Thailand



Thursday, May 14, 2015. INTS 1111. 3:30-5:00 PM

Dredge Byung'chu Käng

By investigating class differentiation in Thailand, this talk upsets neocolonial binaries of East and West and white and non-white in describing new Asian regionalisms and racializations. Kang assesses how sex tourism has shaped contemporary attitudes about class in relation to the optics of interracial relationships in Thailand. Contrary to the popular Western notion that Thais desire Caucasian partners, he argues that Thais are increasingly orienting toward Asian ones instead. Kang demonstrates how Thai gay men imagine, embody, and use partnerships with white Asians to instantiate their middle class position, which complicitly marginalizes sex workers, migrant laborers, and poor or rural Thais.

Dredge Byung'chu Käng is a PhD/MPH candidate in anthropology and global epidemiology at Emory University. His research focuses on the intersections of queer and trans* studies, critical race theory, and inter-Asian regionalism. Dredge has published in journals such as *GLQ* (2011), *Asian Studies Review* (2012), and *Transgender Studies Quarterly* (2014), in addition to edited collections. Dredge's dissertation *White Asians Wanted: Queer Racialization in Thailand*, explores the desire to embody and partner with "white Asians," or light-skinned Asians from developed countries. Dredge's second project, tentatively titled *Amazing Waves: Queering East Asian Popular Culture through Thailand*, explores the impact of the Korean Wave and Cool Japan on the performance of Thai gender, sexuality, and race as well as queer Thai influence on other Southeast Asian nations such as Vietnam and the Philippines.

Sponsored by the Mellon workshop "Mobilizing the Arts in Southeast Asia and its Diasporas,"
UCR Center for Ideas and Society, and SEATriP.