Culture night beckons: The Southeast Asia Club will host its spring Southeast Asia Culture Night at 6 p.m. Friday, March 26, in Wirtz Hall, featuring free refreshments (including regional dishes) and ethnic performances by different groups. This group of students performed an Indonesian dance at last spring’s event. (CSEAS file photo / Julie Edmunds)

Spring into Southeast Asian culture Friday night

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1. This week’s lecture: Dr. Suchit Bunbongkarn on current state of Thai politics

Dr. Suchit Bunbongkarn, chairman of Thailand’s Political Development Council, will present “Thailand 101: Who, What, When, Where and How” at noon Friday, March 26, at the center’s weekly lecture series in Room 110, Campus Life Building. Dr. Suchit, a senior fellow at the Institute for Security and International Studies-Thailand and political science professor emeritus at Chulalongkorn University, previously has served as an advisor to former Prime Minister Prem Tinasulanonda, a member of the National Legislative Assembly and the 1997 Constitutional Drafting Committee, and as a justice on the Constitutional Court. While on campus, he’ll also meet with the NIU Thai Association, which is co-sponsoring the Friday lecture. For a Thai lunch, call 815-753-1771 or e-mail cseas@niu.edu by noon Thursday. Lunches are $4 for students, $5 for others.

2. Center, history department sponsor forum on early modern Southeast Asia

Barbara Watson Andaya, director of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies at the University of Hawaii-Manoa, will be the featured speaker at a campus forum on early modern Southeast Asia from 9:30 to 10:45 a.m Tuesday, March 23, in the Heritage Room of the Holmes Student Center. Center director Jim Collins and assistant history professors and center associates Trude Jacobsen and Eric Jones will also be on the panel. The forum, sponsored by CSEAS and the History Department, is free and open to the public. For information, e-mail cseas@niu.edu. For directions and parking, see the NIU website.

3. Cementing ties with Indonesia partner school

Center director Jim Collins was in Indonesia March 10–12 meeting with one of NIU’s partner universities in Indonesia, Universitas Hasanuddin (in Makassar), to discuss further cooperation, student exchange, and a joint curriculum project. In October 2009, A Razak Thaha, director of the graduate school at Hasanuddin, came to NIU to meet with graduate studies staff and sign a memorandum of understanding with NIU as part of an graduate education initiative by Indonesia’s Directorate of Higher Education. While in Indonesia, Collins met with Thaha and the deans of the school’s engineering, public health, and humanities colleges in addition to the heads of the history and Indonesian language training departments to discuss implementation of the MOU. Before returning to NIU, Collins stopped in Malaysia to plan the May 10 conference in Malaysia about the center’s Malay dictionary project. The conference, The One-Malaysia Malay Dictionary:
Diversity and Lexicography, is co-sponsored by the Ethnic Studies Center of the National University of Malaysia and the center.

4. Center welcomes visitors from Indonesia and Brunei

Official delegations, one from Indonesia and one from Brunei, recently stopped by the center while they were at NIU. A seven-member presidential delegation from the Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta (NYU) visited the center on March 12 before going to the Holmes Student Center for a ceremony to sign a memorandum of understanding between NIU and the Indonesian university. On March 18, Hajah Aminah Bt. Haji Momin and Norhayati Bt. Haji Taha of Brunei’s Institute of Language and Literature dropped by after visiting NIU Press to discuss joint publications. From the center, they went on to Founders Library to visit the Donn V. Hart Southeast Asia Collection with curator and center associate Hao Phan. On Friday, they visited the Malay dictionary project team, met with associate provost Deborah Pierce, Division of International Programs, and attended the center’s noontime lecture before departing on Saturday.

5. Jones wraps up Southeast Asian studies workshops at Texas State

Assistant history professor Eric Jones went back to Texas State University at San Marcos on March 19 to conduct the fourth of four workshops organized by CSEAS for faculty
members at Texas State developing an undergraduate certificate in Southeast Asian studies. Jones gave presentations on current international relations among the countries of Southeast Asia and how to conduct a study abroad program in the region.

6. Seeking host families for Southeast Asia Youth Leadership Program

Got an extra bedroom in the house? The center is actively looking for area families to act as hosts April 11–22 for twenty-five high school students and five adult leaders from Burma, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand participating in the Southeast Asia Youth Leadership Program (SEAYLP). Students will be placed in pairs and adults may be placed as singles. Contact NIU host family coordinator (and past host) Leslie Shive at 815-753-9546 (e-mail lshive@niu.edu) or see the SEAYLP website for host family application forms and information.

7. Still time to apply for summer ethnographic field school in Cambodia

April 1 is the deadline to sign up for anthropology professor Judy Ledgerwood’s July 15–Aug. 15 ethnographic field school in Cambodia. Students will study Cambodian culture, religion, and various field-study methods, including surveys, interviews, and participant observation. A collaborative project with the Royal University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh, the program is an NIU Study Abroad course offering three or six hours of credit for graduate and undergraduate students. For information and applications, contact the NIU Study Abroad Office, 417 Williston Hall; call 815-753-0304; or e-mail niuabroad@niu.edu.

8. Deadline extended, location changed for Ramayana conference

The deadline for presentation proposals has been extended to April 30 for the Third International Ramayana Conference, which is now scheduled for Sept. 18–19 at NIU’s DeKalb campus. The two-day event, co-sponsored by the center and the University of Illinois Center for South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies and the International Ramayana Institute of North America, will include a teacher workshop. For details, see the conference website.

9. PYLP program looking for host families

NIU’s International Training Office is looking for area families to act as hosts in May for twenty-two Muslim and non-Muslim youth and four adult leaders from the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao who are coming to NIU in April for six
weeks to participate in the seventh Philippine Youth Leadership Program (PYLP). The program runs April 17–May 22; the home-stay segment is May 2–15. Students will be placed in pairs and adults may be placed as singles. For details, contact coordinator Leslie Shive at 815-753-9546 or e-mail lshive@niu.edu, or see the PYLP website for host family application forms and information.

10. **Student Fulbright workshop set for March 31**
Finishing your bachelor’s degree? Want to teach English in Indonesia? How about enrolling in a master’s degree program in Malaysia? Do you need to conduct your dissertation research, or just a post-master’s research project, in Cambodia or the Philippines? The U.S. State Department’s Student Fulbright Program, which is coordinated by the Institute of International Education (IIE), allows students to teach English abroad for a year or to conduct postgraduate dissertation research. Interested students can learn more at 2 p.m. **March 31** at a student Fulbright workshop in the Heritage Room at the Holmes Student Center. Featured speakers will be Lauren Hansen, current Fulbrighter in Germany, and IIE representative Megan Spillman. There will be a faculty workshop **April 1** from 2 to 3:30 in the Heritage Room.

11. **Job opportunity: Assistant director of Southeast Asian Studies, Ohio University**
Ohio University’s Center for International Studies (CIS) is accepting applications until **April 15** for the full-time position of assistant director of Southeast Asian Studies. A master’s degree or comparable work experience in the region is preferred; competency in a Southeast Asian language is required. For posting details and to apply online, see the CIS [website](#). For more information, contact associate director Karla Schneider at 740-593-1842 or e-mail schneidk@ohio.edu.

12. **Concordia University hosts Hmong studies conference in April**
The Center for Hmong Studies at Concordia University will present the Third International Conference on Hmong Studies **April 9–11** in St. Paul, Minn. In addition to scholarly presentations, the conference will feature cultural performances, a film festival hosted by the Hmong International Film Organization, and a photo exhibit of life at the Ban Vinai refugee camp in Thailand. For details and to register, see the conference [website](#).

13. **Overseas language, exchange, and area studies program**
- **USINDO Summer Language Program in Indonesia, June 4–Aug. 13:** Ten-week intensive language study of Bahasa Indonesian. Students live with host families and participate in cultural workshops, such as cooking, martial arts, and gamelan. **Application deadline: March 31.** To apply, call the NIU Study Abroad Office at 815-753-0304 or e-mail niuabroad@niu.edu. For program details, see the U.S.-Indonesia Society [website](#). **NOTE:** Students interested in taking language or area
studies abroad through non-NIU programs are advised to work through NIU’s Study Abroad Office. By doing so, students can receive NIU credit and possibly have NIU financial aid apply, in addition to receiving liability and insurance protections.

14. Save the dates: Culture nights and more

- **April 11**: The NIU Thai Association will present Thai Culture Night at the Wirtz Hall auditorium on campus. To celebrate the start of the Thai festival Songkran, the event will feature cultural performances, Thai food, and more. For details, contact dpoj2@hotmail.com.
- **April 16**: The Ethnotopia cultural festival will be held from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Wirtz Hall auditorium on campus. More details to be announced later.
- **April 17**: SEA Club is organizing a group to participate in NIU Cares Day, which places NIU organizations and students throughout DeKalb and Sycamore to do community-service projects from 8 a.m. to late afternoon. Participants get a free T-shirt and a free lunch. For details, see the NIU Cares Day website where you can also register online (select SEAClubNIU when prompted for a group). For more info, contact club president Julie Edmunds at edmundsjulie@yahoo.com or 815-566-2765.
- **April 25**: The Chicago-based Friends of the Gamelan will present a spring concert of traditional and contemporary Javanese gamelan music, led by Joko Sutrisno, artistic director of the Sumunar Gamelan Ensemble of Minneapolis, at 6 p.m. at the Hyde Park Union Church, 5600 S. Woodlawn, Chicago. Admission is $10 for adults and $5 for students. For details, e-mail info@chicagogamelan.org or see the group’s website. In January, Sutrisno co-taught a month-long class on Indonesian music and culture at Hamline University in St. Paul, Minn., with NIU graduate student Sean Dolan.
- **Aug. 20–21**: The Lao Professionals of Illinois will present the first annual Lao Artist Festival at Hemmens Auditorium at Elgin Community College, 1700 Spartan Drive, Elgin. The festival will feature arts and handicrafts from Laos, traditional dance and music, a talent show, traditional dances, and more. Tickets are $10 in advance, $15 at the door. For details, see the festival website or call festival producer Aloun Khotisene at 847-877-8224.

15. Ongoing area Southeast Asia cultural opportunities

- The Indonesian Consulate in Chicago offers free Balinese and Javanese dance and gamelan classes on weekends. For details, see the consulate website.
- The Cambodian Association of Illinois holds free traditional Cambodian music and dance lessons Sundays at the Cambodian American History Museum and Killing Fields Memorial, 2831 W. Lawrence Ave., Chicago. The music program runs from 10 a.m. to noon; the dance program from 1 to 3 p.m. For details, call Anneth Houy at 773-878-7090. Museum hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Friday and on weekends by appointment.
If you are a person with a disability who may need assistance at any center-sponsored event, contact office manager Nancy Schuneman at 815-753-1771 or nschunem@niu.edu. If you no longer wish to receive this bulletin, please reply to this e-mail with a request to remove your name. Thank you.