

PUBLIC LECTURE

Network Asia: Globalization and Regional Studies

Prof. Dr. Prasenjit Duara
(National University of
Singapore)

Tuesday, 23 September
6:00 – 7:30 pm

Institute for European Global Studies
Europainstitut
Gellertstrasse 27
4020 Basel



Prasenjit Duara is the Raffles Professor of Humanities and director of the Asia Research Institute at National University of Singapore. Previously, he taught at the University of Chicago where he was Chair of the China Studies Committee and subsequently Chair of the History Department. Among his publications are *Culture, Power and the State: Rural North China, 1900-1942* (1988), *Rescuing History from the Nation* (1995), *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* (2003), and the edited volumes *Decolonization: Now and Then* (2004) and *A Companion to Global Historical Thought* (co-edited with Viren Murthy and Andrew Sartori, 2014). His new book, *The Crisis of Global Modernity: Asian Traditions and a Sustainable Future*, will be published by Cambridge University Press later this year.

Prof. Duara's research interests include social and cultural history of China and Asia more broadly, problems of development, nationalism and imperialism, religion, historical thought and social theory.

The lecture will be followed by an Apéro. All guests are most welcome!

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Accelerating globalization has ironically intensified regional connections and interdependencies as much in relation to capital, people and culture as to shared regional resources or 'commons' – water, air, microbes, security risks, etc. Whereas US based area studies was an effect of the US government's requirement of language and area studies of new nations, the present moment of area studies ought to reflect upon history and society from the present imperatives of regional connections. This cannot be at the expense of national or local processes; but I believe that we can better understand these processes by viewing them from the perspective of regional and global commons.

Historically the region known as Asia had no strict boundaries; but it was densely interconnected by networks of trade and religion. These informal networks had profound implications on the relationship between culture and society across the region. Today, there is an emerging consensus that continuing our pursuit of existing modes of production, consumption and the political economic arrangements underpinning them will endanger planetary sustainability sooner than we realize. I seek to demonstrate how the intersecting networks of political, cultural and civil society organizations across these societies—particularly around ASEAN-- can provide an alternate framework to rethink the future of the historical region from the perspective of sustainable modernity.