

Call For Papers

The North American Taiwan Studies Association (NATSA) 20th Anniversary Conference

The Zeitgeists of Taiwan: Looking Back, Moving Forward

Deadlines and Dates at a Glance:

- January 10, 2014:** Individual Paper and Panel Proposal Submissions Due
January 10, 2014: Polished Drafts Due (only for our Publication Peer Review Option)
March 7, 2014: Notification of Acceptances
May 11, 2014: Submission Deadline for Full, Final Conference Draft of All Papers
June 20-21, 2014: 20th Anniversary Conference at the University of Wisconsin-Madison!

In honor of the 20th anniversary of the North American Taiwan Studies Association (NATSA), we invite paper proposals from scholars in the humanities and social sciences for our June 20-21 anniversary conference to be held at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Sponsored by Academia Sinica's Institute of Taiwan History and Institute of Sociology and by the University of Wisconsin-Madison's East Asian Legal Studies Center and Center for East Asian Studies, the theme for our 2014 conference will be "The Zeitgeists of Taiwan: Looking Back, Moving Forward." We are calling for papers on the main theme or any of our seven sub-themes outlined below from a broad range of social science and humanities disciplines. We are especially excited to offer a new Publication Peer-Review Option to participating junior scholars who may be interested in honing their original articles on Taiwan for publication.

In German, "zeitgeist" means something along the lines of time's ghost or spirit. This term was an attempt to capture the "feeling" of a particular place and the events taking place there as characteristic of the historical era, or "times," those people were living within. In the singular, zeitgeist indexes a diffuse sense of the intellectual currents or trends that both affect and reflect people's thought and behavior. It is the idea that the "Spirit of an Age" like "the Enlightenment" in Western Europe, "modernity," or "globalization" is a fundamental condition of people's lives. Even as our cumulative expressions and actions construct it, the concept suggests that we are also all the product of our times.

By using "zeitgeists" in the plural form for this year's conference theme, however, we suggest that these feelings are particular not only to different historical ages, but also to different people within the same period. In this way, while zeitgeists may parallel Raymond Williams' "structure of feelings" concept, we also aim to push beyond it by paying attention to people's

agency and the interactive relationships among different “zeitgeists” under the same “age.” Time, in this sense, is not merely a sort of objective reckoning of the passing of smaller or larger units of “the present.” Rather, it is infused with the social and tied directly to the very people, their political and economic decisions, and their works of art and literature that we study. Zeitgeists are time infused with the social, the philosophical, and the political.

We therefore call for papers that pay attention to the multiple, complex ties between people and their actions on the one hand, and time or times on the other. Though time is often thought of as the disciplinary turf of History or Archaeology, here we solicit new ways of addressing time from a wide variety of disciplines and from across disciplinary boundaries as well. Submissions might incorporate questions of time into, for instance, the policy choices that government and civil society face in the context of Taiwan's democratic transition, its demographic changes, its shifting international identity and foreign policy, its increasing role in addressing global issues, and its adjustments to changes in trade and security relations in its neighborhood. What are the best options such time-attuned perspectives give for policy innovation? More broadly, we welcome papers dealing with time both synchronically and diachronically, with Taiwan by itself or in comparison to other places in East Asia, Southeast Asia, or elsewhere at similar times.

How can we push the notion of zeitgeists beyond a diffuse sense of the “feeling” of an “era” into something more particular, more analytically robust, and tied more concretely to particular people and events? Can we push our work to think through time not just in terms of “1987,” “the 1970s,” or “the Japanese period,” but also in terms of “democratization,” “immigration,” “constitution,” or Taiwan's economic transition from labor to “knowledge” intensive industries? How are people and actions the products of their times? How do they (individually, cumulatively, or collectively) exceed, challenge, or change their times? In what ways do trends and pressures from beyond Taiwan's “borders” affect the zeitgeists of Taiwan? How might we understand the points of crossroad *between* zeitgeists, whether separated by time, space, or groups of people? Are there aspects of the particular experience of Taiwan (or Taiwan studies) in relation to time that could shed light on larger questions in our respective disciplines? How has the study of Taiwan, too, been influenced by or challenged the times it was written within? Could we rework the ways that time articulates with our standard disciplinary models or theories of the world to shed more light on the people, policies, practices we study?

In Madison, the conference will therefore address this theme at two different levels: first, in terms of the zeitgeists of Taiwan and its people, and second, those of Taiwan studies. In honor of 20 years of Taiwan studies conferences in North America, we are excited to host two special events. First, we warmly welcome scholars from the European Association of Taiwan Studies (EATS) as well as from the Japan Association for Taiwan Studies (JATS). These scholars will participate in a variety of scholarly panels and informal discussions throughout the conference to offer their perspectives on Taiwan studies and the role that NATSA has played in it. Second, the 2014 NATSA preparatory committee is organizing a special roundtable welcoming several past committee members of the association back to share their reflections on twenty years of development of Taiwan studies in North America and on the impact that NATSA has had on this. In many ways, both Taiwan and Taiwan studies, as several scholars pointed out at our 2013 conference in Santa Barbara, are at an important crossroads at which decisions must be made as to the kind of future we desire. One of the primary goals of these panels will therefore be to reflect on and discuss the current state and history of Taiwan studies to help us to begin charting a way forward for the next twenty years.

There are many ways that Taiwan can be relevant to scholars engaged with similar questions or issues in other world regions. Taiwan has entered into discussions as a model for challenging theories, as a method to test them, as a liminal space, and as a critical example of layers on layers of colonialisms and settler colonialisms. We hope the 2014 conference will continue to inspire participants to produce research and publications that will place Taiwan—along with its people, their productions, anxieties, and challenges—at the forefront of theory. Finally, we hope that NATSA’s annual conferences will become a valuable occasion for scholars and advanced graduate students to come together and consider future possibilities for collaboration in publications, AAS panels, and other academic venues.

Potential sub-themes (see sub-themes file for more information):

1. Banality and Crisis
2. Taiwan Studies at a Crossroads: Zeitgeists of the Last 20 Years
3. Taiwan at a Crossroads: Social Movements
4. Colonial Zeitgeists
5. Industrial and Labor Times
6. Feeling Backward: Loss, Trauma, Melancholia, and Obsessions
7. Methodological Time

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