

## [Call for Papers: “Unlearning Cold War Narratives: Toward Alternative Understandings of the Cold War World,” National University of Singapore, Singapore, 27-28 May 2016](#)

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### CALL FOR PAPERS

What was the Cold War? A simple definition might be: a 20th century international confrontation between the Soviet Union and the United States, which spread from Europe to Asia, Africa, and Latin America, eventually dividing the world into two camps. The key players in this global conflict are generally identified as a number of high-ranking policymakers, including Harry S. Truman, Winston Churchill, Joseph Stalin, and Mao Zedong. Of course, we know this story. Such a common narrative, however, does not help us to understand the multifaceted nature of the conflict, nor does it help us to think about its meanings for our world today. A quarter century has passed since the so-called end of the Cold War. It is time to change our ways of thinking about the Cold War.

To this end, our workshop, which will be held at the National University of Singapore (NUS) on 27-28 May 2016, aims at exploring new ways of thinking about the Cold War. We invite contributions that will challenge the standard narrative of the Cold War by problematizing the imagined and constructed nature of the conflict. Some key questions we hope to explore are: How did local situations contribute to the making and maintenance of the Cold War? Why did millions of people worldwide believe in the “reality” of the Cold War? In what way did local people utilize, or even take advantage of Cold War narratives? Finally, what was the Cold War and how can we periodize it?

In short, what we will attempt to do is to question Cold War imaginings, shedding light on diverse social conflicts, culture wars, and historical struggles at home that were often concealed beneath the mantle of the Cold War. In doing so, we hope to shed light on locally specific realities and everyday politics of “Cold War” confrontations, fostering discussions that will question the standard historical narrative that prioritizes the US-USSR conflict as the most important current in the history of the second half of the twentieth century. Possible themes for the workshop include:

- What, really, was the Cold War? : Issues concerning nature, agency, and periodization

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- Local realities: Issues of decolonization, civil wars, and nation building
- Politics of everyday life: Issues of identity, gender, race, labor, and immigration disputes
- Ordinary people's "Cold War": Everyday conflicts in the name of global confrontation
- Meanings of studying (and teaching) the Cold War in the 21st century

Discussions of all geographical regions are welcome, and cross-disciplinary approaches are also encouraged. In particular, we welcome scholars working on innovative Cold War histories in Southeast Asia, Middle East, Europe, and Latin America, as well as Greece, Turkey, Iran, and USSR. Through this workshop, we hope to develop scholarly dialogues on current and future studies of the Cold War. We plan to compile an anthology based on selected workshop presentations.

Each workshop participant will receive round-trip airfare to/from Singapore, as well as three nights accommodation in Singapore. If interested, please send an abstract (300-500 words) and full curriculum vitae by 1 December 2015 at the latest to the project organizer: MASUDA Hajimu (Department of History, NUS) at <[hishm@nus.edu.sg](mailto:hishm@nus.edu.sg)>.

- Abstracts for individual papers (300-500 words): **1 December 2015**
- Notification of acceptance: **15 December 2015**
- Workshop: **27-28 May 2015**

For further assistance, please contact the organizer, MASUDA Hajimu at: <[hishm@nus.edu.sg](mailto:hishm@nus.edu.sg)>.

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