

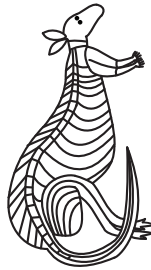


Università
Ca' Foscari
Venezia

Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici

Laboratorio demo-etno-antropologico

Lab



Dea

Lunedì, 12 dicembre ore 14.30-16.30

Aula Milone
Malcanton Marcorà

EDOARDO SIANI

Università Ca' Foscari Venezia,

terrà una conferenza su:

Divination as Research Method: Religious "Unorthodoxy" and Ethnographic Practice in Thailand

Abstract

Often labelled "unorthodox", diviners are a fixture of social life in Thailand. Hidden during the day, the more accessible appear, as darkness falls, sitting at foldable tables and candlelit mats on roadsides. The more upmarket receive clients discreetly from home offices, while the intellectually-inclined prophesize the future of the nation from established astrological associations. So high is the demand for their services, throughout the early 2000s a famous bank dedicated an annual report to the domestic expenditures on fortune telling. One year, this peaked to an extraordinary 130 million Euros, nearly half of which was spent in Bangkok. Throughout the past decade, I conducted ethnographic fieldwork with diviners and their clients in the Thai capital. My approach to data collection, developed on the advice of a renowned master, included training and practicing as a diviner. As unorthodox as my research subject, this approach demands important methodological and ethical considerations. Thought out as a conversation with the students, this talk explores questions including: Should researchers who engage in "participant observation" impose limitations upon their engagement with the field? Should and can researchers who examine more or less orthodox religious practices ever "believe"? Should they take the liberty to intervene on others' lives on the basis of epistemologies other than those associated to the scientific method?

Partecipazione libera - Seminario valido per il tirocinio DEA/ACEL. Coordinatrice: Franca Tamisari: tamisari@unive.it

Nota biografica

Edoardo Siani is Assistant Professor of Southeast Asian Studies at Ca' Foscari University of Venice and Research Associate at SOAS, University London. A resident of Bangkok since 2002, he mainly writes about the relationship between Buddhist cosmology and power in Thailand, focusing on divination, kingship, and spirit mediumship. Edoardo received a PhD in Anthropology and Sociology from SOAS, was researcher and assistant professor at Kyoto University's CSEAS, and adjunct professor at Thammasat University. He has contributed to media outlets including *BBC* and *The New York Times*.