



Southeast Asia Seminar Series,  
St. Antony's College,  
University of Oxford



**Wednesday, 21 October**

Deakin Room, Founder's Building, St Antony's College, 2.00-3.30pm

## **Pingtjin Thum**

Research Associate, Centre for Global History;  
Coordinator, Project Southeast Asia



# **A Vote for Authoritarianism? Reflections on Singapore's 2015 General Election**

The outcome of the recent general elections in Singapore was a shock to observers, who had predicted a far tighter outcome. The unprecedented six seats (out of 87, plus a seventh seat won in a by-election in 2013) won by the Workers' Party in 2011 had led many to herald a "new normal" in Singapore, one which would see greater opposition participation in Parliament to act as a check and balance on the ruling People's Action Party (PAP).

During the 2015 election period, the opposition was greeted by rapturous crowds and the ruling party often seemed on the verge of panic. Yet the PAP won decisively, holding on to all their seats, gaining back a seat from the Workers' Party, and increasing their overall vote share by nearly 10%.

Pingtjin Thum (Green Templeton College), who covered the election with *The Online Citizen*, Singapore's leading independent news website, will reflect on his experience and discuss the reasons for this outcome, by putting it in the overall context of Singapore politics and history.

Pingtjin Thum is a Research Associate at the Centre for Global History and Coordinator of Project Southeast Asia at the University of Oxford.

His work centres on decolonisation in Southeast Asia, and its continuing impact on Southeast Asian governance and politics. He is also creator and host of "The History of Singapore", an online podcast ([www.thehistoryofsingapore.com](http://www.thehistoryofsingapore.com)) and weekly radio show on BFM89.9 in Malaysia.

**All are welcome**

Convenor: Dr Matthew J Walton  
Chair: Dr Kevin Fogg  
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