Our Vision

The Vision of the Center for Hmong Studies is to create a high academic program that will strike a balance between academic study and community engagement.

Our Mission

The mission of the center for Hmong studies is to honor the past, interpret the present, and enrich the future through research and publication, curriculum development and teaching, and conference and community engagement.

Established in 2004, the Center for Hmong Studies is a Concordia University-affiliated institution. The Center exists to promote the scholarly interest, the rich legacy and the complex heritage of the Hmong people.

The Hmong are in a unique position to articulate the ideas and practices of a shifting modern world. Dispersed across the globe, without the advantage of a written script for much of their history, the Hmong are a powerful byproduct of global interactions and international relations. Bonded by a foundation of the oral, a tradition embedded in legends and memory, the Hmong are an example of a global community that has survived despite the influences of dominant cultures and perspectives, the powers of market economies and the strident pulls of politics.

The Center for Hmong Studies is an academic resource center that is unique in its service and commitments. The Center exists to track, document, facilitate research, develop and teach the long history, the current conditions, and the future trajectory of an international community in the midst of transition. Funded by both public and private dollars, the Center for Hmong Studies is excited to meet the needs of a diverse population in the pursuit of delivering the most accurate information on the Hmong. Since its founding, over 20,000 students, scholars and community members from throughout the world have visited the Center.

Our Work and Accomplishments

- Welcomed over 20,000 visitors from throughout the world to the Center for Hmong Studies.
- Organized and hosted seven International Conferences on Hmong Studies, which drew more than 180 presenters/scholars and over 3,500 participants from around the world.
- Provided more than 20 lectures, exhibits, film showing, book launched/reading, and discussions relating to the Hmong experiences; attracting over 2,000 participants.
- Served as senior advisor to the We Are Hmong Minnesota Exhibit at the Minnesota History Center and the Hmong Stories 40 Project in California. These exhibits commemorates the 40th anniversary of Hmong leaving the country of Laos and being in the United States.
- Hosted/Sponsored Dr. Gary Yia Lee, a former faculty member from the University of Sydney, Australia as the Center’s first Scholar in Residence for one year.
- Hosted/Sponsored Professor Long Yuxiao, a Fulbright Scholar from China, for one semester where he taught Hmong History and Culture of China.
- Hosted six visiting scholars from China and Australia.
- Developed and launched the first Minor in Hmong studies in 2006. Soon will launch a Major in Hmong History, Cultural, and Language out of the College of Education at Concordia University-St. Paul.
- Facilitated the signing of three Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) between Concordia University, Guizhou University and Guizhou University of Nationalities in China, and Huaihua University in Hunan Province.
- Conducted five academic tours to China and Southeast Asia for over 40 staff, students and faculty, and community members.
- Acquired over 2,000 books, DVDs, CDs, artifacts, and over a million documents and photographs as well as other special collections relating to the Hmong experiences throughout the world.
- Provided over 25 keynote addresses as well as presentations for community groups and organizations throughout the United States.
Welcome!

On behalf of Concordia University, St. Paul, welcome to the Seventh International Conference on Hmong Studies. Director Lee Pao Xiong, Chamee Vue, and countless volunteers have worked hard to make the conference a time for scholarly discourse and building lasting mutually beneficial relationships. My hope is that the conference will help us all understand better that there are challenges to face, responsibilities to accept and reasons to celebrate. So it is with great pride that we once again welcome you to Concordia University and to the City of St. Paul. Enjoy the conference!

Rev. Dr. Tom Ries
President
Concordia University, St. Paul

Welcome to the Seventh International Conference on Hmong Studies. We are excited to have you join us. We sincerely hope you will enjoy and engage in the many topics that are presented at this year's conference. While you are here, take the time to meet other scholars, professionals and students with interest in the area of health disparities and Hmong studies. Also, visit the many vendors and partners that help make the conference a success. I hope you will give us feedback as to how we are doing so that we can better prepare for future conferences. Again, thank you for your support and participation.

Lee Pao Xiong,
Director of Center for Hmong Studies
Professor of Hmong Studies and American Government

The mission of Concordia University, St. Paul, a university of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, is to prepare students for thoughtful and informed living, for dedicated service to God and humanity, for enlightened care of God’s creation, all within the context of the Christian Gospel.
# 7th International Conference on Hmong Studies

## Schedule at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4:00 pm – 8:00 pm</td>
<td>Check-In &amp; Registration</td>
<td>Pearson Commons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00 pm – 6:00 pm</td>
<td>Mingle/Network</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00: pm – 6:30 pm</td>
<td>Welcome &amp; Overview of the 7th International Conference on Hmong Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:45pm – 7:15 pm</td>
<td>MN Elected Officials</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:30 pm - 9:00 pm</td>
<td>Showing of documentary film “Hmong Pioneers: Honoring the First Wave.”</td>
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**Synopsis:** “Hmong Pioneers: Honoring the First Wave,” a St. Paul Neighborhood Network (SPNN) documentary film, tells the stories of struggle, determination and success, despite great odds, of Hmong refugees in St. Paul. In 1975, at the tumultuous close of the Vietnam War, the Hmong people in Laos fled their homes, livelihoods and culture, and began to arrive in the U.S. as refugees. Since that time, St. Paul has become the largest home of Hmong Americans; Hmong Pioneers is their story.

**Runtime:** 60m

9:00 pm Reception Close
## SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

### Saturday, April 7, 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:30 am – 12:00 pm</td>
<td>Check-In /Walk-In Registration</td>
<td>Pearson Commons</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:30 am – 8:30 am</td>
<td>Continental Breakfast</td>
<td>Buetow Auditorium</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:30 am – 4:00 pm</td>
<td>Conference Vendor Booth</td>
<td>Pearson Commons</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:30 am – 9:00 am</td>
<td>Introduction &amp; Welcome</td>
<td>Buetow Auditorium</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 am – 9:55 am</td>
<td>Opening Plenary Session</td>
<td>Buetow Auditorium</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 am – 11:00 am</td>
<td>Session I</td>
<td>See session schedule</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 am – 11:15 am</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:20 am – 12:20 pm</td>
<td>Session II</td>
<td>See session schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:20 pm – 12:45 pm</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td>Pearson Commons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45 pm – 2:00 pm</td>
<td>Lunch / Special Lunch-In Sessions</td>
<td>Buenger Education Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:05 pm – 3:05 pm</td>
<td>Session III</td>
<td>See session schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:10 pm – 4:10 pm</td>
<td>Session IV</td>
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<td>Break</td>
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# 7th International Conference on Hmong Studies Schedule

**Saturday, April 7, 2018**

## Opening Plenary Session

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Fulbright Scholar and Sasakawa Fellow, Kou Yang is Professor Emeritus of Ethnic Studies, California State University, Stanislaus. Since 1986, Professor Kou Yang has added a critical international component to the academic field research and discipline. Dr. Yang spent six months studying and teaching in China. Since then, he has made additional 10 visits to China. (See additional info about Dr. Kou Yang at the end of the conference booklet.)

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Session I | 10:00 am – 11:00 am

1. Title: The Minnesota Hmong Social Workers’ Coalition: A model for recruiting, supporting, and mentoring Hmong social work students, professionals, and community leaders.
   Location: LTC 214/215
   Presenter(s):
   Pa Der Vang, St. Catherine University
   G Lee Xiong
   Elizabeth Soung
   Cindi Yang, State of Minnesota

   Abstract
   This session provides an analysis of a professional coalition, the Minnesota Hmong Social Worker’s Coalition [MHSCWC], by using three theoretical concepts to extrapolate the function and purpose of the MHSCWC. These three concepts are 1) pipeline program, 2) academic and career mentorship, and 3) professional learning community. These three models provide in depth analysis and intervention strategies in the recruitment and retention of students and professionals of color in a variety of fields and disciplines. They are at various stages of career development from student to professional. Students and professionals of color face structural barriers that lead to poor outcomes in academic programs and professions, limiting the number of trained professionals of color in the social work. Trained professionals of color are a valued resource within the field of social work, especially as client populations are often comprised of people of color who find themselves in need of social services as a result of institutional and structural barriers to access. Mentoring that provides network expansion, skills and knowledge, resources, and guidance lead to higher outcomes for professionals of color and prevent leakage from the pipeline as demonstrated by current literature. MHSCWC and other community-formed groups may be a model for post-secondary institutions and agencies seeking to support Hmong American students in higher education.

2. Title: Servant Leadership: A phenomenological study of Southeast Asian women’s career advancement experiences in community colleges.
   Location: LTC 216
   Presenter: Lee, Soua, California State University, Stanislaus

   Abstract
   This study utilizes a phenomenological approach to explore the career advancement experiences of 10 Southeast Asian women who worked in various California Community Colleges. Participants held various leadership positions in departments such as student services, human resource, library, marketing & outreach, and college administration. Women’s age ranged from their 30s to 50s. Theoretical frameworks employed in understanding the findings are based on Symbolic Interactionism and Resiliency. The women’s stories of career advancement represent a process of self-positioning as figures of both authority and support within their work context. Data analysis revealed four themes that explain their career journey: 1) Difficulties to view themselves as leaders, 2) Unintended recipes for leadership emergence, 3) The unique experiences of Asian American female leaders, and 4) Foundations, strategies, and redefinitions of leadership. Participants overcame the limitations of an undervalued self-perception to build a professional identity based on an orientation toward servant leadership. The journey into leadership was an arduous process that caused them to experience emotional dilemmas. They shared the solutions they incorporated into their lives to improve personal wellbeing. Implications for practice are discussed in order to examine existing institutional conditions that either support or hinder equitable opportunities for young professionals to rise into positions of authority.
3. **Title:** Impact of the “Grade Zero” system on Hmong Children in Lao PDR: A Qualitative Study at a Pre-primary School in a Rural Luang Prabang Province  
**Location:** LTC 217  
**Presenter:** Miki Inui, University of Hyogo, Japan

**Abstract**

In Lao People’s Democratic Republic (PDR), two streams exist in pre-primary education, the standard three-year education and a one-year preparatory class called the “Grade Zero” system. The “Grade Zero” system was launched in 2006 particularly in the areas where ethnic minorities reside; however, little research has been conducted to know the actual impact of the system. This research aims to investigate the introduction of the “Grade Zero” system and its impact on Hmong children in a rural village of Lao PDR. It was predictable that the introduction of the new system brought some positive changes for Hmong children who live in a disadvantageous situation. The research methodology included qualitative research comprising interviews with villagers, school authorities, and staff members of the Department of Education and Sports and observation at a school in a rural Hmong village. The results revealed that the “Grade Zero” classes have been introduced in accordance with the budget, capacity, and available human resources in the villages, as well as the condition of attached primary schools. In addition, it was found that the “Grade Zero” system plays an important role in Lao language acquisition for Hmong children because they can adapt themselves to the language of instruction which is the Lao language, when entering primary school. The school authorities indicated that the rate of repetition and drop out of Hmong children greatly improved and positively impacted their learning achievement due to the sufficient preparation period.

4. **Title:** Mental health among Hmong population in the United States: A systematic review of the influence of cultural factors  
**Location:** LTC 218  
**Presenters:** Cindy Vang, School of Social Work, Arizona State University

**Abstract**

As refugees of the war in Southeast Asia, Hmong experienced various traumatic events (Tatman, 2004). Evidence suggests the persistence of psychiatric disorders related to trauma in refugees even after prolonged resettlement in the United States (Marshall et al., 2005). This systematic review presents the empirical studies on Hmong and mental health with the purpose of identifying the role of cultural factors. The articles were identified through PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, Social Services Abstracts, Web of Science, and PubMed by using combinations of the keywords: Hmong, Southeast Asian, and mental health. The inclusion of studies for our review were met with the following criteria: (a) explicitly stated having Hmong participants; (b) focused on mental health; (c) study conducted in the United States; (d) articles were in English; and (e) published in peer-reviewed journals through 2017. Of 447 resulting articles, 38 studies were included in the final review with 29 quantitative studies, five qualitative studies, and four mixed-methods studies. Highlighting the role of cultural factors, the themes were categorized into the following: psychiatric symptoms and diagnosis (e.g., depression, anxiety, PTSD), treatment and interventions implemented to clinical and non-clinical Hmong populations, and barriers to mental health care. The results of this systematic review shed light on the limited and small studies with the Hmong population. Researchers, practitioners, and stakeholders must advocate for the development of long-term programs designed to promote their mental health and well-being by taking into account their traumatic experiences and limited knowledge with mental health.

5. **Film Showing & Discussion:** America’s Secret War: Minnesota Remembers Vietnam  
**Location:** LTC 219  
**Presenters:** Kaolee Vang, Twin Cities Public Television (TPT)

Lisa Reilein Blackstone, Twin Cities Public Television (TPT)

**Synopsis:** (This session will be 1 hour and 30 minutes)

While the United States was publicly engaged in the Vietnam War, a secret conflict was raging just next door in the country of Laos. Under the command of the CIA, a full-blown military operation engulfed Laos, with a select few of the U.S. Armed Forces participating. At Long Tieng, a secret airbase in the heart of Laos, the CIA trained an army of allied guerilla fighters including a large number of the Hmong people (an ethnic group from the mountainous regions of southern China, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Thailand), to assist in destroying enemy supply lines. The hour-long documentary AMERICA’S SECRET WAR uncovers the history of this covert war through the stories of Hmong elders and a rich collection of never-been-seen archival images, maps, and documents, including recently declassified CIA intelligence.
1. **Title:** Are Hmong and A Hmao a family?  
   **Location:** LTC 214/215  
   **Presenters:** Jili Zhu, Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences, Kunming, China  
   Luo Dan, Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences, Kunming, China

**Abstract**

Hmong and A Hmao, who are scattered throughout Southwest China were recognized as one group and were named "Miao Zu" with other different groups in China. Being the biggest two members of the Western Miao of China, the language and other cultural characteristics of Hmong and A Hmao seem to look different. The research began with focus on the differences found in the study of the the claims of this group. Then there was further exploration of costumes, language, distribution, history, religion, and mentality of A Hmao and Hmong. Finally, the comparative approach was used to analyze whether Hmong and A Hmao are a family. Through the study of the Western Miao of China, more and more similarity can be reflected in the core of their culture, and the differences can also be found. The paper will lead one to understand the relationships and the indigenous identities between Hmong and A Hmao. It also discusses some meaningful cultural phenomenon, like Hmong Dleuization and Hmao Dleuization. Currently, when the Western Miao made responses to the ethnic policy of the state, the indigenous community of the Western Miao shaped another new historical condition for responding their similarity and difference. It also shows that indigenous people of Miao have accepted their historical fate of being classified as an ethnic group, because this recognized community plays an important role of preventing the political exclusion and obtaining the respect of the state. In addition, Hmong and A Hmao have had lots of connection from past to the present.

2. **Title:** The Hmong and the Communist Party of Thailand: A Transnational, Transcultural, and Gender Relations-Transforming Experience.  
   **Location:** LTC 216  
   **Presenters:** Ian G. Baird, Department of Geography, University of Wisconsin-Madison

**Abstract**

Beginning in the 1960s, many Hmong people in Thailand aligned themselves with the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT). By the 1970s a large proportion of the Hmong population in Thailand had joined the struggle, and most of the CPT “liberated areas” were located in mountainous areas populated by Hmong people. In this paper I argue that from the very beginning, until the CPT’s rapid decline in the 1980s, Hmong involvement in the CPT was transnational, transcultural and transformative with regard to gender relations.

The first Hmong Thai to join the CPT was recruited in neighboring Laos when he was visiting. Other Hmong in Thailand heard about the CPT from listening to radio broadcasts in Hmong language from Laos. Many of the early CPT recruits traveled from their homes in Thailand for political and military training in northern Laos. Most Hmong CPT recruits first learned to speak, read and write Thai language, not Lao language, in Laos. Hmong CPT also first started to interact with other Thais, including those from northeastern and southern Thailand, and Chinese Thais from Bangkok. Later, some deemed to have particular potential studied in China, or in Vietnam for specific military training. Some Hmong people with the CPT sent their children to study in northern Laos and later southern China. Crucially, Hmong gender relations were altered significantly as a result of Hmong involvement in the CPT. New opportunities for women was one of the things that convinced many young Hmong women to support the CPT.

   **Location:** LTC 217  
   **Presenter:** James F. Lewis, Bethel University

**Abstract**

There are on-going changes to the contemporary conversion movement to Christianity among the Hmong of Vietnam’s Northern Mountainous Region (NMR) since 1987. Taking place within the brief scope of only 30 years, religious change among the 1.2 million highland Hmong in Vietnam’s fourteen provinces has resulted in some 330,000 declaring they have exchanged many traditional beliefs and practices for faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. They have embraced substantially the same faith as Vietnam’s historic Tin Lanh (Good News) Church, which first came to
Vietnam in 1911, one of six officially approved religions. It is reasonable to claim that a mass movement of this magnitude among a homogeneous ethnicity which has embraced a radically different religion has no parallel in recent history anywhere in the world when considering raw numbers, speed of spread, and scope of acceptance. This complex story includes global influences, societal dynamics, inter- and intra-clan tensions, civic stability, national security, religious freedom and international politics. But, the argument is first and foremost a story about religious change brought about by choices made by individuals for reasons that were to them compelling and life improving while beingbacklighted by broader dynamics attended to by other scholars. This is not to deny the societal dimensions or any of the other perspectives that shed light on it. But it is to suggest that there would be no story if it were not for the fact Hmong individuals, leaders of families and clans across the NRM extending even to surrounding states, have rejected centuries of traditional religious beliefs and practices to embrace the historical Evangelical message of the Christian faith. The topic will be discussed in the broader context of the history of religion. The history of Hmong Christianity is, like history itself, a story of change. This change is more than a matter of “conversion”, though that may be the most dramatic way of treating it. “Conversion” can mean many things including a fixed, permanent, final, static and completed reality. “Religious change” signifies a dynamic, through-time, non-static process. It may be slow and steady or abrupt and contentious broadly impacting culture, politics, and society. The Hmong experience is best interpreted as “change” as it invites us to follow the process of this remarkable movement from uncertain beginnings, to belonging to a world-wide Evangelical expansionist religion totally outside the field of its history and consciousness.

4. Title: Hmong Identity in Europe  
Location: LTC 218  
Presenter: Tian Shi, Katholieke Universiteit, Leuven, Belgium.

Abstract

This paper focuses Hmong refugees resettlement in European countries, especially how young generations use social media to narrate their everyday experience, memory, and identity. Currently, 15,000 Hmong people live in France, in addition to almost 80 in Germany and 30-40 in Netherlands. Based on half a year fieldwork conducted in France, Germany and Netherlands, this examination focuses on how young Hmong understand themselves, express their emotions and identity both online and offline. For better understanding, I also collect archives, documents, and family albums to map the fragments of history. By framing the research around an analysis of social media interaction from a cross-national perspective, this paper investigates how hmong people use social media to present themselves and to what extent social media has an impact on communication flow and empowerment. Moreover, this paper discusses the emergence of a de- and re-territorialized identity among Hmong people in Europe. This paper also explores how the Hmong diaspora contributes to a global hmong/Miao identity. In sum, this paper proposes Iterative narrative model (INM) to understand the dynamics of ethnic identity and solidarity.

LUNCH | 12:45 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. Buenger Education Center

The Center for Hmong Studies is opened during lunch for those who want to tour it. The Center for Hmong Studies houses a library with several hundred books, DVDs, CDs, files, and historical documents and is host to the We Are Hmong Minnesota Exhibit along with others. The Center is next to the Campus Chapel.

Session III | 2:05 pm – 3:05 pm

1. Title: The Construction of National Territory and the Diaspora of Hmong People in the Early Qing Dynasty.  
Location: LTC 214/215  
Presenter: Huang Xiurong, Southwest University, Chongqing, China  
Abstract

Hmong is a subgroup of the Miao People, and they are indigenous to China. Hmong people began to migrate to Southeast Asian countries in 1800s, such as Vietnam and Laos. When the Vietnam War was over in 1975, some Hmong Lao began to disperse to the west countries as refugee, and the United States has accepted most of Hmong Lao refugee. The diaspora of Hmong people in the world was related to the construction of national territory in the early Qing dynasty. In the 18th -19th century, the actual territory that controlled by the Qing central government has
doubled and redoubled, which was the stress response of Qing Dynasty in the face of western colonial power, and also was the result of sinicization of Non-Han groups in the southwest of China. In the process of sinicization of ethnic groups who lived in the southwest frontier, the Qing central government has used two kinds of ways, one is military conquest, and the other is cultural enlightenment. The military conquest mainly focused on the Raw Miao who had never been civilized in the border area between Hunan province and Guizhou province, an area where two Miao rebellions took place. After the Qing central government suppressed these two rebellions, some of the Miao moved into the northwest area of Guangxi Province and the southeast area of Yunnan Province. Some of the Miao people lived there until they were forced to migrate to Southeast Asia. This was the beginning of the international migration of the Hmong in the 18th century.

5. **Title: A technical explanation of the Hmong tones.**
   **Location:** LTC 216
   **Presenter:** Cho Ly, Fresno State University

   **Abstract**

   Hmong language is among the languages that have the most tones in the world. As a consequence, it is very challenging to teach these tones to Hmong or non-Hmong learners. Traditional methods use different melodies that are more or less efficient. This presentation is the result of several years of reflection on how the tones have been created by missionaries, presented by researchers, and taught by teachers. It aims at explaining the tones with a more technological point of view, using graphics and numbers. It will give a better view on how to pronounce a tone like D, which usually is quite confusing to learners because of its similarity with the V tone, and make the difference between short tones and long tones. Even though Hmong people pronounce them every day, just a few are aware of the length of the tones. Finally, these explanations will demonstrate how the inventors of Hmong RPA have developed a quite pedagogical melody to teach the tones. It is believed that such technical explanations will allow teachers of Hmong to better explain the tones to their students and will allow students to learn the tones more successfully.

6. **Title:** Preserving Hmong Culture and Language: Fifteen Years of Qualitative Research.
   **Location:** LTC 218
   **Presenter:** Sally Baas, Concordia University, St. Paul.

   **Abstract**

   This presentation has as its basis: many Hmong students do not speak their Hmong heritage language; many do not know their historical cultural expertise. (Spiritual medical healing, conducting ceremonies, creating arts and crafts, and native language literacy); many Hmong youth do not have a strong ethnic self-identity; many Hmong children in the United States do not acquire English in an effective manner causing a lack of educational achievement. Additionally, there is a tremendous need for helping to build strong ethnic identity, resiliency, leadership, and strong academic achievement for Hmong students. For 15 years, the Hmong Culture and Language Program at Concordia University, St. Paul, has sought to address these needs and has worked both to preserve the Hmong culture and language through storytelling, gardening and the arts, and to plant the seeds of higher education through the summer Building Cultural Bridges Camp and the year around Saturday program. Data and stories from students, staff and the community will be shared which point to successes and challenges in this unique program which has served over 12,000 PK-12th grade attendees, youth, community leaders, and staff. Research points to student language use, satisfaction with the program, the impact of mentoring by youth leaders, individual student success stories, family and community support, as well as the challenges which programs such as these face with fiscal sustainability over decades of existence, yet strive to continue to respond to community student needs and to preserve Hmong culture, language, and identity.

7. **Film Showing and Discussion:** The Hmong and the Secret War: The Hmong American Story.
   **Location:** LTC 219
   **Presenter:** Lar Yang, Yang Design & Valley PBS

   **Abstract**

   “The Hmong and the Secret War is a powerful documentary and a vital contribution to our understanding of ourselves as Americans, this chapter of the Vietnam War, and the brave and resilient Hmong Americans. Any person interested in Hmong culture, twentieth century American history, refugee experiences, or simply the resilience of the human spirit
needs to see this film. It filled me with admiration, sadness, and pride. Part cultural history, part survival and war story—this powerful film is a triumph and a gift to the world.” - Lee Herrick, English Professor (Fresno City College & Sierra Nevada College Low-Residency MFA program) and Fresno Poet Laureate Emeritus (2015-2017)

Session IV | 3:05 pm – 4:05 pm

1. **Title:** *Measuring Formal Intelligence in the Informal Learner: A Case Study of Hmong American Students and Cognitive Assessment.*  
   **Location:** LTC 213  
   **Presenter:** Carl Romstad, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities  
   Zha Blong Xiong, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

   **Abstract**

   The purpose of this study was to illustrate the impracticality of using mainstream formalized methods of intellectual assessments to assess Hmong American children, who came from an informal learning environment. One hundred and fifty-four Hmong American students, ages 5-18, and 51 Caucasian students, ages 5-14, were assessed using the Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children – Second Edition (KABC-II), along with 46 Hmong American students, ages 7-14, who were assessed using the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children – Fifth Edition (WISC-V). Results showed that Hmong American students scored one standard deviation below the national mean on both the KABC-II and the WISC-V. These low scores were observed from samples of kindergarteners, kindergarten through 3rd grade, and students in the upper-level grades compared to a sample of Caucasian students from the same area. Some implications and future research directions are discussed.

2. **Title:** *Negotiating Two Cultural Worlds: The Development of Career Aspirations.*  
   **Location:** LTC 214/215  
   **Presenters:** Luangchee Xiong, California State University, Stanislaus.

   **Abstract**

   The opportunity for self-discovery is relatively new to Hmong women whose traditional role has been to remain at home. Through the voices of five Hmong women enrolled at Merced College during 2017, this study sought to understand how contemporary Hmong American women negotiated modern and traditional values to engage in formal education and select their careers. Four themes emerged from the data analysis: Restriction was a salient cultural practice within the Hmong family, the loss of identity and agency, education as a search for freedom, and career selection as a turning point. As a whole, these themes represent the process of self-affirmation that young Hmong women experience as they distance themselves from the family context to build an autonomous life style. Participants talked about the experiences of physical, emotional, and intellectual restrictions that are constitutive of the cultural practices in multiple Hmong families. Although the experiences of restriction engendered the loss of individuality and autonomous decision making, these young Hmong women found pathways for self-expression and achievement through education. Participation in education provided these Hmong women with a different outlook on traditional gender roles and career opportunities. The participants’ selection of careers became a turning point that encouraged them to reexamine who they were and who they could become. Participants emphasized that Hmong culture is both challenged and preserved by the actions and decisions of family members. These young women were both innovators and carriers of Hmong cultural traditions that found new opportunities of expression in the United States.

3. **Title:** *Hmong Cultural Identities, Love Styles and Relationship Satisfaction: A Structural Equation Modeling Approach.*  
   **Location:** LTC: 216  
   **Presenter:** Lang Lee Lee, California State University Fullerton

   **Abstract**

   The current study investigates Hmong individual’s cultural identity in relation to love styles/components and relationship satisfaction. This study is the first to examine culture, romantic attitudes, and relationship satisfaction simultaneously in a structural equation model. A total of 235 (34 males and 201 female) Hmong participants completed an online survey. The study examines two models which that are predictive of relationship satisfaction. Model I lays the groundwork wherein Hmong and American identity is predictive of the love, romantic obsession,
and practical friendship love styles, which in turn predict relationship satisfaction. The final model shows that the love component is highly predictive of relationship satisfaction. Using a Hmong population, the study demonstrates that cultural identity is influential in their romantic attitudes and relationship satisfaction.

4. Title: Yang Thao Tou and the Lao-Hmong Communists: Memories of a Revolutionary Nationalist Hero.
   Location: LTC 217
   Presenter: Mai Na M. Lee, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

   Abstract

   The role of the Hmong in the communist revolutionary struggle for independence remains unarticulated in the historical records even though the current Communist Lao state recognizes Hmong contributions by constructing monuments for individual Hmong and by according the descendants of Hmong Communist leaders high honors in their governing system. This paper examines the memory works among the Lao-Hmong surrounding the personhood of Yang Thao Tou, a highly decorated revolutionary nationalist leader in Laos who was also the important nexus between the Pathet Lao and Ho Chi Minh’s Viet Minh. Analyzing the historical genesis of how and why Thao Tou rallied one third of the Hmong population of Laos on to the Communist side, this paper argues that while Thao Tou's biographer, his nephew, re-centers Thao Tou’s alliance with the Communist as stemming from his own Marxist-Leninist ideological bent, Thao Tou’s decision to move to the leftist side of the political divide is actually much more complex, and may have stemmed more from personal and strategic reasons—perhaps it may even be deeply rooted in Hmong social structure. This analysis, nevertheless, should not detract from his heroism as a revolutionary nationalist hero on the left, but rather should add to our broader understanding of the Lao and Vietnamese Communist movements and political factionalism in Laos during the revolution. Moreover, this paper seeks to deepen the understanding of how the Hmong are co-opting memory works to advance their political agendas in Laos today.

5. Title: Demystifying Hmong Shamanism: Practice and Use by Hmong Americans Across the Lifespan
   Location: LTC 218
   Presenter: Linda A. Gerdner

   Abstract

   Historically, the Hmong people of Laos practiced a combination of animism and ancestor worship. Hmong Americans are heterogeneous and have been influenced by other religions, such as Christianity. However, within the overall culture, the traditional spiritual beliefs have survived over time despite changes in geographic location. For these persons, shamanism plays a key role. As practicing shamans advance in age they identify the importance of documenting their legacy for future generations. The published book, Demystifying Hmong Shamanism: Practice and use by Hmong Americans Across the Lifespan, is the culmination of working in close collaboration with Hmong shamans and other members of the Hmong American community over 10 years. The author attended 22 ceremonies conducted by different shamans (3=female, 9=male). A range of case examples represent not only the initiation and maintenance of the shaman’s practice but a variety of ceremonies performed to promote spiritual health and well-being across the life span and health/illness continuum. Ceremonies were performed in Minnesota and Wisconsin, along with one in rural Laos. When possible the care recipient was followed over time. While shamanic ceremonies have basic similarities, individual ceremonies vary based on overall purpose, personal needs of the recipient, and practice of the individual shaman. Case examples are described in rich detail. This presentation provides an overview of this landmark publication. Hmong shamanism provides believers with a mechanism to promote spiritual identity, support core cultural values, foster interdependence, provide continuity through tradition, bring order to chaos, promote spiritual and psychological well-being, and uphold social conduct.

Final Plenary Session | 4:30 pm – 5:30 pm
Final Plenary Session

Title: The J. Vinton Lawrence Collection: Overview and description of research potential.
Location: Buetow Music Auditorium
Presenters:
- Megan Johnson-Saylor, Concordia University, St. Paul
- Paul Hillmer, Concordia University, St. Paul

Abstract

James Vinton (“Vint”) Lawrence was a Princeton Art History major who was recruited by the CIA and sent to Laos in February 1962 because he spoke French. When the Geneva Agreements were signed later that year, Lawrence and Tony Poe were the only two Americans who remained at Long Tieng, in violation of the agreement, while the rest of the operation moved across the border to Thailand. Lawrence lived with General Vang Pao, serving as a constant companion and sounding board. (As Roger Warner has written, Vang Pao considered Bill Lair an older brother and Vint Lawrence a younger one.) Living in a jungle in isolation from the outside world for nearly two years, Lawrence in many ways served as the conduit between the Hmong and the US. Given the amount of time he spent with them, Lawrence became an amateur anthropologist and folklorist, asking numerous Hmong leaders and villagers to help him understand their culture. After two tours in Laos, Lawrence was told he would not be allowed to return for a third (to save him from being killed or “going native”—that is, so sympathizing with the Hmong that he might never return).

Mr. Lawrence died of acute myeloid leukemia in April of 2016. His wife, the highly respected journalist Anne Garrels, donated all of his Laos-related effects to Concordia University. This presentation will introduce scholars and any other interested parties to the extensive collection, including three large albums of photographs, about 6000 slides taken by photographer John Willheim, tapes of Hmong sharing folk tales and singing songs, and perhaps of greatest potential interest, Lawrence’s CIA reports. In addition to providing an overview of its contents, the presenters will discuss potential research topics the collection will support.

Closing and Evaluation | 5:30 pm

Please remember to turn in your evaluation after the final plenary session/conference.

THANK YOU FOR COMING, AND HAVE A SAFE TRIP HOME!

Honoring the past, interpreting the present, and enriching the future.
WE ARE HMONG MINNESOTA  
Curated by Lee Pao Xiong  
The Center for Hmong Studies

If you missed the *We Are Hmong Minnesota* exhibit at the Minnesota History Center, it's still not too late. You can still view some of it at the Center for Hmong Studies. After the exhibit closed in January 2016, the Minnesota Historical Society donated the various panels to the Center for Hmong Studies at Concordia University. Combined with the Center's enormous collection of textiles, photographs, and other artifacts, the exhibit is now up once again for public viewing.

**Location:** The Center for Hmong Studies is located at 1245 Carroll Avenue. We are in the former President’s house, next to the campus Chapel.

Kou Yang, Ed.D., MSW.  
Professor Emeritus  
California State University, Stanislaus

**Biography Synopsis**

A Fulbright Scholar and Sasakawa Fellow, Kou Yang is Professor Emeritus of Ethnic Studies, California State University, Stanislaus. With an extensive publication record on Hmong Diaspora, history and culture, the Hmong American history, Lao culture, and the American experiences of Indochinese refugees, he has written more than 20 essays appeared in widely-consulted peer-reviewed journals such as the Journal of Asian American Studies; Ethnic Studies Review; Asian Pacific Migration Journal; Hmong Studies Journal; Miao Research Journal, Journal of Guizhou University for Nationalities; and Journal of Hubei Institute for Nationalities. In addition, he has contributed chapters to nine books, and is co-editor of "Diversity within Diaspora: Hmong Americans in the Twenty-First Century", University of Hawaii Press (2013). He is the author of “Laos and Its Expatriates in the United States,” PublishAmerica (2013), and “The Making of Hmong America: Forty Years after the Secret War,” Lexington Books (2017). He also has two self-published books: “根连万里情依依” (2015), loosely translated as "Root Connection from Ten Thousand Miles (published in China and in Chinese), and “The Hmong and their Odyssey” (2016).

Dr. Kou Yang's early works include collections of poems, Hmong Knowledge and Wisdom, and Hmong Folk Stories and Traditional Songs. Some of his poems have appeared in Haiv Hmoob, a magazine in Hmong language, and Paj Ntaub Voice, a Hmong literary journal. He is often asked to join a Hmong writer group in their poetry reading events.

Additional works included his news articles and editorial pieces to more than a dozen different newspapers and media outlets such as: The deadly, horrible mess we made still plagues Indochina (2015), 40 Years After the Vietnam War: celebrating the contributions of Indochinese refugees to the USA (2015), and President Obama’s Historic Visit to Laos came at the Perfect Time (2016).

Since 1986, Professor Kou Yang has added a critical international component to the academic field research and discipline. Dr. Yang spent six months studying and teaching in China. Since then, he has made additional 10 visits to China. In 2004, he led the California State University, Stanislaus’ Fulbright-Hay Group Project to China, and in 2009 he was instrumental in taking a group of international scholars on a post-conference tour of Guizhou, China. Since 2014, he has led three additional Hmong American delegations to visit the Hmong in China, including his delegation to the 2014 opening of the Hmong “Roots-Searching Monument in Sichuan. For research and leisure, he has travelled widely with visits to Australia, Austria, Canada, China (11 trips to China and has visited many places, including Tibet, Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang), Czech Republic, Germany, France, French Guiana, India, Italy, Hong Kong, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Monaco, Mongolia, Myanmar, Peru, Singapore, Switzerland, Thailand, and Vietnam.
To help with your evening dinner plans we have compiled a list of local restaurants near Concordia University. Each neighborhood offers their own unique collection of restaurants with an array of flavors, atmosphere and price.

Also note the restaurants marked with an *. As a conference attendee you will receive a discount of 10% off your total bill.

### Featured Restaurant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address &amp; Phone</th>
<th>Food Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Punch Pizza</td>
<td>704 Cleveland Ave S • St. Paul MN 55105 • 651.292.0444</td>
<td>Neapolitan Style Pizza</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Grand Ave Restaurants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address &amp; Phone</th>
<th>Food Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Saji Ya</td>
<td>695 Grand Ave • St. Paul MN 55105 • 651.292.0444</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Dixie’s on Grand</td>
<td>695 Grand Ave • St. Paul MN 55105 • 651.222.7345</td>
<td>American Southern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Café Latte</td>
<td>850 Grand Ave • St. Paul MN 55105 • 651.224.5687</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Salute Bar Americain</td>
<td>917 Grand Ave • St. Paul MN 55105 • 651.917.2345</td>
<td>French with American flavor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Pad Thai Restaurant</td>
<td>1681 Grand Ave • St. Paul MN 55105 • 651.690.1393</td>
<td>Thai</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Selby Ave Restaurants

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address &amp; Phone</th>
<th>Food Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Moscow on the Hill</td>
<td>371 Selby Ave • St. Paul MN 55102 • 651.291.1236</td>
<td>Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. W.A. Frost</td>
<td>374 Selby Ave • St. Paul MN 55102 • 651.224.5715</td>
<td>American Fine Dining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Fabulous Fern’s Bar</td>
<td>400 Selby Ave • St. Paul MN 55102 • 651.225.9414</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Mango Thai</td>
<td>610 Selby Ave • St. Paul MN 55102 • 651.291.1414</td>
<td>Thai</td>
</tr>
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### University Ave Restaurants

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address &amp; Phone</th>
<th>Food Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. King Thai</td>
<td>225 University Ave W • St. Paul MN 55103 • 651.237.4790</td>
<td>Asian All You Can Eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Bangkok Thai Deli</td>
<td>333 University Ave W • St. Paul MN • 651.237.4790</td>
<td>Thai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Tapestry</td>
<td>394 University Ave W • St. Paul MN 55103 • 651.290.2585</td>
<td>Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Little Szechuan</td>
<td>422 University Ave W • St. Paul MN 55103 • 651.222.1333</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Hoa Bien</td>
<td>1105 University Ave W • St. Paul MN 55103 • 651.647.1011</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Downtown Saint Paul Restaurants

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address &amp; Phone</th>
<th>Food Type</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The Saint Paul Grill</td>
<td>350 Market Street • St. Paul MN 55102 • 651.292.9292</td>
<td>American Fine Dining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Pazaluna</td>
<td>360 Saint Peter Street • St. Paul MN 55102 • 651.223.7000</td>
<td>Italian Fine Dining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Meritage</td>
<td>410 Saint Peter Street • St. Paul MN 55102 • 651.222.5670</td>
<td>French Fine Dining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sawatdee</td>
<td>486 Robert Street • St. Paul MN 55102 • 651.528.7106</td>
<td>Thai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Fuji Ya</td>
<td>465 Wabasha Street N • St. Paul MN 55102 • 651.310.0111</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Mickey’s Dinner</td>
<td>1950 7th Street • St. Paul MN 55102 • 651.698.8387</td>
<td>All American Classic</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### 7th Street Restaurants

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<th>Food Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The Liffy</td>
<td>175 7th Street W • St. Paul MN 55102 • 651.556.1420</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Cossetta: Pizzeria</td>
<td>211 7th Street W • St. Paul MN 55102 • 651.222.3476</td>
<td>Italian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Downtowner Grill</td>
<td>253 7th Street W • St. Paul MN 55102 • 651.228.9500</td>
<td>American Fine Dining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Tom Reid’s</td>
<td>258 7th Street W • St. Paul MN 55102 • 651.292.9916</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Supattra Thai</td>
<td>967 7th Street W • St. Paul MN 55102 • 651.222.5859</td>
<td>Thai</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This conference could not be possible without the commitment of our volunteers. Thank you!

Volunteers

Bert Lee
Sally Baas
David L. Mennicke
Cate Vermeland
Debra Beilke
Paul Hillmer
Louisa Vang
CHUSA

Many thanks also to our Conference Abstract Review Committee

Dr. Sally Baas, Concordia University
Dr. Paul Hillmer, Concordia University
Dr. Mary Ann Yang, Concordia University

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