

# Courtney T. Wittekind

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## POSITIONS & APPOINTMENTS

- 2023- **Assistant Professor of Anthropology**, Purdue University  
Department of Anthropology, College of Liberal Arts, *on leave AY2023-2024*
- 2023-24 **Postdoctoral Associate in Southeast Asian Studies**, Yale University  
Council on Southeast Asia, MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies &  
Department of Anthropology
- 2022-23 **Postdoctoral Associate in Agrarian Studies**, Yale University  
Program in Agrarian Studies, MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies
- S2021 **Wang Gungwu Visiting Fellow**, ISEAS  
Institute for Southeast Asian Studies-Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore

## EDUCATION

- 2016-22 **PhD in Social Anthropology, Harvard University**  
Dissertation: "*Time to Change: Speculating on Transition in Yangon's New City*"  
Defended August 2022  
Advised by Ajantha Subramanian (Chair), Michael Herzfeld, Jean Comaroff & Erik  
Harms (external, Yale University)  
*Secondary field in Critical Media Practice*  
Co-chaired by Lucien Castaing-Taylor & Joana Pimenta
- 2018 **Master of Arts (AM) in Social Anthropology** (*in passing*), Harvard University
- 2014-16 **MPhil in Social Anthropology, University of Oxford**  
Thesis: *Claiming Space in Myanmar's Transition: Entangled Geographies of Southern Shan State*  
Graduated with distinction in July 2016 as a Rhodes Scholar (Ohio & St Antony's 2014)  
and member of the Programme on Modern Burma/Myanmar Studies
- 2009-13 **BHA (Bachelor of Humanities and Arts), Carnegie Mellon University**  
Anthropology & Fine Art, BXA Intercollege Degree Program  
Graduated with University, Inter-college, College of Fine Arts, and Dietrich Honors

## PUBLICATIONS

### Books

*Speculating on Transition: Imagining Urban Futures in Myanmar's New City* (in preparation)

### Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

- 2024      **“Take our Land:’ Fronts, Falsity, and Fake Farmers in a City-to-Come”**  
*Cultural Anthropology: Journal of the Society for Cultural Anthropology*, 39(1): 91-117.  
<https://doi.org/10.14506/ca39.1.05>
- 2023      **“The Virtual Reality of Land: Navigating Scams and Security in Myanmar’s Digital Land Market,”** with Dr. Hilary Faxon. Digital Transformations in Global Land, Housing and Property, a special issue of *Environment and Planning D: Society & Space* (OnlineFirst)  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/02637758231205958>
- 2022      **“Networks of Speculation: Making Land Markets on Myanmar Facebook,”** with Dr. Hilary Faxon, *Antipode: A Radical Journal of Geography* 55(2): 643-665.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12896>
- 2018      **“Road Plans and Planned Roads: Entangled Geographies, Spatiotemporal Frames, and Territorial Claims-making in Myanmar’s Southern Shan State.”**  
*Journal of Burma Studies* 22(2): 273-319.  
<https://doi.org/10.1353/jbs.2018.0014>
- 2018      **“Rethinking Land and Property in a ‘Transitioning’ Myanmar: Representations of Isolation, Neglect, and Natural Decline”** with Elizabeth Rhoads. *Journal of Burma Studies* 22(2): 171-213.  
<https://doi.org/10.1353/jbs.2018.0014>
- 2016      **“A Space ‘In-Between:’ Liminality and Landscape on the Thailand-Myanmar Border.”** *Visual Anthropology Review* 32(2), 180-191.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/var.12109>

### Manuscripts under Review

**“Build the New City as Fast as Possible:’ Demands for Development and Speculation as Subsistence in Peri-Urban Yangon,”** Post-Agrarian Questions: Land Futures and Surprise in the Countryside, a special issue of *Antipode: A Radical Journal of Geography*.

### Manuscripts in Preparation

**“Revolutionary Investments: Dreams & Schemes in Post-Coup Myanmar,”** *New Media & Society*.

Book Reviews

- 2022 **Provisional “Patchworks” along the Tracks.** *Political Geography*, Review forum of **Citizen Designs: City-Making and Democracy in Thailand** by Eli Elinoff.  
<https://authors.elsevier.com/a/1fbnl3Qu6ubp27>
- 2018 Review of **Border Capitalism, Disrupted: Precarity and Struggle in a Southeast Asian Industrial Zone** by Stephen Campbell. *Tea Circle*.  
<https://teacircleoxford.com/2018/07/09/border-capitalism-disrupted/>  
被扰动的“边境资本主义”：一个东南亚工业园中的不稳定性与抗争 (in translation via the Institute for International and Area Studies, Tsinghua University)
- 2017 Review of **Buddhism, Politics, and Political Thought in Myanmar** by Matthew J. Walton. *Tea Circle*.  
<https://teacircleoxford.com/2017/06/02/buddhism-politics-and-political-thought>
- 2017 Review of **War and Peace in the Borderlands of Myanmar: The Kachin Ceasefire**, edited by Mandy Sadan. *Tea Circle*.  
<https://teacircleoxford.com/2017/03/02/war-and-peace/>

Select Non-refereed Articles and Public Scholarship

- 2022 **“မကွေးရေနံမြေနေရာများတွင် ကိုလိုနီနယ်ချဲ့ဆန့်ကျင်ရေး ရုပ်ရှင်ရိုက်ကူးခြင်း မကွေးတွင်ရိုက်ကူးထားသည့် Saeed Taji Farouky ၏ ‘လောင်မီးတစ်ထောင်’”** [“A Thousand Fires:” Anti-Imperialist Filmmaking in Magway’s Oilfields]. *Tea Circle*.  
<https://teacircleoxford.com/interview/https-teacircleoxford-com-2021-12-07-a-thousand-fires-anti-imperialist-filmmaking-in-magways-oilfields-mmversion>
- 2022 **“Infrastructures of Urban Life Yet-to-Come”** China Made Project Briefs, no. 12.  
<https://chinamadeproject.net/china-made-brief-12/>
- 2021 **“Yangon’s ‘New City.’ 仰光的“新城市”** China Made Project Briefs, no. 9.  
<https://chinamadeproject.net/china-made-brief-9/>
- 2021 **“Can Myanmar’s Protesters Succeed?”** *Foreign Policy*.  
<https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/02/10/myanmar-coup-protests-civil-disobedience-movement/>
- 2021 **“Crisis upon Crisis: Fighting Covid-19 Becomes a Political Struggle after Myanmar’s Military Coup.”** ISEAS Perspective, No. 16.  
[https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/ISEAS\\_Perspective\\_2021\\_67.pdf](https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/ISEAS_Perspective_2021_67.pdf)
- 2021 **“Sino-Myanmar Ties: ‘Pauk Phaw’ Relationship or For China’s Benefit?”** ISEAS Fulcrum, May 24, 2021.  
<https://fulcrum.sg/sino-myanmar-ties-pauk-phaw-relationship-or-for-chinas-benefit/>
- 2021 **“Military Rule in Myanmar: Parsing the Propaganda”** ISEAS Fulcrum, May 24,

2021. Available at: <https://fulcrum.sg/military-rule-in-myanmar-parsing-the-propaganda/>
- 2021      **“Learning from ‘Social Punishment:’ Neutrality in Myanmar is No Longer Tenable”** ISEAS Fulcrum, Apr. 16, 2021.  
<https://fulcrum.sg/learning-from-social-punishment-neutrality-in-myanmar-is-no-longer-tenable/>
- 2017      **“On Myanmar’s Periphery, Alternative Perspectives of the Political Transition.”** *The Myanmar Times*, Jan. 13, 2017.  
<http://www.mmmtimes.com/index.php/opinion/24548-on-myanmar-s-periphery-alternative-perspectives-of-the-political-transition.html>
- 2015      **“An Uncertain ‘Progress.’”** *Tea Circle*. Nov. 7, 2015.  
<https://teacircleoxford.com/2015/11/07/an-uncertain-progress>

#### Foreign Language Publications

- 2014      Editorial Assistant, *P. Monin’s P. Monin*. Pansodan Reader Series. Yangon: Pansodan Books.
- 2014      Co-Editor, *Burmese Jottings*. Yangon: Pansodan Books.
- 2012-13   **“Tea House,”** a column by Burmese Poet & Author Khet Mar. *Sampsonia Way Magazine*.  
<http://www.sampsoniaway.org/category/khet-mar/>

### GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

#### Major Grants and Fellowships

- 2023-26   **Collaborative Humanities Postdoctoral Fellowship in Urban Humanities**, Vanderbilt University College of Arts & Science, *declined*
- 2023-24   **Weatherhead Scholars Fellowship**, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, *declined*
- 2022      **International Development Research Centre Grant, Knowledge for Democracy – Myanmar**, Government of Canada (Co-investigator with Dr. Matthew J. Walton & Siew Han Yeo, University of Toronto Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy) (CA\$449,355)  
*“Supporting Myanmar Voices in Media and Education”*
- 2021      **Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad (DDRA)**, US Department of Education (US\$65,308), *declined*
- 2021      **International Development Research Centre Grant, Knowledge for Democracy – Myanmar**, Government of Canada (Co-investigator with Dr. Matthew J. Walton & Siew Han Yeo, University of Toronto Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy) (CA\$65,000)
- 2020      **NSF Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant (DDRIG)**, National Science Foundation, Division of Social and Economic Sciences (US\$10,503)

- 2019 **Wenner-Gren Dissertation Fieldwork Grant**, Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research (US\$8,301)
- 2019 **Blakemore Freeman Fellowship** for Advanced Language Study (Burmese), Blakemore Foundation (US\$48,000)
- 2019 **Frederick Sheldon Traveling Fellowship**, Committee on General Scholarships, Harvard University (US\$28,000)
- 2019 **CAORC-Inya Fellowship**, Council of American Overseas Research Centers & US Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (US\$4,400)
- 2016-21 **NSF Graduate Research Fellowship** (GRFP), National Science Foundation (US\$105,000)
- 2014 **Rhodes Scholarship**, The Rhodes Trust/University of Oxford (Ohio & St Antony's 2014) (US\$150,000+)
- 2014 **Marshall Scholarship**, Marshall Aid Commemoration Commission, *declined* (US\$100,000+)
- 2011 **Boren Scholarship** for less-commonly taught language study (Burmese), NSEP Critical Language Program, US Department of State (US\$27,000)

#### Honors and Awards

- 2022 **Critical Urban Anthropology Association Graduate Student Paper Prize** (Honorable Mention) for the best papers selected by the CUAA on issues of urban life, space and place, poverty and homelessness, infrastructure, urban governance, social movements, and transnational and global intersections.  
*Awarded to "Take our Land: Fronts, Falsity, and Fake Farmers in a City-to-Come."*
- 2022 **John Okell Paper Prize** awarded by the Burma Studies Group Executive Committee to the strongest essay on a Burma/Myanmar related topic by an early career researcher.  
*Awarded to "Take our Land: Fronts, Falsity, and Fake Farmers in a City-to-Come."*

#### Internal (Purdue University)

- 2023 **ASPIRE Research Enhancement Grant**, College of Liberal Arts

#### Internal (Harvard University)

- 2022 **Teschmacher Fund Summer Research Grant**, Department of Anthropology
- 2021 **Mid-Dissertation Research Grant**, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs
- 2021 **Harvard Mellon Urban Initiative Research Grant**,  
*"Urban Development, Social Media, and Speculation in Peri-Urban Yangon"*
- 2020-21 **Harvard Mellon Urban Initiative Doctoral Fellowship**
- 2019 **Pre-Dissertation Research Grant**, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs
- 2017/19 **Mellon Foundation Student Grant**, Critical Media Practice, Harvard University
- 2017/19 **William E. Braden Fund**, Southeast Asia Grants, Asia Center, Harvard University

2016 **Presidential Scholarship**, President's Office, Harvard University

Internal (University of Oxford)

2016 **School of Anthropology Doctoral Bursary**, University of Oxford, *declined*  
 2015/16 **Modern Burmese Studies Research Grant**, St Antony's, University of Oxford  
 2016 **Sir Peter Elworthy Research Grant**, The Rhodes Trust, University of Oxford

Internal (Carnegie Mellon University)

2013 **Andrew Carnegie Society Scholar**, ACS, Carnegie Mellon University  
 2012 **Fall Semester Inductee**, Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society, Carnegie Mellon University

## PRESENTATIONS

Invited Presentations

2023 **"Is it Solid? Speculation on 'New City' Futures in (Post)authoritarian Myanmar,"**  
 Program in Agrarian Studies, MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies, Yale  
 University

2023 **"Real Farmers, Dream Cities: Agrarian Change, Demonstration, and the Politics  
 of Visibility in Myanmar,"** Southeast Asian Studies Seminar Series, MacMillan Center  
 for International and Area Studies, Yale University

2022 Invited Speaker, Food for Thought Series, Environmental Humanities Program, Yale  
 University

2022 **"Digital Speculation in Peri-urban Yangon's 'New City' Land Markets,"** From  
 One to Zero: Critical Approaches to Digital Technology and Media Workshop. Harvard  
 Anthropology & the Berkman Center for Internet and Society

2022 **"Watching and Waiting: Development, Deferral and Desire in Myanmar's New  
 Yangon City,"** Center for Southeast Asian Studies, University of Wisconsin, Madison

2021 **"Chinese Investment in Southeast Asia: Lessons from Yangon's 'New City,'"**  
 Research Institute on Contemporary Southeast Asia (CNRS-IRASEC) (Bangkok,  
 Thailand & Paris, France)

2021 **"Infrastructural Investment in Peri-urban Yangon: From 'Post-Transition' to  
 'Post-Coup,'"** Institute for Southeast Asian Studies-Yusof Ishak Institute (ISEAS)  
 (Singapore)

2018 **Brown University Southeast Asia Studies Symposium**, The Ethics of Cultural and  
 Ethnographic Fieldwork in the Global South

Invited Workshops

2023 **"Land Futures: Grounds for Concern in Global Development,"** Global  
 Development Section, University of Copenhagen

2023 **“Digital Transformations in Global Land, Housing, and Property,”** University of Sydney & University of California, Berkeley (Boulder, Colorado)

Panels and Roundtables Organized

- 2022 **“Myanmar Networked: Burma Studies Across Scale, Place, and Time”**  
Association for Asian Studies 2023 Annual Meeting (Boston, MA), Chair, with co-organizer: Nicole Tu-Maung
- 2022 **“Infrastructures of Urban Life Yet to Come”** Association for Asian Studies 2022 Annual Meeting; Double Panel - Session I: Modeling the Global City, Session II: Time & Temporality (Honolulu, HI), Co-organizer: Dr. Jessica DiCarlo
- 2021 **“Scales of Contention: Regulation, Surveillance, and Activism in the City”** 2021 International Burma Studies Conference, Northern Illinois University (DeKalb, IL)
- 2021 **“Digital Research Methods in Post-Coup Myanmar”** Collaboration with UC Berkeley and the National University of Singapore’s Asia Research Institute
- 2017/18 **International Burma/Myanmar Studies, Graduate Student Workshop,** Programme on Modern Burma/Myanmar Studies, St. Antony’s College, University of Oxford (Oxford, United Kingdom)

Selected Conference Papers

- 2023 **“Betting on the Future: Spatial Fluidity and Temporal Marginalization in Southwest Yangon's New City.”** AAA 122<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting, Panel: “Living Uncertainty: Frameworks of Agency, Possibility, and Injury,” (Toronto, Canada)
- 2022 **“Frustrated Future-making in a City of Dreams: ‘Revolution’ and its Reversals in Peri-Urban Yangon.”** AAA 121<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, Panel: “The Shapes of Myanmar’s Revolution: Ruptured Futures, Returns to the Past, Ruins of the Present,” (Seattle, WA)
- 2022 **“Infrastructures of Urban Life Yet to Come.”** Association for Asian Studies 2022 Annual Meeting; Double Panel - Session I: Modeling the Global City, Session II: Time & Temporality (Honolulu, HI), Co-organizer: Dr. Jessica DiCarlo
- 2021 **“As Fast as Possible: Speculation, Speed, and Mediation in a ‘New City.’** Third China Made Workshop: The Social Life of Chinese Infrastructures in Southeast Asia (University of Colorado Boulder, National University of Singapore & the University of Toronto), Chairs: Darren Byler
- 2021 **“Surprised in the City: Unexpected and Unplanned Urbanism in Cities across Asia.”** AAS 2021 Annual Meeting, Roundtable (Seattle, WA), Co-Chairs: Dr. Erik Harms and Dr. Michael Herzfeld
- 2021 **“As Fast as Possible: Speculation, Speed, and Mediation in a ‘New City.’”** AAA 120<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, Panel: “Modernity’s Resilience? Infrastructure, Intermediaries, and Anachronistic Futures,” (Baltimore, MA), Discussant: Dr. Jerry Zee and co-sponsored by the American Ethnological Society & the Anthropology and Environment Society.

- 2018 **“Transition’ at the Margins: Popular Politics, Perceptibility, and Time in Peri-Urban Myanmar (Burma).”** AAA 117<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, Panel: “At the Edge of Political Form: Dispossession, Popular Politics, and Political Subjectivity in Southern Asia” (San Jose, CA), Discussant: Dr. Aihwa Ong
- 2017 **“Grounding Transition: Contradiction and ‘Cold Blood’ in Southern Shan State.”** Oxford-SOAS Graduate Student Workshop, “New Directions in Research on Myanmar” (School of Oriental and African Studies University of Oxford, United Kingdom)
- 2017 **“Road Plans and Planned Roads: Geographies of Southern Shan State.”** Sponsored Panel - Burma Studies Group, “Re-working the State: Geographies of Power in Colonial and Postcolonial Burma,” Association for Asian Studies Annual Conference (University of Toronto, Canada)
- 2016 **“Talking Transition: Spiritual, Spectral, and Speculative Narratives.”** 12<sup>th</sup> International Burma Studies Conference, “Traditions and Challenges” (Northern Illinois University, United States)
- 2016 **“Claiming Space in Myanmar’s Transition: Contested Geographies of Southern Shan State.”** 5<sup>th</sup> Southeast Asia Studies Symposium, “Human and Environmental Welfare in Southeast Asia,” Project Southeast Asia (University of Oxford, UK)
- 2015 **“Blurred Borders, Shifting Selves: Liminality and Landscape on the Thailand-Myanmar Border.”** EuroSEAS 2015, European Association for Southeast Asian Studies (University of Vienna, Austria).

## TEACHING & OUTREACH

### Lead Instructor

- S2024 HIST964: **Topics in the Environmental Humanities**, Graduate Certificate in Environmental Humanities Program, Yale University (co-taught with Sunil Amrith)
- S2022 EXP-0001-S: **Collaborative Media-Making for Social Justice**, Experimental College, Tufts University  
*Experimental College Visiting Lecturer Program*
- 2021/23 FILM101: **Community-Based Film as Art & Research: A Practice Workshop**, Parami University (Yangon, Myanmar; virtual)
- S2019 CDP04: **A Critical Survey of Visual and Media Anthropology**, Contemporary Documentary Practice Program, Myanmar Deitta Center for Documentary Arts (6-week module; Yangon, Myanmar)

### Teaching Fellow

- S2022 ANTHRO 98B: **Junior Tutorial for Thesis Writers in Anthropology**. Teaching Fellow, Department of Anthropology, Harvard University; 2 sections



*Certificate of Distinction in Teaching from the Derek Bok Center, Harvard University*

- S2021 **Researching (with) Social Media.** The American Association of Geographers. Intensive Workshop with Hilary Faxon, selected for *Graduate Student Learning Series on Methods during a Pandemic*
- F2020 GENED 1093: **Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Cares? Reimagining Global Health.** Teaching Fellow for Arthur Kleinman, Paul Farmer, Anne Becker, and Salmaan Keshavjee; Program in General Education, Harvard University; 2 sections  
*Certificate of Distinction in Teaching from the Derek Bok Center, Harvard University*
- AY18-19 **Undergraduate Senior Thesis Advisor**, Department of Anthropology, Harvard University
- 2016-22 **Non-Resident Undergraduate Advisor**, Scholarships and Fellowships Team, Mather House, Harvard University

#### Curriculum Development

- 2019 National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Summer Institute, **“Colonial Experiences and Their Legacies in Southeast Asia,”** Asian Studies Development Program at The East-West Center, University of Hawai‘i  
Course Designed: *Southeast Asia through its Outcasts: Prisoners, Prostitutes & Provocateurs*

#### **RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES**

- 2015-22 **Co-Founder, Editor & Contributor, *Tea Circle: A Forum for New Perspectives on Burma/Myanmar, Program on Modern Burma Studies***, St Antony’s College, University of Oxford (Oxford, UK)  
Available at: <https://teacirclemyanmar.com>  
While at the University of Oxford, I co-founded the online forum *Tea Circle*— a site that publishes new and emerging research alongside non-academic perspectives on Burma/Myanmar. As co-founders, Dr. Matthew J. Walton and I, along with a team of 12 editors, have published over 100 articles yearly, drawing over 10,000 views per month. In 2021-2022, *Tea Circle* received over \$465,000 CAD of funding from the Government of Canada’s International Development Research Centre to expand our operations.
- 2014 **Editor and Translator, *Pansodan Art and Culture Journal & Pansodan Books*** (Yangon, Myanmar)  
Working with Pansodan Gallery and Pansodan Books over a period of eight months, I assisted with the editing, drafting, and translating of two books aimed at Burmese language learners while also editing and writing for the Gallery’s quarterly Art and Culture Journal.
- 2013 **Assistant Field Officer, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Myanmar (Mawlamyine, Myanmar)**  
As an Assistant Field Officer and short-term consultant in the UNHCR Mawlamyine Field Office, I conducted field research and designed survey tools to assist in the Office’s

work toward identifying, tracking, and assisting internally displaced and returnee populations in Myanmar's Southeastern region.

### LANGUAGE TRAINING

**Burmese/Myanmar:** Advanced (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), 2009-present

**Thai:** Elementary-level coursework, 2012

### MEMBERSHIP & SERVICE

- 2023-24 Member, Steering Committee, Environmental Humanities Program, Yale University
- 2022-23 Joint Organizer, Council on Southeast Asia Studies (CSEAS) Brownbag, Yale University
- 2022-23 Joint Organizer, Southeast Asia Conference, Harvard University Asia Center
- 2021-23 Member, "Digital Transformations in Property and Development," Social Science Matrix at the University of California, Berkeley (Co-led by Desiree Fields & Hilary O. Faxon)
- 2018-22 Affiliate, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University
- 2023- Reviewer, *American Anthropologist*
- 2023- Reviewer, *Environment and Planning D: Society & Space*
- 2020- Reviewer, *Geopolitics*
- 2020- Reviewer, *GeoJournal*
- 2019- Reviewer, *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review*