

1) Panel title: **The creation of efficacy in Southeast Asian healing practices.**

2) Conveners: Elizabeth Elliott (PhD Candidate, Anthropology, UCL) and Giulio Ongaro (PhD Candidate, Anthropology, LSE).

Emails: elizabeth.elliott.11@ucl.ac.uk; g.ongaro@lse.ac.uk

3) Panel description:

The efficacy of ‘traditional’ healing practices has recently re-emerged as a central topic of discussion in medical anthropology. Previously examined in ethnographic material from areas such as Amazonia, China or India, the debate has very seldom drawn from analyses of Southeast Asian healing practices. Especially in rural contexts, these are still widespread and involve the use of medicinal plants and other products, therapeutic ritual, manual therapies and mantras or magic. Rather than tackling the question of how efficacy is measured, the present panel instead brings together papers that examine how efficacy is intentionally created in therapeutic encounters within several healing traditions of mainland Southeast Asia; both lowland scriptural traditions and upland, orally transmitted ones. In each of these cases, the papers will tackle the following questions: what are the key elements of the therapy considered to be effective, and through what kind of process is this efficacy created and delivered? What divergence in understanding of the production of efficacy, if any, is there between practitioner and patient? And, more comparatively speaking, what parallels do we find between ideas of efficacy and the overall cosmology of the society in question? Drawing from a range of approaches, such as phenomenology, anthropological theories of ritual and “placebo science”, these ‘emic’ perspectives will be subsequently considered in comparison to the researcher’s etic point of view of efficacy.

4) Double session.

5) Discussant: Prof. Elisabeth Hsu (Department of Anthropology, University of Oxford) and/or Prof. David Napier (Department of Anthropology, UCL).