

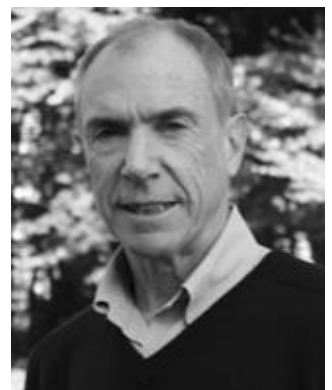


## Comparative Queer Southeast Asian Studies

Guest lecture by Prof. Ward Keeler (University of Texas at Austin)  
Wednesday, June 26, 2019 • 6:00 pm • Großer Hörsaal, Oxfordstr. 15

Ongoing social relations in lowland Southeast Asian societies are based on hierarchical understandings, which is to say that they are predicated on mutual interdependence through difference. This point helps make sense both of Southeast Asia's long-standing gender binarism and of the relative tolerance historically afforded people of non-normative gender and sexuality. Difference, in this view, *always* makes a difference, although some flexibility as to who exhibits which contrasting traits is allowed. LGBT activists mounting campaigns against legal discrimination insist that non-normative gender and sexuality should make *no* difference. Yet many queer Southeast Asians prefer activities, such as drag shows, in which people compete to *distinguish* themselves—to instate differences in standing—over efforts to win similar rights for everyone. A growing backlash against queer people appears to stem from their demands for recognition without discrimination: the reprisals are against claims that queerness should make no difference.

Ward Keeler is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Texas at Austin. He has conducted extensive fieldwork in Java and Bali (Indonesia) and in Burma, focusing on performance, gender, language, and hierarchy in these societies. His publications include monographs on Javanese shadow plays and on Burmese Buddhism and gender, a textbook for the Javanese language, and the translation of an Indonesian novel. As a fellow at the Hanse-Wissenschaftskolleg in Delmenhorst he is currently researching shifting aesthetic preferences in Southeast Asia.



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