

Philip Thai

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Academic Appointment

Northeastern University, 2013–present
Assistant Professor, Department of History

Education

Stanford University, 2013
Ph.D. in History
Committee: Matthew H. Sommer (chair), Kären Wigen, Wen-hsin Yeh
Fields: Late Imperial and Modern China, Early Modern and Modern Japan, Political Science

University of California, Berkeley, 2000
B.A. in History with Highest Honors, Minor in Asian Studies
Advisor: Frederic E. Wakeman Jr.

Publications

Books

China's War on Smuggling: Law, Economic Life, and the Making of the Modern State, 1842–1965.
Columbia University Press, Study of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, 2018.
<https://cup.columbia.edu/book/a/9780231185844>

Articles and Book Chapters

- “Smuggling and Legal Pluralism on the China Coast: The Rise and Demise of the Joint Investigation Rules, 1864–1934,” in Clara Wing-chung Ho, Ricardo K. S. Mak, and Yue-him Tam, eds., *Voyages, Migration, Migration, and the Maritime World: On China's Global Historical Role*: 165–85. De Gruyter, 2018.
<https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110587685>
- “Introduction,” in “Binding Maritime China: Control, Evasion, and Interloping” (special issue guest editor with Eugenio Menegon and Xing Hang), *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Cultural Review* 7.1 (2018), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1353/ach.2018.0000>
- “Old Menace in New China: Coastal Smuggling, Illicit Markets, and Symbiotic Economies in the Early People's Republic,” *Modern Asian Studies* 51.5 (2017): 1561–97.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X16000688>
- “Law, Sovereignty, and the War on Smuggling in Coastal China, 1928–1937,” *Law and History Review* 34.1 (2016): 75–114. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0738248015000668> Translated as: “Falü, zhuquan yu Zhongguo yanhai jisi zhi zhan” 法律、主权与中国沿海的缉私之战, *Falü shi yiping* 法律史译评 (Legal history studies) 5 (2017): 333–62.

Book Reviews and Review Essays

Review of Yukiko Koga, *Inheritance of Loss: The Political Economy of Redemption after Empire*. *Enterprise and Society* (forthcoming).

Review of Shellen Xiao Wu, *Empires of Coal: Fueling China's Entry into the Modern World Order, 1860–1920*. *The Economic History Review* 69:3 (2016): 1048–49. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ehr.12412>

“Japan in Maritime Asia: Security, Commerce, and Sovereignty,” review essay of Noell Wilson, *Defensive Positions: The Politics of Maritime Security in Tokugawa Japan*, and Catherine L. Phipps, *Empires on the Waterfront: Japan's Ports and Power, 1858–1899*. *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Cultural Review* 17 (2015): 123–30. <https://cross-currents.berkeley.edu/e-journal/issue-17/hipps-wilson>

Review of Pär K. Cassel, *Grounds of Judgment: Extraterritoriality and Imperial Power in Nineteenth-Century China and Japan*. *Journal of Asian Studies* 74.2 (2015): 459–60. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911815000133>

Review of Michael Kwass, *Contraband: Louis Mandrin and the Making of a Global Underground*. *Enterprise and Society* 15.3 (2014): 593–95. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1467222700016001>

Review of Wenkai He, *Paths toward the Modern Fiscal State: England, Japan, and China*. *Journal of Asian Studies* 75.4 (2013): 975–77. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911813001241>

Other Publications

“Tariffs and Unintended Consequences: The Case of China's War on Smuggling.” Columbia University Press Blog (2018). <http://www.cupblog.org/2018/07/19/tariffs-and-unintended-consequences-the-case-of-chinas-war-on-smuggling/>

“Overseas Chinese, Coastal Smuggling, and Legal Pluralism in the People's Republic of China.” H-Net World Legal History Blog (2016). <https://networks.h-net.org/node/16794/blog/world-legal-history-blog/142600/overseas-chinese-coastal-smuggling-and-legal>

Fellowships and Awards

Post-doctoral

National Central Library (Taiwan) Center for Chinese Studies (CCS) Research Grant, 2018

Northeastern University Humanities Center Faculty Fellowship, 2018–19

Association for Asian Studies (AAS) First Book Subvention Award, 2017

Northeastern University Richard and Arlene Offenberg History Faculty Fund, 2017

Northeastern University College of Social Sciences and Humanities (CSSH) Dean's Research Development Initiative Award, 2016

Northeastern University Asian Studies Research Award, 2016

Henry Luce Foundation/American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) China Studies Postdoctoral Fellowship, 2015–16

J. Willard Hurst Summer Institute in Legal History Institute Fellow, 2015

Yale University Council on East Asian Studies (CEAS) Postdoctoral Fellowship, 2015–16 (declined)

Yale University Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library Fellowship, 2015 (declined)

Northeastern University Asian Studies Curriculum Award, 2015

National Central Library (Taiwan) Center for Chinese Studies (CCS) Research Grant, 2014

Law and Society Association (LSA) Career Workshop Grant, 2014

Northeastern University Humanities Center Program Award, 2014

Pre-doctoral

Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation Doctoral Fellowship, 2012–13

Freeman Spogli Institute (FSI) China Studies Dissertation Grant, 2012–13

Stanford University Department of History Weter Fellowship, 2012

Freeman Spogli Institute (FSI) China Studies Dissertation Grant, 2011–12

Stanford University Department of History Distinguished Scholar, 2009–10

Stanford University Department of History Graduate Student Fellowship, 2006–11

Business History Conference (BHC) Oxford Journals Doctoral Colloquium in Business History Grant, 2011

Social Science Research Council (SSRC) International Dissertation Research Fellowship (IDRF), 2010

Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad (DDRA) Fellowship, 2009–10

Stanford University Graduate School of Humanities and Sciences Graduate Research Opportunity (GRO) Fellowship, 2009

Blakemore-Freeman Fellowship for Advanced Asian Language Study, 2006–07

University of California Berkeley Department of History Highest Honors, 2000

Berkeley Undergraduate Journal Best Paper Prize for “The Quiet Revolution and the ICAC: The Search for Legitimacy in Hong Kong in the 60s and 70s,” 2000

University of California President’s Undergraduate Research Fellowship, 1999–2000

Interviews

New Books Network (NBn), East Asian Studies Podcast (2018). <https://newbooksnetwork.com/philip-thai-chinas-war-on-smuggling-law-economic-life-and-the-making-of-the-modern-state-1842-1965-columbia-up-2018/>

Columbia University, Weatherhead East Asian Institute (WEAI) Q&A (2018).

<http://weai.columbia.edu/weai-author-qa-philip-thai-chinas-war-on-smuggling/>

Northeastern University, Breaking History Podcast (2016).

<https://breakinghistorypodcast.com/2016/10/16/episode-7-history-of-smuggling-in-china-with-philip-thai/>

Select Presentations

Invited Lectures

“Trans-Asian Encounters and China’s War on Smuggling,” Harvard University Asia Center, 2018

“Legal Shades of Gray: Coastal Trafficking, Underground Markets, and Symbiotic Economies in Socialist China,” Legal History Colloquium, Vanderbilt University, 2016

“Old Menace in New China: Coastal Smuggling and Illicit Markets under Early Communist Rule,” Institute for Chinese Studies, Ohio State University (OSU), 2015

“Illicit Economies on the Chinese Coast: An Historical Perspective,” D'Amore-McKim School of Business, Northeastern University, 2014

“Falü, guojia jianshe yu Zhongguo yanhai jisi zhi zhan” 法律、國家建設與中國沿海緝私之戰, (Law, state-building, and the war on smuggling in coastal China”) (in Chinese), National Central Library (Taiwan), 2014

“The War on Smuggling in Coastal China: Law, Policing, and State-Building,” Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies, Harvard University, 2013

Conferences

“Fire Sale: Retailing, Marketing, and Conceptualizing Property Insurance in Modern China,” Association for Asian Studies (AAS) Annual Conference, 2018

“Risky Business: Insurance and the Emergence of Financial Capitalism in Modern China,” American Society for Legal History (ASLH) Annual Conference, 2017

Roundtable on *Futility of Law and Development: China and the Dangers of Exporting American Law*, International Society for Chinese Legal History (ISCLH) Conference, 2017

“Gendered Dimensions of Smuggling on the China Coast, 1928–1937,” Association for Asian Studies (AAS) Annual Conference, 2017

Roundtable on “Economic Life in Chinese History: New Research Directions,” New England Region Association for Asian Studies (NEAAS) Annual Conference, 2017

“Smuggling and Legal Pluralism on the China Coast: The Rise and Demise of the Joint Investigation Rules,” American Society for Legal History (ASLH) Annual Conference, 2016

“Old Menace in New China: Coastal Smuggling and Illicit Markets in the Early People’s Republic,” Association for Asian Studies (AAS) Annual Conference, 2016

“Smuggling and Legal Pluralism on the China Coast: The Rise and Demise of the Joint Investigation Rules,” “Voyages, Migration and the Maritime Silk Road: An International Symposium on China’s Role in Global History,” Hong Kong Baptist University, 2015

“Smuggler, Peddler, Patriot, Spy: Illicit Coastal Trade in the Early People’s Republic,” “Doing Business across Borders,” Hagley Museum and Library, 2015

“‘One Complementing the Other’: Legal Reforms, Illicit Businesses, and the War on Smuggling,” “Globalism and the Law in Historical Perspective,” Legal History Consortium Conference, Indiana University Maurer School of Law, 2015

“Binding Maritime China: Control, Evasion, and Interloping,” Co-organized with Boston University and Brandeis University, 2015

“Smuggling and Interdiction along Coastal China,” Association for Asian Studies (AAS) Annual Conference, 2013

“Legal Sovereignty and the War on Smuggling in Coastal China,” American Historical Association (AHA) Annual Conference, 2013

“Law, Business, and the War on Smuggling in Coastal China,” Business History Conference (BHC), 2012

“Law, State-Building, and the War on Smuggling in Coastal China,” Association for Asian Studies (AAS) Annual Conference, 2012

Workshops

“Anti-Smuggling Campaigns and the Expansion of State Authority on the China Coast,” “Maritime Asia: Securitization of the China Seas in the 19th and 20th Centuries,” Institute of East Asian Studies (IEAS), University of California, Berkeley, 2018

“Things Fall Apart? State Re-Building and New Geographies of Coastal Smuggling in Civil War China,” “New Perspectives on the Chinese Civil War,” Council on East Asian Studies (CEAS), Yale University, 2016

- “Unscrupulous Merchants, Illicit Joint Ventures, and the Business of Smuggling,” “Rethinking Business History in Modern China, 1839–1937,” Institute of Chinese Studies, Freie Universität Berlin, 2014
- “Smuggling is a Business’: Regulations, Sovereignty, and Markets,” “Rethinking the Market in Modern China,” Joint Center for History and Economics, Harvard University, 2014
- “Law, State-Building, and the War on Smuggling in Coastal China,” “International Workshop on Chinese Legal History, Culture, and Modernity,” Columbia University, 2012

Discussant and Chair

- “Smuggling, Violence and State in East Asian Maritime World,” Association for Asian Studies (AAS) Annual Conference, 2019
- “Reading Legal Texts in Chinese History: Sources, Materiality, and Authority,” American Society for Legal History (ASLH) Annual Conference, 2018
- “The Chinese Question: Gold Rushes and Global Politics,” talk by Mae Ngai (Columbia University), Harvard University Asia Center, 2017
- “Revolution at the Canteen: Food and Labor Politics in Industrial China, 1910s–1950s,” talk by Seung-joon Lee (National University of Singapore), Harvard-Yenching Institute, 2014
- “Riots, Rights, and Radicals: Social Movements and Memory,” Northeastern University World History Conference, 2014
- “Comparative Studies of Tax Policy Regimes,” Social Science History Association (SSHA) Annual Conference, 2013

Courses Taught

- ASNS/HIST 1150: East Asian Studies
- CLTR/HIST 1500: Modern Chinese History and Culture
- HIST 2308: Law, Justice, and Society in Modern China
- HIST 2360: History of Capitalism in East Asia
- HIST 3330: The Global Cold War

Academic Service

- Executive Committee, Northeastern University Asian Studies Program, 2014–present
- Chair of Communications Committee, International Society for Chinese Law and History (ISCLH), 2014–present
- Member, Department of History Faculty Advisory Committee on Salaries (FACS), 2015
- Coordinator, Stanford University Japanese Imperial Maps as Sources for East Asian History Conference, 2011
- Member, Stanford University East Asian History Graduate Admissions Committee, 2011 and 2009
- Lead Organizer, University of California-Stanford University Chinese History Conference, 2006

Other Education

- Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), 2009
- Yale-China Chinese Language Center (CLC)
- Tsinghua University, Beijing, China, 2006–07
- Inter-University Program (IUP) for Advanced Chinese Language Studies

University of California, Berkeley Extension, 2001–02

Certification in Corporate Finance with Distinction

Peking University, Beijing, China, 1998–99

University of California Education Abroad Program (EAP)

Languages

Mandarin: Advanced fluency

Cantonese: Native speaker

Japanese: Reading knowledge

Technical Skills

Geographic Information System (GIS), SPSS, and Excel (advanced statistical functions)

Oracle Certified Programmer for the Java 2 Platform and coding experience in Java

Passed Level I Certified Financial Analyst (CFA) Exam

Professional Affiliations

American Historical Association (AHA)

American Society for Legal History (ASLH)

Association for Asian Studies (AAS)

Business History Conference (BHC)

Harvard University Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies Associate in Research

Historical Society for Twentieth-Century China (HSTCC)

International Society for Chinese Law and History (ISCLH)

Law and Society Association (LSA)

References

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