

**CONSORTIUM OF ASIAN & AFRICAN STUDIES (CAAS)**

Columbia University, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Inalco University, Leiden University, Shanghai University of International Studies, SOAS-University of London, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

**INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM**

**Inalco, Paris - December 15 & 16, 2026**

**AREA STUDIES, INTERDISCIPLINARITY AND AFRICAN AND ASIAN STUDIES: NEW PERSPECTIVES**

**CONTEXT AND RATIONALE**

Area Studies have long occupied a distinctive position within the academic landscape, bridging disciplinary boundaries to generate comprehensive understandings of specific world regions. Emerging in the mid-twentieth century at the intersection of history, anthropology, linguistics, and political science, area studies have been key to understanding Asian and African societies. Recent global transformations — social, economic, technological, environmental, and epistemological — have prompted a rethinking of Area studies and opened the field to new perspectives.

This conference seeks to examine the evolving nature of Area Studies in the disciplines that constitute them, with particular attention to African, Middle-Eastern and Asian<sup>1</sup> Studies, at a moment when globalization, digital connectivity, migration and shifting geopolitical dynamics demand fresh analytical frameworks.

The interdisciplinary character of Area Studies represents both its greatest strength and its most persistent challenge. By bringing together historians, sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, linguists, economists, educationists, and scholars from diverse fields, Area Studies enables holistic, interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary perspectives that transcend disciplinary silos.

However, this interdisciplinarity raises fundamental questions: How do we navigate between depth of disciplinary expertise and breadth of regional knowledge? What methodologies best serve the study of complex, interconnected societies? How can Area Studies maintain analytical rigor while remaining responsive to the lived realities of the regions they examine? More importantly, can they provide new conceptual frameworks as disciplines do, or are they doomed to apply tools invented elsewhere? What would be the best way to foster creativity in Area Studies?

**THEMATIC FOCUS**

This symposium invites scholars to explore new perspectives emerging within African, Middle Eastern and Asian Studies, examining how these fields are being reconfigured by contemporary challenges. We particularly welcome contributions addressing disciplinary or cross-disciplinary perspectives, such as knowledge production issues, intellectual exchanges in the Global South, digital humanities and regional studies, indigenous epistemologies and methodologies, or innovative pedagogical approaches and practices in Area Studies.

Contributions can also be situated within the more “mainstream” academic fields of

*History, historiography*

*Geography, urban studies*

*Philosophy*

*Religious studies*

*Sociology, anthropology*

*Linguistics, sociolinguistics*

*Education*

*Literature*

*Political science & international relations*



<sup>1</sup> Broadly taken as Eastern Asia, Southeast Asia, India and Southern Asia, and Central Asia

**Keynote speakers:**

(tba: 2 keynote speakers)

**SUBMISSION PROCEDURE & TIMELINE**

**PAPER or PANEL proposals should be sent *in PDF* to**  
**[vp-international@inalco.fr](mailto:vp-international@inalco.fr) & [sophie.babault@inalco.fr](mailto:sophie.babault@inalco.fr)**

**\* Submission deadline: April 30, 2026**

**\* Acceptance notifications: June 5, 2026**

PAPER proposals should not exceed 1 page (references incl.).

PANELS should not exceed 4 speakers and panel proposals should briefly present each speaker's talk.

\*\*\*

Each paper will be allotted **20 minutes**, followed by **10 minutes for questions and discussion**.

Panels will be allotted 1 hour in total.

There will be no poster presentations.

## Organizing Committee

Prof. Gilles Forlot

[vp-international@inalco.fr](mailto:vp-international@inalco.fr)

Prof. Sophie Babault

[Sophie.babault@inalco.fr](mailto:Sophie.babault@inalco.fr)

Partner CAAS Coordinators

## Scientific committee of the Symposium:

### *A local scientific committee at Inalco University includes:*

- Prof. George Alao (Yoruba studies; language education)
- Prof. Frédéric Wang (Chinese studies; philosophy)
- Dr. Shahzaman Haque (Urdu studies; sociolinguistics)
- Prof. Rima Sleiman (Modern Arabic Literature)
- Dr. Sébastien Colin (Chinese studies; geography)
- Prof. Bernard Thomann (Japanese studies; history)
- Dr. Jean Bazantay (Japanese studies; linguistics)
- Dr. Céline Peigné (South African Studies; Language education & sociolinguistics)
- Dr Jing Guo (Chinese studies; language education)
- Prof. Il-Il Yatziv-Malibert (Modern Hebrew language & linguistics)
- Prof. Catherine Capdeville (Chinese studies; anthropology)
- Prof. Jérôme Samuel (Indonesian and Malaysian studies; language and sociolinguistics)
- Dr. Hui-yeon Kim (Korean Studies; sociology)
- Dr. Laurent Coumel (Russian studies; history)
- Dr. Chloé Paberz (Korean studies; anthropology)
- Dr. Amir Moghani (Persian studies; literature; translation)
- Dr. Mylène Hardy (Chinese studies; information and communication studies)
- Prof. Elisa Carandina (Modern and contemporary Hebrew literature; gender studies)
- Dr. David Serfass (Chinese studies; history)
- Dr. Huy Linh Dao (Vietnamese studies; linguistics)
- Prof. Laetitia Bucaille (Arab studies; sociology)
- Dr. Mériam Cheikh (Arab studies; anthropology)
- Prof. Delphine Allès (Indonesian studies; Political sciences & international relations)
- Dr. Anne Viguier (Indian studies; history)
- Dr. Nicolas Elias (Turkish studies; anthropology)
- Dr. Harit Joshi (Indian studies; literature)
- Dr. Sophie Hohmann (Central Asian & Caucasus studies; sociology)
- Prof. Isabelle Konuma (Japanese studies; Japanese law; gender studies)
- Prof. Zhe Ji (Chinese studies; sociology and religious studies)
- Dr. Dominique Samson (Russian and Siberian Studies; Arctic anthropology)