

## GSGS Workshop Report

### New and Critical Perspectives on Global Studies

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The international workshop jointly conducted by Sophia and Sogang Universities succeeded in its explicit, as well as implicit, goals. The event was, ostensibly, a mechanism for the presentation of, and the receipt of critique and commentary upon, ongoing and forthcoming doctoral research. However, the unwritten but understood second purpose of the collaboration was to forge bonds of mutual affection and interest amongst presenters, mentors, and attendees.

The event allowed for the formal presentation of ongoing research efforts from the doctoral students of both universities' contingents. These ranged from the preliminary plans of academic endeavor from those in their first year in a Global Studies doctoral program, to almost completed dissertations, from those intending to graduate within the year. The diversity of topics, methods, and personal predilections in evidence during the scheduled talk period, drew attention to the varied potential applications of the Global Studies episteme, while simultaneously elucidating patterns of commonality. For example, the presentations of David Laichtman and Seunghoon Woo, the Sogang student organizer, respectively concerned Japanese arctolatry and Korean economic diplomacy. Though topically disparate, we both incorporated archival work, journalistic evidence, a mixing of qualitative *and* quantitative approaches, and a penchant for processing fragmented evidence inductively, so as to arrive at meta-level conclusions. A series of faculty discussants offered commentary at both the midpoint and the end of the presenter slate. The proffered advice did include notes for individual speakers' points of consideration and possible areas of improvement. Yet the discussants' remarks ever linked these particular instances to a higher level of discourse. Sogang's Dr. Hong, for example, advised all the speakers that a mixed-methods approach was not necessarily

detractive, but could, if done rigorously, beget a paradigm of interdisciplinary connection. Similarly, Sophia Professor Emeritus Dr. Wank, expounded at length on the requirement for all the presenters to hew unto a *global* gaze, and how adopting such a perspective delimited the potential audience for our work.

Beyond the utility for ongoing projects, this event allowed those present to feel part of an academic community. Global Studies remains a young field, and scholars operating therewithin are apt to feel isolated, or to question the wisdom of choosing a less-understood degree path. By filling a room with those of like mind, participants were able to feel connected to a scholastic group *beyond* the bounds of individual institutions. We voiced similar concerns and offered wry condolences to each other on our folly. However, what began as gallows humor, by the conclusion not just of the event proper, but following a multi-day itinerary of meals, outings, and fraternization, had become modest but real hints of hope. For instance, members of the group exhibited the Liberal Arts graduate student's propensity for considering all sights and events through a critical humanities phoropter. Thus, during an ascent of Tokyo's Mount Takao on the day following the presentations, inspired by the forested surroundings, Sogang's Lea Middell and Sophia's Sinwa Naw fell to discussing issues of ecology as they related to their own shared topic of divided states. Across regional foci and between national education systems, a connection was evident. The end of the expedition involved promises of sharing contact information, future communication, and a reciprocal visit.