



*“The Provinces Elect Governments,
Bangkok Overthrows Them”:
Urbanity, Class, and Post-Democracy in Thailand*

A Public Lecture presented by Associate Professor Jim Glassman,
University of British Columbia

Urban social movements are often associated with what are considered “progressive” causes, and most activists involved in such movements are inclined to describe themselves in such terms. The Thai coup of September 2006 poses problems for any such easy identification. Though executed by the military, on behalf of royalist interests, the coup was supported by an array of primarily Bangkok-based and middle class groups, many of them associated with organizations such as NGOs and state enterprise unions. Although some of these groups claimed anti-neoliberal political orientations, their support for the coup effectively placed them on the side of forces opposed to quasi-Keynesian policies and in favor of specific forms of neo-liberalism—at least for Thai villagers. This paper explores this development by focusing on the Bangkok/up-country and urban/rural divisions in Thai politics—which, though socially constructed, have taken on political substance, in part because of their grounding in regionally differentiated class structures.

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1:30 pm

Senate Room

All Welcome

Jim Glassman is Associate Professor in the Department of Geography at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. His work focuses on development, industrial transformation, and political conflict in East and Southeast Asia, with emphasis on Thailand. He is the author of *Thailand at the Margins: Internationalization of the State and the Transformation of Labour* (published by Oxford University Press in 2004), and of *Bounding the Mekong: the Asian Development, Bank, China, and Thailand* (forthcoming from the University of Hawai'i Press). He is currently conducting research on the impact of war and geo-politics on the regionalization of Korean and Thai firms during the Cold War.