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Activism under Democratic Decline: Managing Uncertainty and Hedging to Survive

Department of Political and Social Change Seminar Series

Protest movements across the globe face daunting prospects amid mounting illiberalism. How do activists adapt? Drawing on cases from across Southeast Asia, we argue that what distinguishes contention under democratic decline is both repression and uncertainty, following experience of relatively greater openness. In such contexts, activists adopt hedging strategies – sectoral, scalar, spatial, and epistemic – that help mitigate risk, preserve social capital, and sustain mobilization.

Speaker

Meredith Weiss is Professor of Political Science in the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy at the University at Albany, SUNY, and founding director of the SUNY/CUNY Southeast Asia Consortium. She specializes in comparative politics with a focus on Southeast Asia, particularly Malaysia and Singapore. Her research addresses issues including social mobilization and civil society, identity, parties and elections, liberalization and illiberalization, and governance. Her most recent book is *Politics in a Pandemic: Governance and Crisis Management in Southeast Asia* (Cambridge, 2025).

Details

12:30–2:00 pm AEST, Tuesday, 27 October 2026

PSC Reading Room 4.27, Hedley Bull Building

Registration is not required for this in-person only seminar.

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and Social Change

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