

Resources for a Dialogue on Hmong Studies

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An Overview of Hmong Studies

An Overview of the Field

- A few academic institutions have started or are discussing the possibility of “Hmong Studies” Centers, but there is still no program in the U.S. at any college or university that has a Hmong Studies Major or even a Minor with even one or two tenured faculty who work in the area on staff as we find in several Asian American Studies and more recently Vietnamese Studies programs.
- Increasing numbers of scholarly works are being produced by persons of Hmong-origin, particularly professors and graduate students at American universities. Only about 10% of the publications in 3 earlier bibliographies published by U of Minnesota had Hmong-origin authors, while 132 of 536 (25%) of Hmong Studies publications published since 1996 cited in the Hmong Resource Center’s 1996-2004 annotated bibliography had at least one Hmong-origin author.

An Overview of Hmong Studies

What Should a Hmong Studies Program Look Like?

- A strong *community* component – links to Hmong community organizations, outreach to Hmong student groups on campus and the broader Hmong community and also work in multicultural education for the broader university and area community
- But equally important, a strong, *internal academic* component, a core of courses taught in a major or minor program by at least 2 or 3 affiliated tenured faculty from the college or university *itself*, along with adjunct professors and visiting scholars. The institutional academic component is very important for Hmong Studies to receive the scholarly respect it deserves relative to other programs in Asian American Studies, Vietnamese Studies, Korean Studies, Filipino Studies etc. that we find in several West Coast schools
- Hosting of conferences regional, national or international and scope
- Well organized study abroad programs with an academic focus, developed by credentialed faculty and tied to the program and college curriculum

An overview of recent work in Hmong Studies 1996-2006

- **Physical and Mental Health – 141 Works**
- **Literacy and Educational Adaptation – 97 Works**
- **Hmong History and Contemporary Affairs in China and Southeast Asia – 83 Works**
- **Hmong-American Families, Parenting and Gender Roles – 51 Works**
- **Settlement Patterns, Housing and Socio-economic Incorporation of the Hmong Diaspora – 44 Works**
- **The War in Laos and Refugee Resettlement Issues- 20 Works**
- **Traditional Hmong Culture and Religion – 19 Works**
- **Hmong Music and Storytelling/Embroidery – 18 Works**
- **Hmong Americans and Race Relations, The Law, and Political Incorporation – 18 Works**

An overview of recent work in Hmong Studies 1996-2006

- **Dictionaries, Bibliographies, Reference Works – 13 Works**
- **Cultural Maintenance and Adaptation in the Hmong Diaspora – 12 Works**
- **Hmong-American Cultural Arts (Analyses of Video and Literature) – 7 Works**
- **Hmong-American Fiction and Poetry - 6 Works**
- **Personal Narratives of Hmong-Americans – 6 Works**
- **Linguistic Studies of the Hmong Language – 4 Works**

Areas in Need of Increased Scholarly Attention in Hmong-American Studies

- Indepth studies of Hmong demographics and socioeconomic trends in communities across the United States from 2000 census data
- More Research on educational outcomes and acculturation (in terms of language use, test scores, graduation rates of the first generation of Hmong born and raised in the United States). This 2nd generation will be compared to the other immigrant children and youth born and raised in the United States including Mexican, Vietnamese, and Hispanic groups as well as other racial minorities.
- Investigation of gender differentials in educational attainment between young Hmong-American women and men. No comprehensive contemporary analysis of this issue has yet been published though anecdotes suggest enrollments and retention of Hmong-American women may exceed that of men in many educational institutions.

Areas in Need of Increased Scholarly Attention in Hmong-American Studies

- Works that examine the growing *social, political and cultural complexity and diversity* of the Hmong community in the United States and that explore generational, gender, and religious differences in views toward different issues. It is very misleading to make vast generalizations about a monolithic "Hmong community." The new Hmong refugees who have come to the U.S. from Wat Thamkrabok in Thailand in 2004 and 2005 will add to the complexity of the community considerably.
- An example of an issue(s) of in great need of scholarly analysis: a study of how *religious affiliation* (traditional Hmong religion/evangelical Christian etc.) *influences views* and divides the community's views toward proposed Hmong marriage (Mej Koob) legislation in Minnesota. Religious affiliation greatly influences views of segments of the community toward many social issues but this reality is almost completely missed by policymakers and many community members.

Areas in Need of Increased Scholarly Attention in Hmong-American Studies

- In-depth examinations of local level racial attitudes toward Hmong and racial discrimination (individual and institutional) against Hmong-Americans in the wake of the very negative and stereotyping media reporting of the tragic incident in Northern Wisconsin in November 2004.
- There is still a great need for a comprehensive and authoritative two-way Hmong-English/English Hmong dictionary

Research Resources – Library Collections and Archives

- Southeast Asian Archive, University of California at Irvine
<http://www.lib.uci.edu/libraries/collections/sea/sasian.html>
- Hmong Resource Center Library at the Hmong Cultural Center (Saint Paul, MN)
www.hmongcenter.org
- Hmong Studies Internet Resource Center (home to extensive online bibliographies and the full-text Hmong Studies Journal www.hmongstudies.org)
- Hmong Nationality Archives (Saint Paul, MN)(artifacts and out of print books)
www.hmongarchives.org

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