At the beginning of the 21st Century, relations with Asia have become crucial not only for the private, but also for the public sector. Economic, political and cultural relations between the West and the East are growing, and the need in our part of the West – the Nordic region – for solid knowledge about Asia, is also growing.

The present situation presents new opportunities for Asian studies within the Humanities and Social Sciences and, not least, a need for closer cooperation between the two. Unfortunately however, while our knowledge has become more useful and relevant to the wider society, many of us experience general budget cuts and difficulties in maintaining, not to speak of developing, our academic activities.

The Nordic Council of Ministers, the formal cooperation institution for the Nordic governments, has this year decided “to investigate the possibilities of creating a closer relationship between the Nordic Council of Ministers and China”. While the rise of China is clearly catching global and Nordic attention, the importance of other parts of Asia should not be underestimated. India is obviously of growing importance, and together with the East Asian countries it expresses interests in the Arctic. The ongoing diplomatic problems between Norway and China, and between Denmark and India, which would possibly be handled more easily in a Nordic frame, should also be considered.

These challenges and opportunities call for the further development of Nordic cooperation within research and studies focusing on Asian affairs. We therefore invite you to join the conference, Nordic Asian Studies in the 21st Century – Stocktaking for the Future.

The aim of the conference is twofold:

1. To gather colleagues from the Asian studies environments in all five Nordic countries to identify current tendencies and future prospect for Asian studies within the Humanities and the Social Sciences, as well as to identify Asia-relevant tendencies in academia outside these fields for future cooperation.

2. To invite people from the public and private sectors who engage with Asian partners. Through their presentations and in a dialogue with them, locate areas of common interest.
Keynote Speakers
The following speakers will inspire our proceedings:

- Pingtjin Thum, Visiting Fellow at Green Templeton College, University of Oxford; Research Associate at the Centre for Global History, University of Oxford; and coordinator of Project Southeast Asia
- Tansen Sen, Professor of History, City University New York (CUNY), Director of the Center for Global Asia at NYU Shanghai Campus.
- Jong-kun Choi, Professor and Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Political Science and International Studies, Yonsei University, Seoul
- Kerstin Sahlin, Professor, University of Uppsala, Secretary General of Humanities and Social Sciences, Swedish Research Council, Stockholm
- Ummu Salma Bava, Director, Europe Area Studies Programme, Professor of European Studies, Centre for European Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
- James Wertsch, Professor, Washington University in St. Louis
- Henning Kristoffersen, Public Affairs Director Asia, DNV·GL, Shanghai

Suggested topics for panels:

- Globalization and area studies, a contradiction in terms? Perspectives from Nordic Asian studies.
  - New regional opportunities in a globalized World?
  - A Nordic response to One Belt, One Road?
  - Nordic perspectives on Asia
- A stocktake of developments in cross-faculty cooperation:
  - Disciplinary strength and/or area insights
- Asia – Nordic academic collaboration: experiences from area studies and from the disciplines.
  - Student and staff exchange, Nordic and Asian experiences
  - Teaching Asian area studies in the Nordic countries
- Welfare for human security or for securing the market?
  - Life science and national politics: Low fertility and aging societies
  - Social engineering between ethics, politics and economy
  - Western ideals, challenges, visions and Asian reality
  - Mega-cities and urban landscapes: East-West perspectives on quality of life in the 21st Century
  - Comparative philosophy on quality of life
- Digital realities, Eastern and Western challenges and perspectives on freedom, censorship and on the “Fourth Industrial Revolution”.
  - National and global educational challenges and approaches in Asia and in the Nordic region
- Sustainability, climate change and the environment
  - Nordic-Asian collaboration in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals
  - Cross-regional learning
  - Engaged scholarship and transitions to sustainable societies

NB: the number of panels and session will be adjusted according to the number participants and their fields of interest.
In recent years, Asia observers have debated the distinctive role of cultural factors – history, language, religion and memory – in shaping Asia’s identity and institution building. Addressing this issue, the Fudan-European Center for China Studies will host a roundtable – “The Struggle for Normative Order in East Asia” – questioning if East Asia is functioning in the same way as European or Western theories might predict. Is there an Asian way of building regional institutions, despite the penetration of Western norms via globalization? Are there Asian norms defining the forms of government, social model and international order in the region?

This will be debated by James Wertsch from Washington University in St. Louis along with a colleague within the same field from Fudan University, Shanghai. Together they will engage the floor in a larger discussion on the topic.

Participation
Conference participation is open to scholars and doctoral candidates in the social sciences and humanities.
It is possible for a limited number of participants to attend the conference without presenting a paper, or to attend only the keynote speeches.

Conference Fee and Accommodation:
The conference fee for paper presenters is 250 Euro, which includes accommodation during the conference, as well as receptions, conference dinner and lunches. Accommodation will be provided at a hotel near the conference site. More information will follow on the conference website soon.

If you wish to attend the conference without presenting a paper the conference fee is 100 Euro and includes receptions, conference dinner and lunches.

Deadlines for Conference and PhD Course:
- 19 Sept 2016: Deadline for submitting abstract (maximum 300 words)
- 3 Oct 2016: Acceptance of abstracts by Academic Committee
- 20 Oct 2016: Deadline for submitting the full paper and paying the conference fee

Abstracts and full papers should be submitted by registering on the conference website where all practical information about the conference also will be available:

http://noasc2016.sciencesconf.org
Conference tag: #noasc2016
PhD Course
The conference will be combined with a PhD course where doctoral candidates will present and discuss their research projects with senior researchers as well as with fellow doctoral candidates. The first part of the course consists of active participation in the lectures and sessions that form the conference Nordic Asian Studies in the 21st Century – Stocktaking for the Future. The second part of the course will consist of individual written work, oral presentations and feedback from and discussions with teachers and course participants. Further there will be sessions on “Doing Fieldwork” and “Getting Published”, as well as an introduction to the online journal Asia in Focus which is published electronically by NIAS.

The 2016 NNC PhD course will focus on the academic and societal relevance of Asian studies. Taking the questions, problems, dilemmas and decisions of the individual research project as the point of departure the focus will be on clarifying processes of knowledge production in an inter-disciplinary and cross-cultural setting.

The course can be taken as a 7.5 ECTS credit course (to be approved by the individual student’s home university/institution). To receive the credits, doctoral students must attend the conference on November 7-9, the PhD course on November 10-11 (ECTS only given for full attendance!), submit and present a paper (max 10 pages), and give comments on a fellow PhD student’s paper.

Commentators at the PhD Course
Eva Hansson, University of Stockholm
James Wertsch, Washington University in St. Louis
Lau Blaxekjær, University of Torshavn
Chunrong Liu, Fudan-European Centre for China Studies
Geir Helgesen, NIAS - Nordic Institute of Asian Studies

Your presentation
You are expected to prepare and present a ten page text about your research in which you draw on and relate to relevant theories and readings.

What you write will of course depend on where you are in the research process:

1. If you are at the very beginning of defining your research question then you may choose to write about your considerations regarding the formulation of a researchable question.
2. For those who have come a bit further and who are searching for funds for their project, or have recently started a PhD project, you can present your research proposal as well as further reflections on the proposal.
3. If your project is well underway then you may choose to reflect on any aspects of the process of doing your project that you want to discuss at the course, preferably with a focus on its academic and societal relevance.

Regardless of where you are in the research process your text should relate to the overall theme of the conference and the current societal challenges in Asian studies.

Your text should not present and discuss your research findings in the format of a traditional academic text. The focus should be on reflections and discussions of the academic relevance of the project as well as its relevance for the wider society.
Importantly – the point is to discuss the aspects of your project that you find problematic and that you are struggling with, where you can benefit from a discussion. You may also have found interesting arguments in your project literature that you want to discuss, or perhaps you have found something that you want to contest or problematize based on your own research.

PhD candidates for whom the above does not apply or fit well with their current work, are invited to produce a more educational and academic jargon-free paper that would fit the expert column in a serious newspaper or magazine.

Suggested issues for such “op-eds” or feature article texts:
- Globalization promotes regionalization, how does it affect Asian Studies?
- Economic globalization decreases the room for national political manoeuvring, Eastern and Western experiences in a comparative perspective.
- The rise of Asia and the decline of the West: interconnected or mutually independent developments.
- A Nordic approach to Asia? Positive or negative perspectives?
- Asian studies and the public and private sectors: how to create synergies?
- The NNC consortium, a unique regional academic cooperation with great potential: how do we further develop and utilize this opportunity?

Fee and Accommodation for PhD Course
The fee for the conference including the PhD course is 300 Euro, which includes conference fee, accommodation, reception, lunches and dinner (according to the programme). Accommodation is provided for 4 nights from 7-11 November. More information on this will follow on the conference website shortly.

Steering committee for the conference and PhD workshop
Eva Hansson, University of Stockholm
Stein Kuhnle, University of Bergen
Stig Thøgersen, University of Aarhus
Lena Rydholm, Uppsala University
Lau Blaxekjær, University of Torshavn
Geir Helgesen, NIAS – Nordic Institute of Asian Studies

For further information please contact Katrine Herold, Project Coordinator, NIAS, Katrine.herold@nias.ku.dk

Or go to the conference website
Conference tag: #noasc2016