



The Department of Asian and Asian American Studies Colloquium Series presents a talk in Collaboration with the Wang Center's Asian/American Programs:

# **Hip-Hop 'Arts as Fact': Cambodian American Rap and Genocidal Remembrance**

**Cathy Schlund-Vials**

Department of English, University of Connecticut

**Thursday, February 26**

**4:00-5:15 PM**

**Wang Center Lecture Hall 1**

The legacy of genocide, the absence of state-sanctioned justice, and the memory of “the Killing Fields” are primary reference points for this talk, which examines the ways in which Cambodian American hip hop is rooted in political and politicized projects of genocidal remembrance. Imbued with the task to remember despite present-day threats to forget, Khmer American artists such as praCh and Seasia use the multifaceted idiom of hip hop to negotiate, revise, and rewrite the Cambodian refugee script. From Long Beach, California and Lowell, Massachusetts to Phnom Penh, the work of Cambodian American hip hop artists emerges, to paraphrase a title from praCh’s second album, *Dalama: The Lost Chapter* (2002), as “arts of fact” that document the history of Cambodia’s genocidal past, translate the impact of this past on 1.5-generation Cambodian/Cambodian American youth, and push for alternative modes of agency and justice in a space marked by indifference and injustice. At reform histories shape the way diagnosis unfolds, and what stories it becomes possible and impossible to tell when love, gender, agency, and rationality are in question.

*Cathy J. Schlund-Vials is an Assistant Professor of English and Asian American Studies at the University of Connecticut at Storrs. She is currently working on a book-length project which examines genocidal remembrance and contemporary Cambodian American youth production entitled, *Cambodian/American Memory Work: Remembrance, Resistance, and Reconciliation*. Dr. Schlund-Vials received her Ph.D. in English with a concentration in American Studies at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst.*