
3 May 2017, Wednesday ✦ 12.30pm – 1.30pm

Lee Sheridan Conference Room, Level 1, Eu Tong Sen Building, NUS (Bukit Timah Campus)

The Narrative School of Constitutional Interpretation

Speaker: Bo Tiojanco, Yale Law School

Chairperson: Kevin Tan, NUS Law

ABSTRACT

The author suggests that there is a school of constitutional interpretation which—like originalism, structuralism, living constitutionalism, moral reading, prudentialism, etc.—deserves its own name. The author calls it narrativism. It asserts that the heart of any interpretation of a Constitution is a narrative of national identity: a story of whom the People are, whence we came, whither we must go, and why law's bridge is the best way to get there. Its proponents include Charles Sumner, Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Jr., Robert Cover, Bruce Ackerman, Jack Balkin, Marvic Leonen, Peter Brooks, Anthony Amsterdam, and Jerome Bruner. Their narrative school of constitutional interpretation emphasizes an often-neglected value of legal systems: their ability to foster national identity and thus maintain social solidarity. The school also gives voice to citizens long-marginalized by legal theory: social critics. These traits enable narrativism to effectively defend legal principles against the present resurgence of populism.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER



Bo Tiojanco is a J.S.D. candidate at Yale Law School, where he earned his LL.M. degree in 2014. His dissertation has two aims: first, to explore how the prevailing Philippine founding narrative and the Philippine legal aesthetic defeat the promises of the 1986 Philippine Revolution; and second, to retell the narrative and offer a conceptual toolkit for redeeming these promises. For the 2016-17 academic year, Bo is a Yale Fox International Fellow at the National University of Singapore. Bo is a member of the Philippine Bar. He is also a lecturer at the University of the Philippines, College of Law, where he obtained his J.D. degree, cum laude. He was twice an editor of the Philippine Law Journal, and an editor of the Yale Journal of Law and the Humanities. His works have been published in the Philippine Law Journal, the Philippine Daily Inquirer, the Manila Times, the UP Law Center Press, and Vibal Publishing. He has forthcoming entries in the Max Planck Encyclopedia of Comparative Constitutional Law.

REGISTRATION

There is no registration fee for this seminar but seats are limited.

Light lunch will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis.

Closing Date: **2 May 2017, Tuesday**

For enquiries, please contact Sunita Tavabalan at cals@nus.edu.sg

To REGISTER,

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