FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND

HEGELISM IN SINGAPORE

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DATE & TIME: 4 NOVEMBER 2009, WEDNESDAY, 2.00PM
VENUE: LEE SHERIDAN CONFERENCE ROOM, EU TONG SEN BUILDING

ABOUT THE SPEAKER
A/P Tey Tsun Hang is from the Faculty of Law, National University of Singapore.

ABSTRACT
This seminar explores how the regime governing freedom of expression in Singapore reveals a political philosophy that shares many features of the Hegelian notion of an ethical state.

Whilst the state is the personification of national interest and public good, the public if left to their own devices would be irrational. Hegelism believes that only the executive can look after the objective interests of all groups in society. This paper explores how the various legislation restricting speech predicate on the executive governing with national interests in mind, and privilege the executive as the final arbiter in any interest manifestations.

Hegelism chooses, in place of direct universal suffrage, an articulation of societal divisions through their relative distance from the state - where the state should comprise the more universally minded individuals - the system of a differentiated franchise in which legitimate interest groups would be represented. The paper explores how, and to what extent, the structure of electoral regime in Singapore mirrors such an idea.

Hegelism maintains that the state has the authority to judge the actions of the religious entities. This paper explores how the extensive grid of powerful legislative instruments (each with its own unique function in deterrence, prevention and punishment) in Singapore encapsulates the Hegelian belief that it is the state - rather than religious entities - that actuates the truly universal.

The Hegelian solution to the cacophonous confusion of public opinion is a strong political leadership which is able to discern the true from the false in public opinion. This paper explores its implications on the place of civil society and media in Singapore.

REGISTRATION
If you wish to attend this seminar, please email to clemail@nus.edu.sg. There is no registration fee for this seminar but seats are limited. Registration commences at 1.45pm. For enquiries, please contact Ms Khai at Tel: 6516 3102. Directions to the law school may be found at http://law.nus.edu.sg/faculty/Location.htm.