

# Agency and Change in Constructivist IR Theory

**Date: 20th March,  
2015 (Friday)**  
**Time: 15:00-16:30**  
**Venue: E12-G003**  
**Language: English**

**Guest Speaker:  
Prof. Ted Hopf**

Some years ago John Mearsheimer criticized social constructivism for being too optimistic about change, as if all we had to do was think away bad things, and progress in world politics would ensue. Hopf, in turn, as a card-carrying constructivist, criticized Mearsheimer for his mischaracterization of constructivism. Yet he argues that constructivist IR theory (CIRT) has taken a recent and unhelpful liberal turn away from the deep pessimism about change and agency that characterizes all the foundational texts of social constructivist theory that can reify some of the complaints of its critics.

*Ted Hopf* is now a professor of Political Science in National University of Singapore. He has also been teaching at Ohio State University, Ohio University and the University of Michigan before. His main fields of interest are international relations theory, qualitative research methods, and identity, with special reference to the Soviet Union and the former Soviet space. In addition to articles published in the *American Political Science Review*, *European Journal of International Relations*, *Review of International Studies*, *International Organization*, and *International Security*, and numerous book chapters, he is the author or editor of five books, including *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities and Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999* (Cornell University Press, 2002), which won the 2003 Marshall D. Shulman Award, presented by the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies for the best book published that year on the international politics of the former Soviet Union and Central Europe. Hopf published in April 2012 by Oxford University Press. Hopf received his B.A. from Princeton University in 1983 and Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1989.



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