



The Liu Institute for Asia and Asian Studies,  
the Department of Anthropology, and the  
**ISLA Language and Linguistics Working Group**  
are proud to present a series of lectures by  
**Constantine Nakassis**  
Assistant Professor of Anthropology  
and the Social Sciences  
The University of Chicago

## **"Item Numbers" and the Performativity of the Image in Tamil Film**

Thursday, March 20, 2014, 4-5pm  
112-114 McKenna Hall  
Followed by a Reception

"Item numbers" are provocative and sensual (and, to some, obscene) song-and-dance sequences that are standard fare in the Tamil film industry of South India. Such "numbers" turn on the figure of the "item," the sexualized female body presented on screen to be seen. Drawing on ethnographic research with audiences, actresses, and film producers and directors, this talk interrogates the performativity of such images of semi-naked female bodies onscreen, of the ways in which such images exceed and detach themselves from the film narrative and thus take on a particular presence offscreen.

For anthropologists of media, film scholars, and scholars of gender and South Asia.

## **"NEED FLUENCY": English-Tamil Code-Mixing and the Double Voicing of Youth "Style"**

Friday, March 21, 2014, 11am-12pm  
242 O'Shaughnessy Hall

Youth speech has long been noted for its hybridity and transgressive playfulness. In the multilingual context of Tamil Nadu, India, such heteroglossia is especially pronounced among college youth, who have to contend with both vernacular languages and English in the college. Through the lens of Tamil youth concepts of status and cool -- what they call "style" -- this talk interrogates the ambivalences, desires, and anxieties that are wrapped up with English and Tamil, the language of mobility and globality and the language of the "culture," home and the village.

For linguists, linguistic anthropologists, and scholars of youth culture.

**Constantine Nakassis** is a linguistic and cultural anthropologist with interests in semiotics; mass media and film theory; trademark, brands, and counterfeiting; youth culture; codeswitching and codemixing. His regional focus is Tamil Nadu, India.

For more information, contact Susan Blum: [sblum@nd.edu](mailto:sblum@nd.edu)