

# **Animal Beings: Elephants and Empire in Southeast Asia**

## **Bradley Davis**

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In the decades before French colonial rule, the Vietnamese agrarian empire launched a project to control flora and fauna that brought environmental rule to uplands spaces. Although already important for centuries, elephants became both a focus and a means for this imperial ambition. Through evidence from the Nguyen archives and ethnographic fieldwork, this presentation examines the connections between imperial ethology and human dominion during precolonial nineteenth century Vietnam and makes the case for a history of human-elephant relations that reflects the interconnected intimacies that bridge seemingly distinct forms of life.

**Bradley Camp Davis** is an associate professor of history at Eastern Connecticut State and works on borderlands and environmental history with a regional focus on Southeast Asia. His first book, *Imperial Bandits: Outlaws and Rebels in the China-Vietnam Borderlands*, was published by the University of Washington Press in 2017 and he is currently writing his second, "Empire of Life: Environment and Dominion in Vietnam," which includes chapters on elephants and buffalo. He is also conducting research with the Elephant Working Group, an interdisciplinary, international team studying *longue durée* elephant-human relations in Afro-Eurasia. A visiting fellow in the Agrarian Studies program at Yale last fall, Brad has also held visiting appointments at the University of Paris-VII and the l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient in Hanoi

**Wednesday, February 19**

**12:00 Noon**

**Room 203, Luce Hall, 34 Hillhouse Avenue**