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The Centre for Korean Research and the Department of Asian Studies is pleased to present:
“Glossolalia, Cacophony, Intensity”



By Nicholas Harkness
Harvard University

Friday, October 23rd
3:30-5:00 pm

Room #400, UBC School of Music
6361 Memorial Rd, Vancouver

Abstract: This seminar discusses glossolalia (“speaking in tongues”) and cacophony in settings of fervent group prayer among Protestant Christians in Seoul. Ethnographic field data on prayer, preaching, music, and other features of Christian worship reveal how processes of semiotic intensification and the production of unintelligible speech contribute to collective experiences of spiritual contact. The analysis develops broader questions about “intensity” as a both an analytical category across disciplines and as a local cultural category in South Korea.

Bio: Nicholas Harkness is Associate Professor of Anthropology at Harvard University, specializing in the ethnographic study of communication and cultural semiosis. His long-term research in South Korea has resulted in publications at the intersection of urban anthropology, linguistic/semiotic anthropology, and the anthropology of religion. His book, *Songs of Seoul: An Ethnography of Voice and Voicing in Christian South Korea* (University of California Press, 2014), was awarded the Edward Sapir Book Prize by the Society for Linguistic Anthropology (American Anthropological Association).