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Spring 2009 Speaker Series

INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL STUDIES CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

“Militant Music, Powerful Language and Atomic Bombs: Constitutional Change in the Philippines”



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At the tipping point between the Marcos dictatorship and the Aquino presidency, the Anti-Bases Movement and the Women’s Movement were well-positioned to rid the Philippines of nuclear weapons. Yet it was not apparent to leaders of the Communist Party of the Philippines or to officials in the administration of U.S. President Reagan. From protest songs, the presentation links the notions of *kalayaan* (“freedom”) and *isang malayang patakaran panlabas* (“independent foreign policy”) with

phrasing in the new constitution designed to protect the lives and health of Filipinos from U.S. nuclear weapons. Replete with policy and procedural traps, that document would defeat the pro-U.S. President and her allies in their efforts to keep foreign military bases in the Philippines after 1991. Earlier, the Nuclear-Free Philippines Coalition had accumulated considerable political and cultural capital. In the end, Filipinos in the Anti-Bases Movement raised the bar for the Nuclear Freeze Movement globally. This presentation explains why—on the basis of song lyrics, newspaper reports, public opinion polls, government documents, memoirs, interviews and U.S. Embassy cablegrams.

Date: Wednesday, September 9th

Time: 12 pm – 1:20pm

Place: Burns Hall Room 2118

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