

**Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences
Research Seminar Program 2021**

Tuesday 9th November (12-1pm)

To be held via Teams Meeting

Dr Anh Nguyen Austen

Anh Nguyen Austen is a Researcher at the Centre for Refugees, Migration and Humanitarian Studies at the Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences. She is an interdisciplinary refugee scholar working at the intersection of history, digital humanities, ethnography, education, and activism for community based cultural histories. She is particularly interested in research about refugee-led humanitarianism, with a focus on post-traumatic growth and how refugees and migrants process their life stories to become leaders in the sector. The study includes an examination of refugee-led entrepreneurship, social enterprises, and grass roots political and advocacy organisations. Her first book, *Vietnamese Refugees and Adoptees in Australia and the Global Digital Diaspora: History of Migration, Childhood, and Belonging on Facebook* is forthcoming with Routledge in 2022. It tells the story of Vietnamese migration through oral histories of childhood and how those children grew up in Australia and curate their own histories on Facebook. As an early career researcher, she works on several collaborative research projects including Bushfire Resilience and oral histories for Cobargo Community of NSW; the history of education of stateless children and their families in the Thai/Burma Border program at ACU; immigrant and refugee language rights, children and families book making, food creations, and meaning making in resettlement with *VietSpeak* in Melbourne's Inner West, *Kid's Own Publishing* in Collingwood and *Free to Feed* in Fitzroy North. In 2001, she held the Frederick Sheldon Fellowship from Harvard University, the start of a late career in academia.



Migrant Digital Diaspora: Vietnamese Refugees Curating Histories on Facebook

The Vietnamese represent one of the twentieth century's largest movements of refugees. At the end of the Vietnam War in 1975 to 1990, more than 500,000 Vietnamese resettled all over the world. After almost fifty years of resettlement worldwide, the child refugees (known as the '1.5 generation') and the children of refugees ('2.0 generation') have been using Facebook to reconnect and curate their own histories in digital diaspora. Vietnamese migrants on Facebook provide a nuanced study of a digital migrant group with positive refugee identification in this emergent history and study of digital diasporas. My working definition of a migrant digital diaspora is an online community of refugees or forced migrants that engages in internet-based communication and transnational practices of belonging based on a shared historical consciousness or an identity that derives from displacement. Vietnamese refugees in digital diaspora use Facebook as a living site of memory where they engage in public shared collective knowledge and continuation of cultural identity and belonging. This paper examines the distinctive histories curated and nature of Facebook as an organic archive that is a constantly evolving, process of self- and group-historization that distinguishes it from the stories told through oral histories, historical documents and artefacts found in established histories and museum collections.