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TREATMENTS FOR AN AGE OF ANXIETY: PERSPECTIVES FROM HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM

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Tuesday, October 1, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm

The Lawrence de Graaf Center for Oral
and Public History (PLS 600)

Light refreshments served

In less than 50 years, Vietnam went from being one of the poorest countries in the world to boasting one of its fastest growing economies. However, according to many people in Ho Chi Minh City, the epicenter of Vietnam's economic boom, now that the country is modernizing so rapidly, they have more to worry about than ever before. What accounts for the simultaneous rise of economic prosperity, on one hand, and anxiety, worry, and stress, on the other, among Vietnam's growing middle class? The notion that the current historical moment is an age of anxiety reflects not so much a quantitative change in anxiety but instead a qualitative shift as it gets linked to new forms of insecurity. At a time when people all over the world increasingly turn to the pharmaceutical and wellness industries to soothe their troubled minds, it is worth considering whether the social and political dynamics that make them an appealing salve in the first place may be part of the problem.



Allen Tran is an associate professor of anthropology at Bucknell University. He is the author of *A life of worry: Politics, mental health, and Vietnam's age of anxiety* (2023), which is available through Open Access from the University of California Press. He has also published in *American Anthropologist*, the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, and *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*.