

# CCCS SEMINAR EASTMINSTER

Sir Ivor Jennings, the Westminster Model and State Building in Asia



CENTRE FOR  
COMPARATIVE  
CONSTITUTIONAL  
STUDIES

MELBOURNE LAW SCHOOL

All of the Asian States that emerged from British control in varying degrees took key substantial elements from the British Westminster system. This system was more commonly associated with the British settler countries like Australia, Canada and New Zealand where “kith and kin” links with Britain seemed to make this appropriate. However, the British and the Asian indigenous elites saw advantages in applying this very British system to the very different context of the East.

These Asian nations did not have centuries to interpret and adjust in order to develop their constitution as the British had. Instead within months they needed to formulate and design a constitution and therefore invariably drew upon the system of their imperial master and advisers like Sir Ivor Jennings. Since the Westminster system is based on convention and ambiguity and not rigid rules and clarity the same Westminster system could be adopted and manipulated to produce diverse results and reactions that would shape their countries forever. These states therefore became Eastminsters.

This talk broadly examines the concept of Eastminster in the eventful context of Asian decolonisation and the need for rapid constitutional settlement.

## EVENT DETAILS

**Date:** 20 October 2015  
**Time:** 1:00 - 2 :00 pm  
**Venue:** Room 920  
Melbourne Law School

Bookings are essential  
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Register online at:  
[law.unimelb.edu.au/cccs](http://law.unimelb.edu.au/cccs)

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Prior to this he was Smuts Fellow in Commonwealth History and Politics at the University of Cambridge. Harshan's latest book is *A Political Legacy of the British Empire - Power and the Parliamentary System in Post Colonial India and Sri Lanka* and he recently edited for Cambridge University Press *Constitution Maker - Selected Writings of Sir Ivor Jennings*.

