



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education

REGION I
SCHOOLS DIVISION OF THE CITY OF BATAC

Advisory No. **067**, s. 2026

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INVITATION TO DALUBBANHAWAN 2026

The University of the Philippines Association of Political Science Majors (UP APSM), an academic student organization dedicated to advancing social participation will host the annual lecture series – Dalubbanhawan 2026 via Zoom Platform.

Dalubbanhawan is an annual event of the organization designed to engage participants with pressing societal issues through the lens of political science while promoting a deeper appreciation for discipline. This year's iteration is titled the Philippine Learning Crisis: How Weak Foundational Literacy Undermines Democratic Governance.

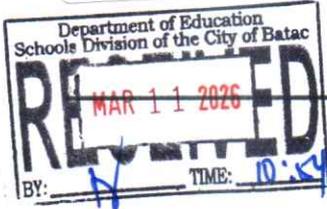
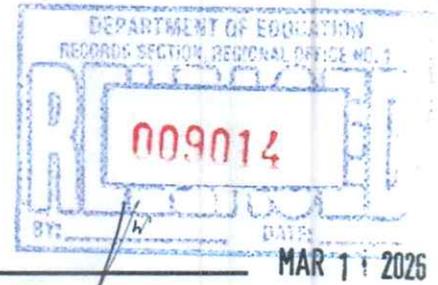
The online lecture series will be held on March 28, 2026 from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. The program will gather high school teachers from across the country for a series of expert-led lectures examining how foundational literacy affects democratic governance. Target participants include school heads of public and private Junior and Senior High Schools in the division. Attendance of interested participants shall be voluntary.

For further details and other queries, please refer to the attached advisory.

For information.


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Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education
REGION I

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The online lecture series will be held on **March 28, 2026**, from **1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.** The program will gather high school teachers from across the country for a series of expert-led lectures examining how foundational literacy affects democratic governance. Target participants include school heads of public and private Junior and Senior High Schools in the region. Attendance of interested participants shall be **voluntary**.

For queries and registration details, please contact:

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UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES
ASSOCIATION OF POLITICAL SCIENCE MAJORS

Room 101, Paloma Hall
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Dalubbanwahan 2026 Concept Note

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The Philippine Learning Crisis: How Weak Foundational Literacy Undermines Democratic Governance

The Philippines is in the midst of a profound crisis happening within its classrooms, the effects of which reverberate across all sectors of society. For years, alarms have been raised about the worsening “learning crisis” in the country. This issue has been defined by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) as a global challenge in which children are unable to achieve foundational skills, inhibiting their life chances and reinforcing inequality—especially among those in developing countries like the Philippines.

Evidence from regional and international assessments indicates the dismal performance of Filipino students in core academic areas. The 2024 Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM), conducted by the Department of Education, Southeast Asian Mathematical Olympiad, and the United Nations Children Funds, found that only 27% of Grade 5 students in the Philippines meet the minimum proficiency level in reading. On the other hand, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development’s (OECD) 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) showed that the Philippines has among the lowest average scores in reading, mathematics and science among participating countries.

Among the primary contributors to this crisis is the persistent lack of funding. Although education receives the largest share of the national budget—as mandated by the Constitution—it remains below global standards and insufficient relative to the needs of Filipino students.

This inadequacy has serious implications for the economic conditions of Filipinos; however, it also affects their civil participation. Consistent with scholarly research and democratic theory, prolonged educational deficits risk producing a generation of voters unable to access and properly process politics-related information, making them highly vulnerable to political practices that weaken democratic governance and entrench political dynasties.

The proper exercise of democracy hinges on the capacity of the people to read and understand information, compare policy options, detect misinformation and hold leaders accountable. Therefore, the UP Association of Political Science Majors (UP APSM) hopes to shed light on the implications of the plummeting proficiency of Filipino learners for democratic governance and the proliferation of political dynasts through its flagship event, which will be titled **Dalubbanwahan 2026 titled "The Philippine Learning Crisis: How Weak Foundational Literacy Undermines Democratic Governance."** It will be a Zoom online lecture series held on the 28th of March 2026, comprising the following topics: **Mulat: The Learning Crisis and Information Asymmetry; Salat: Low Foundational Literacy and Ineffective Political Accountability; and Kapit: Heuristic Political Behavior as Response.**

These topics aim to examine the relationship between foundational literacy and democratic governance by linking the country's learning crisis to political concepts such as informed participation, information asymmetry and accountability. It seeks to equip educators with analytical tools to contextualize voter behavior, governance challenges and democratic outcomes within contemporary Philippine politics.

The Philippine learning crisis is not merely an educational concern but a democratic one, with deep implications for political participation, accountability and governance. As foundational literacy continues to shape citizens' capacity to engage with public life, addressing its political consequences becomes imperative. The UP APSM warmly welcomes the participation of educators across the country, who the organization hopes—through this lecture series—will be equipped with analytical perspectives that link education, political behavior, and democratic institutions. In doing so, the program highlights the central importance of education and civic engagement in fostering a more accountable and participatory democracy.

Program Flow:

Time	Activity
12:30 pm - 1:00 pm	Open Room (Zoom)
1:00 pm - 1:05 pm	Introduction
1:05 pm - 1:10 pm	Opening Remarks
1:10 pm - 1:15 pm	Introduction for the First Speaker
1:15 pm - 2:05 pm	Lecture 1: Mulat: The Learning Crisis and Information Asymmetry
2:05 pm - 2:15 pm	Open Forum
2:15 pm - 2:20 pm	Certificate Awarding for First Speaker and Introduction for Second Speaker
2:20 pm - 3:10 pm	Lecture 2: Salat: Low Foundational Literacy and Ineffective Political Accountability
3:10 pm - 3:20 pm	Open Forum
3:20 pm - 3:25 pm	Certificate Awarding for Second Speaker and Introduction for Third Speaker
3:25 pm - 4:15 pm	Lecture 3: Kapit: Heuristic Perfect Behavior as Adaptation
4:15 pm - 4:25 pm	Open Forum
4:25 pm - 4:30 pm	Certificate Awarding for Third Speaker
4:30 pm - 4:35 pm	Closing Remarks
4:35 pm - 4:50 pm	Photo Opportunities and Egress

Lecture Topics:

#1 | **Mulat: The Learning Crisis and Information Asymmetry**

- According to Robert Dahl, a core element for effective democratic governance is the enlightened understanding of the people. In particular, it is the condition where “each [citizen] must have equal and effective opportunities for learning about the relevant alternate politics and their likely consequences” (Dahl 2020). This condition is to ensure that voters can make informed decisions that best serve their interest. However, foundational literacy—an integral institutional prerequisite for enlightened understanding—has been stifled by issues such as persistent poverty and inadequate funding in the education system throughout the years in the Philippines. A key manifestation of this is the reported decline in student reading proficiency, wherein figures drop significantly by senior high school (Lauengco, 2026). In light of this condition, a form of information asymmetry emerges between voters and political elites where citizens lack the capacity to access and process relevant political information necessary for both retrospective and prospective voting.

#2 | **Salat: Low Foundational Literacy and Ineffective Political Accountability**

- Free and fair elections are designed to function as a stabilizing mechanism for “political accountability,” the relationship between citizens and politicians (Panao, 2016). Through elections, the people can hold their political representatives accountable by rewarding them with office or sanctioning them with removal. In turn, the politician responds by performing their duties and delivering benefits that their constituents value. While effective political accountability is the ideal standard, the Philippines is no stranger to impunity and corruption—as seen through cases of human rights abuses and the mismanagement of public funds. One possible phenomenon that could explain this is information asymmetry. This is because, in environments where voters are unable to assess political performance, politicians tend to have little incentive to provide meaningful goods for the people (Cruz et al., 2020). If the people are ill-equipped with the tools to scrutinize their agents, i.e., literacy, politicians may exploit these gaps to maintain power.

#3 | Kapit: Heuristic Political Behavior as A

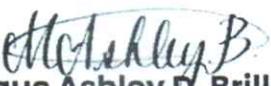
- In the Philippines, one might ask how the public navigates the electoral process when persistent challenges in the education system often constrain the development of literacy and information-processing skills. Under such circumstances, one concept may offer a partial cognitive heuristics. This is because the concept views people as cognitive misers: those adept at applying various “shortcuts” to make reasonable decisions with minimal cognitive effort (Lau and Redlawc, 2001). In political contexts, this means that voters may rely on party affiliation, endorsed candidates, poll ratings, and candidate appearance alone to decide who to give their vote to. While heuristic political behavior is not inherently a threat to democracy, its predominance can entrench family dynasties and elites by emphasizing their brand recognition—such as family name, party affiliation, or family name—over legislative productivity. This reinforces their constituents need. In this way, cognitive heuristics might be a significant factor in the rise and retention of many established local and national political dynasties.

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