Advisory No. 033 , s. 2025
MARCH 11, 2026

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In compliance with DepEd Order (DO) No. 8, s. 2013
This advisory is issued not for endorsement per (DO) 28, s. 2001
but only for the information of DepEd officials,
personnel/staff, as well as the concerned public.
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DALUBBANWAHAN 2026

Attached is a letter from Mr. Lorenzo Gabriel P. Viray, Project Head, Dalubbanhawan2026, UP Association of Political Science Major, University of the Philippines Diliman, dated March 05, 2026, the contents of which are self-explanatory, for information.

Participation of public and private schools shall be subject to the no-disruption of-classes policy stipulated in DepEd Order No. 9, s. 2005 entitled Instituting Measures to Increase Engaged Time-on-Task and Ensuring Compliance Therewith.

Moreover, schools are reminded of the "No Collection and No Selling of Tickets Policy" stipulated in DepEd Order Nos. 19 and 40, s. 2008 and RA Nos. 4206 and 5546.

DALUBBANHAWAN 2026
033 /MARCH 11, 2026

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ASSOCIATION OF POLITICAL SCIENCE MAJORS
1/F Left Wing, Palma Hall
University of the Philippines Diliman
Quezon City

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4 March 2026

Violeta M. Gonzales (OIC)
DepEd Muntinlupa Division Superintendent
National Capital Region

Dear Mx. Gonzales:

Greetings!

We are the members of the **University of the Philippines Association of Political Science Majors (UP APSM),** an academic student organization dedicated to advancing social participation through the objective study of political science. Founded in 1983, UP APSM is a non-profit, non-sectarian, and non-partisan organization composed of political science students from UP Diliman. To fulfill this mission, the organization will host its annual lecture series, **Dalubbanwahan 2026.**

Dalubbanwahan 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 the discipline. In light of growing national concern over students' declining foundational literacy, this year's iteration is titled T**he Philippine Learning Crisis: How Weak Foundational Literacy Undermines Democratic Governance.** 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. It will be held online on **28 March 2026, from 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM via Zoom.**

With this, we humbly seek your office's support in **recommending and promoting the aforementioned event** to the heads of public and private junior and senior high schools in the region through an endorsement letter. This will greatly help us reach out to schools and teachers for the promotion of social and political involvement.

Should you want to acquaint yourself with our event and our organization, feel free to refer to our attached event primer and concept note.

If you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us through our email address: **apsm.upd@gmail.com** or through this contact number: **0915 789 7882** and look for Mr. Lorenzo Gabriel P. Viray.

We hope for your favorable response on the above matter. Thank you so much!

Respectfully,

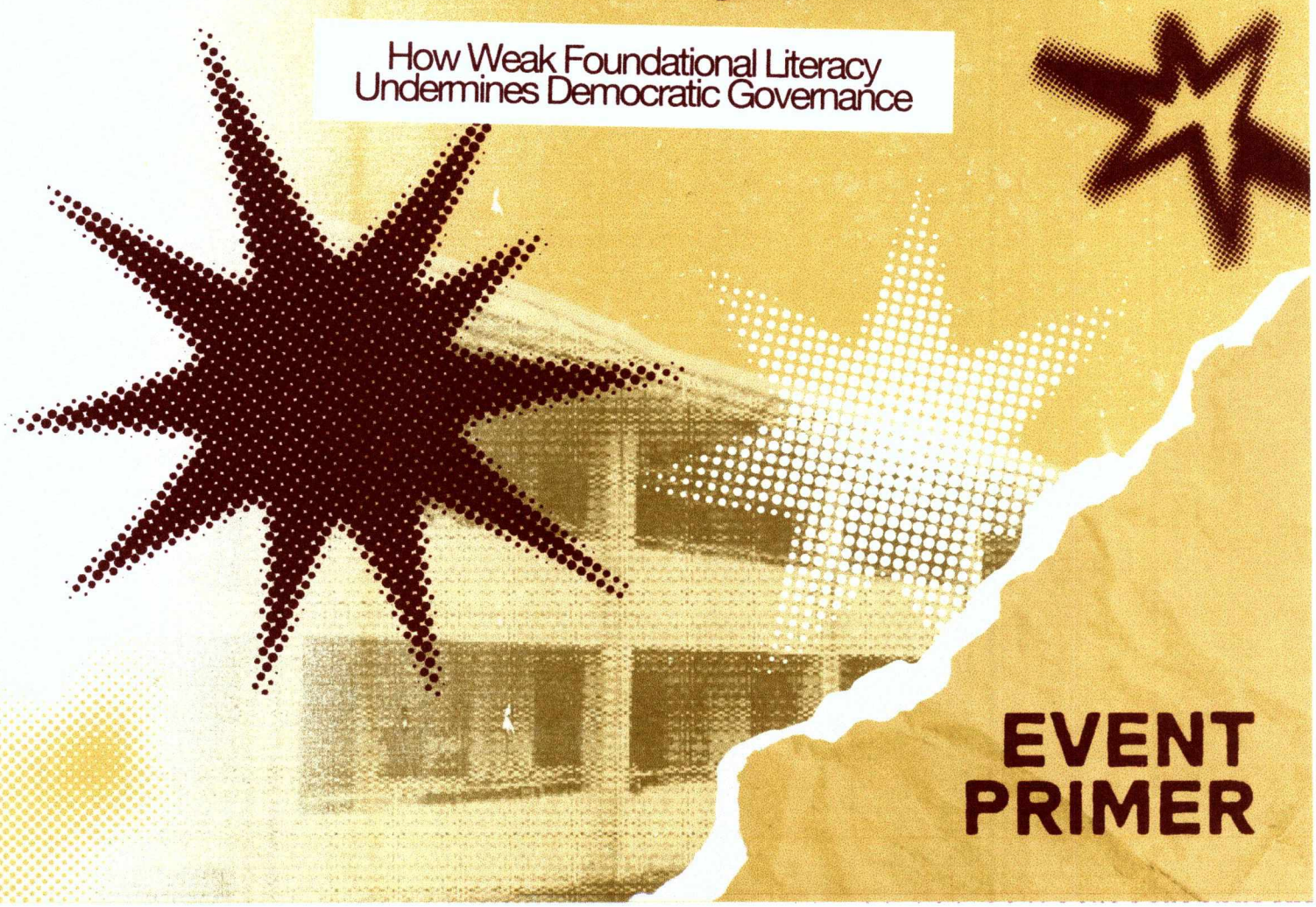
Lorenzo Gabriel P. Viray
(+63) 915 789 7882
lpviray@up.edu.ph
Project Head, Dalubbanwahan 2026

University of the Philippines
Association of Political Science Majors

DALUBBANWAHAN 2026

THE PHILIPPINE LEARNING CRISIS

How Weak Foundational Literacy Undermines Democratic Governance



EVENT PRIMER

DALUBBANWAHAN 2026

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's Fund, 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.

WHAT IS DALUBBANWAHAN?

Dalubbanwahan is one of the flagship events of the UP Association of Political Science Majors (UP APSM) that brings educators together to talk about important national issues through the lens of Political Science. This event features a series of seminar-lectures led by experts, helping teachers understand the current political developments and their impact on society. It also aims to engage teachers and the youth in Political Science, empowering them to become informed and thoughtful participants in civic life.

Over the years, Dalubbanwahan has served as a platform for political discourse among high school teachers. In 2024, the focus was on the Attempt of Charter Change in the Philippines, examining constitutional reform and its effects on the everyday lives of Filipinos. Last year, Dalubbanwahan 2025 focused on Civil Societies Challenging PH Politics in the New Age of People Power, which examined how Philippine civil societies respond to contemporary political crises—particularly the impeachment attempts against Sara Duterte at that time. Building on this tradition, Dalubbanwahan 2026 will explore how the Philippine learning crisis—particularly weak foundational literacy—affects democratic governance.

Dalubbanwahan fosters informed dialogue by engaging respected scholars and practitioners from Political Science and related fields. Past speakers have included distinguished faculty members of the University and veteran political activists, such as Leodigario "Ka Leody" De Guzman, Prof. Francis Joseph A. Dee, and Prof. Maria Ela Atienza, among others.

Recognizing the essential role of teachers in shaping students' intellectual, social, and civic development, UP APSM continues to position Dalubbanwahan as a space that strengthens political understanding and nurtures a more informed and engaged youth.

This is Dalubbanwahan—linking classrooms to the heartbeat of democracy.

ABOUT UP APSM

We, the University of the Philippines Association of Political Science Majors (UP APSM), are a student-led political science organization based in the College of Social Sciences and Philosophy at the University of the Philippines Diliman. Since our founding in 1983, we have actively engaged in the study and practice of Political Science. Now in our 42nd year, we continue to promote political awareness and participation among students and teachers through our flagship events.

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Dalubbanwahan 2026 Concept Note

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

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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.

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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 Political 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 kind 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 should be the standard, the Philippines is no stranger to impunity and corruption—as seen through cases of human rights abuses and the malversation 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 Adaptation

- 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 clarity: 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 Redlawsk, 2001). In political contexts, this means that voters may rely on party affiliation, endorsements, 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 familiar politicians and dynasties by emphasizing their brand recognition—appearance, party, popularity, or family name—over legislative productivity and services their constituents need. In this way, cognitive heuristics might be a significant factor in the rise and retention of many established local and national politicians today.

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References:

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