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CENTRE FOR CHINA STUDIES

Newsletter of Centre for China Studies, the Chinese University of Hong Kong

China Studies Webinar Series

The China Studies Webinar Series, hosted by CCS, recently featured Professor Lihong Shi, an associate professor in the Department of Anthropology at Case Western Reserve University, to talk about her latest research on families who have lost their only children under the One Child Policy and how they deal with their grief. If you missed the webinar, you can listen to the edited talk “Losing an Only Child: Grief Among shidu Parents in China” on our podcast.

Don't miss our upcoming webinar series events:

MAR ::
18
Mao's Third Front: The Militarization of Cold War China
Covell Meyskens
USA Naval Postgraduate School

Intersecting Labor in the Social Factory
Mun Young Cho
Yonsei University

APR ::
16

MAY ::
28
Beyond Self and Other: An Ethnography of Encounters
Lili Lai
Peking University

You can find the Centre for China Studies podcast on Spotify, SoundCloud, and the Apple Podcast app. As well as the full script of the first episode on the CCS website, at ccs.cuhk.edu.hk.



[Click Here to listen on SoundCloud](#)

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KLAIMAN JOINS LANGARA COLLEGE FACULTY

Todd Klaiman, a CCS PhD candidate, has been offered a staff position at Langara College, Canada.

By Marta Gramatyka

Todd Klaiman's first encounter with Asian culture happened when he traveled to Taiwan to teach English. Unexpectedly, he became interested in Buddhism and its practices while observing the daily life of Taiwanese. This interest led him to living in a Buddhist monastery for four years while studying Chinese simultaneously.

Klaiman did his masters and PhD at the National Taiwan Normal University in translation studies. After over six years of studying and teaching translation he decided to change disciplines to foster his historical knowledge – and the Centre for China Studies allowed him to explore this field even more.

When Klaiman first spoke to Professor Jan Kiely, Kiely informed him that his responsibility as a PhD advisor is to make students competitive scholars in the global market, which came to fruition after Todd was able to take courses on Chinese history with both Professor Kiely and, now retired, Professor John Lagerwey.

Throughout his time at CCS, Klaiman found he could truly enrich his knowledge and push his research goals further.

Choosing to write a dissertation on Chinese Buddhism in South East Asia, Klaiman had a chance to travel for his research to Malaysia, Singapore, and London, tracing the trails of the religious practices and using world-renowned resources.

Now, a visiting fellow at the University of Victoria in the Center of Religion and Society, and a soon-to-be assistant professor of Asian Religions at Langara College in Vancouver in the Asian Studies Department, he recalls his time at CCS with a lot of gratitude.



Photos provided by Todd Klaiman

When reminiscing on his academic career, Klaiman noted that his interest in Buddhism was driven by an interest in comparing approaches to the knowledge and practices of Buddhism he experienced while in Canada and in Asia. In Canada he was mainly discovering Buddhism by books which introduced Buddhism as a philosophy rather than a religion. Whereas, in Asia he realized how differently Buddhism was perceived– people were praying in temples and worshipping gods, making donations. This contrast allowed him to connect with people who have extensively researched religious rituals and the experiential aspect of religion.

Klaiman's research, therefore, discusses different ways people express their religiosity. The concept of Buddhism we can read about in the West is entirely different than in Asia and that's why learning about these differences is so fascinating.

See page 4 for Klaiman's sharing in the CCS RPg Workshop

CCS ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Austin Bliss is a 2020 BA/BSSc in Contemporary China Studies graduate now studying at the Hopkins Nanjing Center.
by Marta Gramatyka



Photos provided by Austin Bliss

Austin Bliss, a 2020 graduate of CCS, is now pursuing a dual master's degree at the Hopkins-Nanjing Center to further learning about China. "It is taught in Chinese which no other similar programme targeted at international students could offer." Although the graduate school is challenging, he feels like CUHK gave him a solid understanding of both Chinese culture and language and the foundation for continuing his education in China studies, which makes him stand out in class. Austin most enjoys that the classes are conducted in Chinese and that there is a requirement of writing a thesis in Chinese, as it

allows him to fully use and enhance his language skills which he acquired during his undergraduate studies at CCS. He recalls the subjects taken during his time at CUHK as very interesting, especially since the professors are educated internationally, so they provided a well-rounded perspective on Chinese matters and help with seeing China through a global lens.

Since CCS and Hopkins share many similarities such as in the comprehensive approach to studying China and having a very student-oriented attitude, Hopkins often feels like a continuation of the CCS programme in Austin's perspective. American and Chinese students can interact with each other during classes.

While enjoying his coursework, the year hadn't been an easy one, as Austin was unable to attend classes physically in Nanjing, so he opted to travel to Johns Hopkins' campus in Italy for his first semester. "Italy was a cool experience because we were mixed in with the regular Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies students, who are mostly studying international relations, rather than specifically focusing on studying China." He was exposed to many different perspectives, as well as was able to share his own experiences of living in Hong Kong. "A lot of them want to work for the American State Department or other such organisations and didn't necessarily know as much about China so there were some interesting discussions." His most memorable experience in Italy was forming a small China-focused community. "I helped organized and occasionally moderated the US-China dialogue which we held in person and talked about issues that affect US-China relations."

Austin looks back on his time in Italy fondly, "It was fun to be sitting in Italy and having debates in a mix of Chinese and English on things like Hong Kong, Taiwan and the coronavirus. This was also nice because it was completely offline." Austin has high hopes of returning to China this fall, where he can immerse himself in the local culture and enjoy his studies. Currently, he is taking a brief absence from his studies and has returned to Hong Kong.

"I'm extremely happy to be back. I've missed the atmosphere of Hong Kong and my friends here." - Austin Bliss





RPg Training Workshop on Job Search and Applications

By YANG Yiwei

On 24 February 2021 the Centre organized the first session of the RPg training workshop series on 'job search'.

All presenters and faculty members provided practical advice on job searching and career planning, such as broadening academic networks through attending conferences, publishing papers, creative ways to reach out to people, and making good use of teaching opportunities such as being a Teaching Assistant. The three panelists included PhD candidate Todd Klaiman, 2020 PhD graduate Marnyi Gyatso (Yang Zhiqiang), and PhD candidate Yiyang Wu, who shared their experiences of job searching with current CCS RPg students. Klaiman will soon begin a position as assistant professor at the Department of Asian Studies, Langara College, Vancouver, Canada. He will defend his PhD thesis later this year.

Klaiman reminded the audience to aim for diversity and to engage with wider opportunities in different sub-fields.

Gyatso just started a Postdoctoral Research Scholarship in the Weatherhead East Asian Institute at Columbia University.

Gyatso emphasized the importance of identifying the main field and subfields, and to well prepare separate materials before entering the job market. Yiyang Wu received an initial offer from the Chinese University of Hong Kong (Shenzhen). Wu introduced the current situation of university career opportunities in Shenzhen and the Greater Bay Area. Future workshops are proposed to discuss issues such as how to prepare for the qualifying exam and oral defense, and how to write conference applications and presentations.

MEET SOME OF OUR UNDERGRADS

Where are you from? What brought you to Hong Kong?

I am from the city of Kumamoto (熊本) located on the south west side of Japan. The reason why I chose Hong Kong to go to university is because first I feel some connection (we call this 縁 en in Japan) towards Hong Kong since it's the first place I had ever travelled. Secondly, I like the multi-national culture of Hong Kong. Last but not least I like the people in Hong Kong.

Why did you choose to study China? What sparked your interest in China?

My first notable experience with China was because of my grandfather. He is from Taiwan and I wanted to know more about him since he had already passed away when I was born. The second time was when I was studying in a boarding school in Canada (I went there for my high school). I had Chinese roommate and found out that Japanese and Chinese culture seems close but are also different in many ways. That made me want to learn about another culture more closely.

What's been your experience learning Chinese, have you been learning both Cantonese and Mandarin while you've been in HK? How challenging has it been learning Chinese as a native Japanese speaker?

I have a local friend who has taught me some Cantonese, mostly bad words. I have been studying Mandarin. At first it was really challenging to differentiate all 发音 (fayin) because it all sounds the same to me. Luckily, I am Japanese, so it was not as challenging to read Chinese.

How does online learning differ from your expectations?

I am enjoying it more. I did not expect that I would enjoy my online learning experience as much as I am.

Did you choose to come to Hong Kong or stay in Japan this year?

I chose not to come to Hong Kong for now since my classes are all online. Because I am staying in Japan I can have family time. I was away from my home for about six or seven years already, and I feel like this is the last chance I can stay with my family for such an extended period of time.

Have you ever had an embarrassing or hilarious moment on Zoom during your classes?

It was not about me, but someone forgot to unmute the microphone and she was calling her dog. (If you know someone who has a dog, you understand how they change their voice when calling their dog.)

What are you most looking forward to when students are able to return to campus full-time?

I want to try the different canteens on Campus and meet some new friends. I also want to explore the campus more as well.



Kyoka SHIGEMITSU, Year 1
Japan



Matthew DIXON, Year 2
United Kingdom

My interest in Chinese studies started early when CCS visited my school. I was originally planning on going to the UK, but the more I looked into CCS the more interested I became. I visited the campus in 2018 and met with both Professors Kiely and Ling. That was the final step in me fully committing to coming to CUHK.

What sparked your interest? Why study China?

It came out of nowhere. I was doing an IB programme so I tailored it so I could do a lot of my projects about China. I found it so out of left field compared to what someone might normally do. I did my extended essay on the Belt and Road initiative. Once my parents saw that I was interested they recommended books for me to read. Martin Jacques was one of the big authors that I discovered in high school, "When China Rules the World". It was that book which I did in my global politics class, we only covered a specific part of it, but I ended up reading the whole thing. I'd say the interest developed from there and I wanted to continue with it in university, but not many places specialized in China, even in Europe. My first choice was SOAS at the time, I visited there, but London felt too familiar. I would have felt too comfortable in Europe, so I wanted to push that a little further.

What about being in Hong Kong challenges you in a way that Europe wouldn't?

I think it's being surrounded by a culture that I have always been interested in, and I've experienced in little bits, but I've never lived in. I've lived in the US and Europe for the past eleven years, so I wanted to go somewhere else that was a bit different. Hong Kong is a comfortable midpoint between China and the West. So it seemed like the most logical place to go.

Which courses are you enjoying most this term?

I'd say the one I'm enjoying the most is China's Business Environment with Professor Li Chen. Just because it's business, but not quite, in the fact that it glosses over a lot of technical jargon which is something that I find difficult to adapt to. I can't wrap my head around general business models, but the way he presents them are very intuitive. Then, for my term paper, and my large research project, I have found a topic that I'm really interested in. I'm already invested even though it's not due for a few months' time. I find myself working on it every day, just because. The way in which I plan my days, I work a certain amount of time a day, and I try and keep my mind off doing the stuff I don't enjoy doing as much by mixing in a bit of stuff that I actually do enjoy working on, so it's that specific course in which I keep coming back to.

So your research project is based on this course? What is it about?

The big question for me was, "the impact of Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton on the rise of high-end local Chinese fashion", in terms of the influence of social media and celebrities, and on how China has flocked to such an international brand and how it became popular. Just trying to figure out that question, how has Louis Vuitton made it better than others? I'd say in high school I was interested in a lot more mainstream fashion, but then I sort of branched out, especially being in Hong Kong, where there's such a wide variety that's available in terms of the spectrum of fashion.

MA COURSE HIGHLIGHTS

CHES5136: Hong Kong and Mainland China: Interaction and Integration

In the Spring of 2021, Dr. Leung Kai Chi returned to CCS to teach the course “Hong Kong and Mainland China: Interaction and Integration”, which focuses on issues such as the imagined Hong Kong identity, various aspects of governance in Hong Kong, education, and the civil society.

Students will give two presentations and write a final paper for this course. For the final paper, students will write about any subject matter related to the political, economic and social relationships between Hong Kong and Mainland China. As for the final presentation, students will discuss the significance and controversies about an article of the Basic Law of their choosing. Finally, to keep students engaged with local issues, Dr. Leung invites students to each give a 3-minute presentation about current affairs in Hong Kong.

A few weeks ago, a student Kenneth made one such 3-minute presentation on the water resources of Hong Kong. He learnt that “the supply of Dongjiang water to Hong Kong is not a simple policy regarding people’s livelihood, but a political, economic, historical and identity issue.” Kenneth’s presentation helped him and fellow classmates gain better understanding of water security and surrounding debates.

In the coming April, Dr. Leung will lead students on a virtual walking tour of Central and Sheung Wan to illustrate the colonial past of Hong Kong. He takes students for fieldtrips every year in order to highlight certain historical or important places.

Teaching this course for the fifteenth time, Dr Leung, an active local commentator, columnist and teacher who receives his doctorate in Geography in the US, said “It certainly is a challenging time to discuss the interaction between Hong Kong and Mainland China right now, but the ongoing turbulence indeed highlights the necessity of scholarly approaches in understanding the underlying issues at stake.”



Dr. Leung Kai Chi



Pre-COVID-19 Dr. Leung would take students of this course for an annual hike to Yau Tong, where a historical colonial military fort was once erected.

Dr. Leung takes students to interact with farmers and villagers in the New Territories to better understand the plights of villagers, and Hong Kong’s use of space.





CHE5101 Selected Themes on Gender in China: Gender and Culture in Contemporary China

This course, taught by Dr. Lynn Sun, takes an anthropological perspective on a general human category, gender, in the context of contemporary Chinese society. Through this approach, the course shows how the notion of gender is largely a sociocultural product. The anthropological approach helps students contemplate taken-for-granted beliefs regarding gender and sexuality. Gender politics in essence addresses difference and inequality. Reflecting upon how gender became a category of analysis for anthropologists, the course brings to the fore the relationship between culture and power. Students explore the material, economic, political, and sociocultural factors that underpin such construction.

This course starts by introducing core concerns, arguments, and approaches related to gender and sexuality in China. After the introductory sessions, the focus is on common (or controversial) gender and sexual issues we encounter in our daily lives. Students are encouraged to examine their own gender identities and beliefs critically; to not only understand how our gender assumptions are shaped but also to develop one's own gender statement.



Dr. Lynn Sun



Bill YU

I registered for this course as I want to learn through the perspective of sociology, to get a better understanding of the current status of gender issues in China, especially the development of feminism and the LGBTQ movement in Chinese society. To this point, the most inspiring idea to me should be the term "Hegemonic Masculinity", it makes me realize that phallogocentric discourse was indoctrinating us unconsciously and rooted in our education.

I prefer Lynn's interactive teaching method; the content of each class is closely related to the weekly required readings, so I can prepare before class and fully participate during the lectures. I think one of the course's highlights is the reflection paper presentation. In this storytelling session, I can listen to different thought-provoking ideas from the cohort. Especially since many gender-related topics seem marginalized in our current landscape, but they were introduced by various classmates; I did not expect and have never thought of these issues/cases. Those stimulating ideas have largely inspired me in my independent gender research.



Rui HOU



Huawei TIAN

I am a bit practical regarding my expectations on taking this course: I want to do a better job in dealing with intimate relationships. It is because happiness comes from love, love comes from intimate relationships, and to have a better understanding of people in our intimate circle, we might need to take gender issues into our consideration. To me, the most inspiring thing about this course is helping me to step aside from our taken-for-granted world, and the sense of self and gender; it teaches me how to see my world from an anthropological perspective. Indeed, we are practicing anthropology in our daily life, we can reflect and/or resonate with different experiences shared in class.



CCS STUDENT AND FACULTY NEWS

Research Updates, Awards, Promotions, & Publications

photo submitted by CCS graduate Jaiiff YIU

Publication Highlights

Full-time Faculty

Professor Tim Summers published a book chapter “Imagining Brexit: The UK’s China Policy after the Referendum”, in Michael Reilly and Chun-yi Lee, eds, A new beginning or more of the same: The European Union and East Asia after Brexit, Palgrave Macmillan, 2021.

Professor Summers published a journal article “Britain and Hong Kong: the 2019 protests and their aftermath”, Asian Education and Development Studies, 7 Jan 2021.

Professor Li Chen published a policy journal article “Stock Market, Financial Governance and China’s Innovation”, Hong Kong International Finance Review, 1: 45-60. December 2020.

Professor Li published a journal article “Chinese Financial Statecraft in Southeast Asia: An Analysis of China’s Infrastructure Provision in Malaysia” (with Guanle Lim and Xianbai Ji), The Pacific Review, 34 (2), 4 Jan., 2021.

Part-time Faculty

Dr. Arsène published a book chapter, “China, Information Technology and Global Freedom of Expression. A story of sovereignty and global capitalism”, in Lee Bollinger and Agnes Callamard (eds.), Regardless of Frontiers. Global Freedom of Expression in a Troubled World, New York, Columbia University Press, 2021.

Dr. Arsène published a journal article, China’s Social Credit System: Discipline and Morality (in French: Le système de crédit social en Chine: la discipline et la morale), Réseaux n°225, 2021/01.

Grant Awarded

Professors Li Chen and Tim Summers succeeded in applying for the Project Impact Enhancement Fund (PIEF) offered by the Faculty of Arts. The grant will be used to support the impact case jointly developed by Professors Li and Summers under the title of “Towards SMART Integration: Policy Innovation in the Guangdong-HK-Macau Greater Bay Area Development under China’s Dual Circulation Strategy.”

Other Important Dates:

APR ::::

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**CUHK Programme Taster Fair
Online Event**
See the CCS Website for Details

APR ::::

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**MA in Chinese Studies
2021-2022 Intake
Application Deadline**

MAY ::::

24

**JUPAS Applicant Exploration Days
Online Event**
See CUHK’s Website for Details

MAY ::::

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**BA in Chinese Studies
2021-2022 Intake
Extended Deadline for Applications**