

Visiting Speaker Series 2016-17 Term 2

To See and to Tell a Revolution: On Going (and Not Going) to China in the Long Sixties

Fabio LANZA

Associate Professor of modern Chinese history,
Departments of History and East Asian Studies, University of Arizona

20 Jan 2017 (Friday)

12:30 – 2:00pm

Room 1118, 11/F,

Yasumoto International Academic Park

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Fabio Lanza (Ph.D. Columbia University, 2004) is associate professor of modern Chinese history in the Departments of History and East Asian Studies of the University of Arizona. His main research interests are political movements and urban history of twentieth-century China. He is the author of *Behind the Gate: Inventing Students in Beijing* (Columbia University Press, 2010) and co-editor (with Jadwiga Pieper-Mooney) of *De-Centering Cold War History Local and Global Change* (Routledge, 2013). His second single-authored manuscript, *The End of Concern: Maoist China, Activism, and Asian Studies*, is in production for Duke University Press. He is currently working on a research project on Beijing urban space under Maoism.

ABOUT THE TALK

In 1971, the first delegation of US scholars crossed the border from Hong Kong into the People's Republic of China. They had been invited allegedly because they represented a "radical" organization—the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars (CCAS)—vehemently critical of US policies in Asia and of the dominant academic views on China. A second delegation followed in 1972, both groups met with Zhou Enlai and members of the "Gang of Four," but dreams of a sustained relationship based on political sympathy were quashed by the Nixon rapprochement. Instead, the China trips created a rift within CCAS, as they shifted its priorities towards an almost exclusive focus on the PRC. But also, and perhaps more significantly by going to China, CCAS delegates found themselves

in the position of other "fellow travelers," caught in the tension between the desire to understand *politically* Chinese socialism and the need to explain Chinese realities *scholarly*, between friendship and investigation. This tension reflects a larger issue that sympathetic visitors of the PRC from all over the world faced: knowledge of revolutionary China could not be restricted to an assessment of concrete, factual truths, but should instead be based on a shared political horizon. By analyzing the CCAS trips and comparing them with travels by European visitors, this paper questions the always unresolved connections between seeing and understanding, personal experience and scholarly authority, politics and knowledge production.



Free Admission

The seminar is conducted in English

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