

## Visiting Speaker Series 2017-18 Term 2

# IT Phone Home: Tracing the Strange Itinerary of Corporate Social Responsibility in China

## Ellen HERTZ

Professor of Anthropology, Institut d'ethnologie,  
University of Neuchâtel

**19 Apr 2018 (Thursday)**

**4:30 – 6:00pm**

**Room 1118, 11/F,**

**Yasumoto International Academic Park**



### ABOUT THE SPEAKER

*Ellen Hertz* is professor of anthropology at the University of Neuchâtel. Her background in Chinese studies, law and anthropology has translated into a long-standing interest in the complex and ambiguous mechanisms of bureaucratization and marketization that characterize contemporary modernity, and on the place of gender in these configurations. She has published on diverse topics (financial markets; international organizations; intangible cultural heritage; sex work; corporate social responsibility and environmental anthropology) and maintains an active interest in theoretical developments in the social sciences, with an emphasis on gender, citizenship and normative regimes.

### ABOUT THE TALK

As China became the “world’s factory” over the course of the past thirty years, numerous initiatives involving state, inter-governmental, corporate and civil society actors have arisen to address the problem of labor conditions. This has led to a plethora of new governance techniques of great interest to the anthropology of law. The rise of the “corporate social responsibility” (CSR) paradigm in transnational firms, in particular, has led to the elaboration of projects for “capacity building” that range over new territory and set out to accomplish goals that are quite distinct from promoting workers’ rights or improving factory conditions. In this presentation, I will focus on one such innovation: a project to facilitate communication between “left-behind children” in the countryside and their parents working in factories in China’s coastal cities. In 2013, I accompanied the Chinese NGO that had designed this project, from their plush offices in a prosperous coastal city to one of the poorest regions in Guangxi province and back. This journey provided a surprising window onto some of the stakes behind and effects of these novel forms of governmentality.

**Free Admission**

**The seminar is conducted in English**

**Enquiry: Centre for China Studies | [ccs@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:ccs@cuhk.edu.hk) | [www.cuhk.edu.hk/ccs](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/ccs)**