Engineering Ethics Learns from Chinese Thought: Ritual Performance in Engineering Practice

On 18 January, Prof. Philip J. Chmielewski, Professor and Sir Thomas More Chair of Engineering Ethics at Loyola Marymount University (Los Angeles), shared his ideas on how insights gleaned from Chinese philosophy can enrich the field of engineering ethics. Engineering ethics, as he argued, serves as a guide to contemporary professional engineering practice and must have a global coherence. It therefore cannot derive solely from European traditions of reflection. He emphasized the contribution of the concept of *li* (禮) developed in the *Xunzi* (and the ritual performances associated with this concept) to the advancement of an ethical understanding of engineering practice in various aspects, such as in the practice’s impact on the engineers themselves, in the range of its responsibilities, and in the social goals of this professional activity.

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

On 20 January, Prof. Fabio Lanza, Associate Professor of Modern Chinese History at the University of Arizona, illustrated, through scrutiny of the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars (CCAS) delegations’ visits to China in the early 1970s, the tensions between the desire to understand Chinese socialism politically and the need to explain Chinese realities as well as between friendship and investigation that sympathetic visitors to the PRC from all over the world faced in that era. The larger issue reflected by the tension, he argued, is that 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, he raised questions regarding the always unresolved connections between seeing and understanding, personal experience and scholarly authority, politics and knowledge production.
Reading the Cultural Revolution from a Cultural Perspective

On 21 February, Prof. Pang Laikwan from the Department of Cultural and Religious Studies of CUHK discussed her new book *The Art of Cloning: Creative Production during China’s Cultural Revolution* (Verso 2017) and explained why we should take the culture of the Cultural Revolution seriously. Through close examination of this period—when ordinary citizens read widely, travelled extensively throughout the country, and engaged in a range of cultural and artistic activities—she argued that the freedom they experienced differed from the freedom under Western capitalism, but was far from boring and was filled with its own kind of diversity. Prof. Pang also explained the relation between subject formation and social formation during the Cultural Revolution, which offers new perspectives on understanding how ordinary people actually lived in this turbulent period.

Purifying the Frontier: Tourist Projects of Bordering in Guizhou

Approaching Guizhou as a late-imperial frontier region of state instability, contingent sovereignty, and ambiguous identities, Prof. Tim Oakes, Professor of Geography and Director of the Centre for Asian Studies at the University of Colorado Boulder, delivered a talk on 15 March that explored the relationship between contemporary tourism practices and historical processes of peripheral territorialization in China. His analysis developed an interpretive framing of the Guizhou frontier as a paradoxical space in which two fundamental but irreconcilable impulses of nation-building—the search for primordial roots of national purity and the missionary drive—meet in a productive but volatile tension. The aporia between these impulses which are readily apparent in the practices of tourism development in Guizhou today, he argued, is fundamentally important for understanding why state territorialization projects were historically incomplete and why contemporary tourism can be understood as an ongoing process of peripheralization.
Book Launch Seminar: Youth Cultures in China

The authors of Youth Cultures in China, Prof. Jeroen de Kloet, Professor in Globalisation Studies and Director of the Amsterdam Centre for Globalisation Studies at the University of Amsterdam, and Prof. Anthony Y. H. Fung, Professor and Director of the School of Journalism and Communication at CUHK, discussed the questions addressed in their new book on a seminar held on 23 March. Prof. Eric Florence, Director of the French Centre for Research on Contemporary China, and Prof. Ling Minhua, Assistant Professor of the Centre of China Studies, served as discussants.

The book documents the lives of Chinese youth and examines their experiences, how they are represented in the media, and their interactions with old and new media. In the seminar, the authors addressed and discussed the meaning of being young in a country that is changing so fast, in a place ruled by one Party, during a time of intense globalization and exposure to different cultures. They explored the complex entanglements with family, school, workplace and the state, engaging with the multiplicity of Chinese youth cultures, through a variety of case studies including the differences between migrant workers who move to Shenzhen to work in a factory and their affluent urban peers, and young students working hard for their entrance exams and dream careers, among many others.


In his talk on 30 March, Prof. Zhang Wenyi, Assistant Professor at the Department of Anthropology at Sun Yat-sen University, examined the moral paradox created by the introduction of transgenic crops to ethnic Kachin communities by various government-sponsored economic development projects in Southwest China since the late 1990s. Conflicts between the local and regional/national level were generated because transgenic crops, which were un-classifiable in the local mythological system and foreign to the local ecology, were prevalent in the governmental discourse of economic development. The talk detailed how the local-regional conflict was negotiated among the Kachin, and explored how it could be considered a generative moment in the socio-ecological entanglement surrounding transgenic crops.

Documentary Screening: A Harsh Transition

On 29 March, Mr. Zhou Fangsheng, the former Deputy Director of the Bureau of Enterprise Reform in China’s State-owned Asset Supervision & Administration Commission (SASAC) and Vice-Chairman of the China Enterprise Reform & Development Association, brought his landmark documentary A Harsh Transition to the Centre, and shared his insights on the SOE reforms which according to him were “bitter, miserable and complicated, full of ups and downs.” The film offers a rare inside look at the monumental task of turning stagnant state firms into market-oriented businesses. It is the first of its kind to capture people involved in the restructuring process and their efforts to transform their operations into profitable companies.
Centre for China Studies Research Postgraduate Student Conference 2016-17 (Term 2)

On 26 April 2017, the Centre for China Studies hosted the Research Postgraduate Conference of 2017. MPhil student *Gao Yu* presented a case study of Baiqing Village—a single surname village in the Chishi area along the Hunan-Guangdong road which prospered from commercial events and developed its gentry community and lineage organizations during the mid-Qing period. Ms. Gao analyzed how the lineage organizations contributed to the development of the Lijia and Xiangyue systems, which greatly shaped the landscape of local society. Drawing on local gazetteers, genealogies, stone inscriptions, land deeds and oral history, she examined and demonstrated the process of creating a lineage in southeastern Hunan in the late imperial period.

PhD candidate *Jia Luyang* presented her term project: “Cooperation and Compromise: The Shanghai Democratic Women’s Federation at the Grassroots (1949-1953).” Based on archival materials, newspapers and interviews, her presentation focused on the achievements the Federation made in mass mobilization during the early years of the PRC, and revealed the internal and external contention the Shanghai Democratic Women’s Federation had to deal with when “mobilizing the masses.”

PhD candidate *Lu Chentong* presented recent discoveries from her Jiangsu fieldtrip to the early Ming capital Nanjing and to Suzhou, one of the Yuan national Daoist centres. She reported on the politics and religion of this region, and discussed the Song-Yuan-Ming continuity of the socio-cultural milieu, from which her thesis subject, the scholar Song Lian, emerged.

MPhil student *Yan Yiqiao* presented his research on the Buddhist quest of a Sichuanese social elite figure, Yuan Huanxian, in the Republican era. By analyzing hagiographies, memoirs and other archival materials, Mr. Yan outlined the process of Yuan’s commitment to Chan Buddhism in the context of the social and political conditions of his day. He argued that Yuan Huanxian’s religious interest was in keeping with the family tradition and was strongly related to his wife’s religiosity.

Capstone Research Student Conference 2016-17 (Term 2)

On 24 April, the Centre for China Studies organized the 2017 Capstone Research Student Conference, during which students from the Undergraduate Program presented their final year research projects. The presentations covered a large range of topics, including cultural phenomena, social issues, Hong Kong and China, China’s international relations, economic development, business and commerce.
**Job Talk**

On Saturday 25 February, the Centre for China Studies and the CCS Alumni Association organized a job talk for current undergraduate and Master students of the Centre. Three CCS alumni shared their experience of finding work and developing their careers after their graduation: Robert Hao (BA 2010, Head of Business Operations and Strategy at Airbnb China), Pei Jiyang (MA 2014, Manager of China Policy and Government Relations at United Technologies Corporation) and He Yifan (MA 2016, Production Assistant at Real Pictures Entertainment). After a pizza break, two distinguished guests, Dr. Chan Kien Ngai and Gordon Lam Chi Wing, both with extensive executive experience, spoke to the students and gave further advice on how to get to the job interview stage and present oneself to a potential employer.

**CCS Screenings**

Accompanying two courses offered by the MA in Chinese Studies program this term, “Trauma and Memory in 20th and 21st Century China” and “China on Screen”, the CCS Film Screenings looked back at Jiang Wen’s first three films: *Devils on the Doorstep* (2000), *In the Heat of the Sun* (1994) and *The Sun also Rises* (2007). Jiang Wen, considered one of the most accomplished directors working in China today, has specialized in creating innovative representations of various traumatic events in 20th century China. Controversial and thought-provoking, Jiang’s films invited the audience to reflect on the nature of history, memory and their relationship to the present.

**Public Screening: Crime Summary (2014)**

On 8 March, students in the courses “Selected Themes on Chinese History: The Cultural Revolution” and “Trauma and Memory in 20th and 21st Century China” attended the special screening of the documentary *Crime Summary* organized by the course teachers. The director of the film, Mr. Xu Xing, was present for a Q&A session. The film shows Xu’s journey to find peasants who were detained as “active counter-revolutionaries” during the Cultural Revolution. Xu Xing accidentally came across their “crime summaries” in 2011 and went on to discover their stories. Students were deeply touched by the film and raised a lot of pertinent questions and comments during the lengthy Q&A.

**Public Screening: Yellowing (2016)**

On 10 April, CCS held a public screening of the indie documentary *Yellowing*, which recorded the 2014 Umbrella Movement. The film followed several youngsters throughout the 79 days and nights of the “occupation”, and displayed the hopes and disappointments of a protest that made headlines around the world. Both the director and the producer were present and engaged in an active post-screening discussion with the audience.
Excursions

HKIFF Film Screenings & Talks
In April, the class of “China on Screen” explored the 41st Hong Kong International Film Festival. Dr. Chen Chih-ting organized four on-site activities, providing students with opportunities to watch classic films related to the curriculum on the big screen and exposing them to original ideas and pertinent discussions through post-screening talks. One screening the whole class attended was of the Taiwanese film Yi Yi, directed by Edward Yang. After the screening, they engaged with Ms. Kaili Peng, the composer and art director of the film, and Ms. Jin Yan-ling, who played one of the main roles in the film. The students also enjoyed the restored version of the classic A Brighter Summer Day and talked with the screenwriter Hsiao Yeh.

JCCAC and PMQ
On 14 April, the class “Chinese Art in the World after 1900: Aesthetics and History” joined a half-day tour to the Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre (JCCAC) and PMQ under the guidance of Dr. Elaine Kwok. The two places helped the students to compare different models of running and integrating a cultural place in the social context of Hong Kong. Throughout the tour, the students were asked to bear several questions in mind: (1) What are the physical, social and cultural features of the place? (2) Where can the models be transplanted to, and how to adapt them to other communities/societies? A brief discussion on these questions in the late afternoon brought an official end to the study tour.

New Home Association
On April 18, the class “Urban China” visited the Support Service Centre for Ethnic Minorities of the New Home Association in Yau Ma Tei under the guidance of Prof. LING Minhua. The students learned the living conditions of and challenges facing ethnic minority immigrants during a lecture and through interaction with social workers there. They explored afterward the unique physical, social and cultural features of the multi-ethnic district by taking an ethnographic walk to appreciate the complexity of urban development and cultural diversity in the cosmopolitan city of Hong Kong.
The lecture by Dr. Fan Yun impressed me the most. As my research is focused on the election strategies of politicians on social media, she shared with me her actual experiences in the election. She pointed out social media is very critical for the survival of small political parties as it is a cost-effective way to communicate with potential voters. The field trip was fascinating as it linked the classroom experience with the real world. It was totally a valuable experience of my academic journey!

Vivien Chan

From 24 to 29 April, Prof. Tim Summers took students in the Issues in Contemporary China stream on a fieldtrip to Taipei. During the six-day trip, the group participated in lectures, talks and discussions with scholars and professionals on a wide range of topics from the politics and economy of Taiwan to its external and Cross-Strait relations. They also visited Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall and 228 Memorial Park.

The students attended lectures and activities in three universities. In Tamkang University, during a formal discussion and a lunch meeting, Dr. Tai Wan-chin and Dr. Li Chi-Keung shared their insights on the Cross-Strait relationship and Taiwan’s external relations. At National Taiwan University, Prof. Fan Yun, who founded the Social Democratic Party, led a vivid discussion about Taiwan’s civil society and democratic movements based on both her research and her personal experience. She responded to students’ questions about elections, same-sex marriage, populism, the 228 Incident, among many topics. On the second last day of the trip, the group travelled on high-speed train to Hsinchu and visited National Chiao-Tung University where they met Prof. Chuang Ya-Chung and learnt about his anthropological research on public participation in Taiwan’s democratic development, which is summarized in his book *Democracy on Trial: Social Movements and Cultural Politics in Post-Authoritarian Taiwan.*
Apart from discussions with scholars, students also visited other institutions and communicated with professionals with different backgrounds. In the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan—a significant participant in the democratic movement and political development of Taiwan—Rev. Yeh Ching-An, Rev. Lee Sing-jen and Rev. Cheng Kuo-chung introduced the history of Taiwan’s democracy in association with activities of the Presbyterian Church and shared their views on various political issues nowadays from a religious perspective. The visit to the British Office in Taiwan on the same day provided the group with a third party’s opinion on Taiwan politics and external relations. Mr. David Snower, Head of Political Section of the British Office, shared with the students his observations and understandings of current issues in Taiwan. On a different occasion, Michael Cole, editor in Chief of Taiwan Sentinel, an experienced journalist, expert on Taiwan and a former Intelligence officer in the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, sat together with the students and had an insightful and inspiring discussion with them on various aspects of Taiwan politics, society and external relations.

The lectures and talks equipped the students with useful information and knowledge about Taiwan from multifarious perspectives, which greatly facilitated the research for and completion of their individual projects. It was a delightful and fruitful journey.

**Undergraduate Fieldtrip**

**Urban Development in the Pearl River Delta: Guangzhou and Foshan**

Between May 15 and May 20, Dr. Li Chen, Assistant Professor at the Centre for China Studies took the undergraduate students to Guangdong Province for a fieldtrip. They visited the cities of Guangzhou, the provincial capital, and Foshan, a booming neighboring industrial city. The activities undertaken during the week-long trip were designed to facilitate students’ study of Guangdong Province with an interdisciplinary approach.

In Guangzhou, visits to the Chen Clan Academy, Shamian Island and the Museum of Guangdong History and Art provided the students with knowledge of the region’s rich history. Sightseeing in Canton Tower and Huacheng square gave the group a sense of Guangzhou’s vibrant modern cityscape. On the third day, students explored the central business district and visited Guangzhou’s “Huge Diamond”— International Grand City which was co-developed by Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited. The students attended a talk with a manager in the company and discussed the new trends in urban development and property management.
In Foshan, the students explored the Sino-German Industrial Services Zone where they saw first-hand examples of Sino-European economic cooperation and China’s cutting-edge-technology clusters. They also visited Foshan Lingnan Tiandi, one of the most prominent and successful cases of public-private redevelopment in greater China.

The group took the last day visiting the Lingnan College of Sun Yat-sen University, a renowned university in China founded in 1924 by Dr. Sun Yat-sen. They received a lecture by Prof. Lin Jiang on the economic developments of the Pearl River Delta as well as the inter-regional cooperation and competition among different political and economic actors in Southeastern China.

CENTRE NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Ms. Yu Chiu Lan Rebeca, staff member of the Centre for China Studies, who has been awarded the Positive Workplace Service Award 2016/17 (individual prize).

GREEN AWARDS

We are pleased to announce that the Centre for China Studies, as a participant in the Green Office Programme (GO!), has attained the Competent Green Office Status in 2016.

DONATION

The Centre for China Studies received in December a donation from Ms. Lin Xiying, a 2016 graduate of the MA in Chinese Studies programme. We very much appreciate her generosity and support!

PUBLICATIONS

We are pleased to announce the following publications

- Prof. Ling Minhua’s “Precious Son, Reliable Daughter: Redefining Son Preference in Migrant Households in Urban China” has been published in The China Quarterly 229 (March 2017): pp. 150-171.


- Dr. Tim Summers’s “British Policy toward Hong Kong and its Political Reform” has been published in Issues & Studies, Vol.52, No. 4, December 2016.