



Teaching Hong Kong, Hong Kong Teaching: A HKS SYMPOSIUM

SCHEDULE, ABSTRACTS AND BIOS

Meeting ID: 934 6501 5237

Passcode: 618458

SCHEDULE OF THE SYMPOSIUM

Saturday 4 December 2021 (9:50am – 4:30pm)

Note: Each presenter should give a well-timed presentation of 20 minutes, leaving ample room for questions and discussion.

WELCOME: 9:50am

Time	Presenter's Name	Paper Title
10:00am – 10:30am	Charles LAM, Raymond PAI	Teaching Hong Kong, Learning Hong Kong: Cantonese Humor as a Resource
10:30am – 11:00am	Kelly Ka-Lai CHAN	A City That Studies An (auto)ethnographic study of Hong Kong
11:00am – 11:30am	Christine VICERA	Storytelling as Decoloniality in/as Praxis: Autoethnographic Reflections on Literary and Cultural Production by Ethnically Diverse Communities in Hong Kong
11:30am – 12:00nn	Roy CHAN	Hong Kong Through a Speculative Lens: Teaching Misrecognition
12:00nn – 12:30pm	WONG Ka Ki	Teaching Hong Kong in a Silenced Time: Experience Sharing on teaching Hong Kong Literature
12:30pm – 2:30pm	LUNCH BREAK	
2:30 pm – 4:30 pm	Roundtable Sharing and Discussions // Emily Chow-Quesada (HKBU) // Heidi Huang (Lingnan) // Michael O'Sullivan (CUHK) // Noah Shusterman (CUHK) // Chris Song (University of Toronto Scarborough) // Michael Tsang (Birkbeck, University of London)	

WELCOME: 9:50 am

MORNING SESSION: Presentations
(10:00 am – 12:30 pm)

1.

10:00 am – 10:30 am

Teaching Hong Kong, Learning Hong Kong: Cantonese Humor as a Resource
Charles LAM and Raymond PAI

ABSTRACT

This study discusses how humor contributes as a resource to the teaching of Hong Kong, both in the context of Cantonese language learners across the globe and for a wider audience who are interested in social and identity issues in “homeland” Hong Kong. We argue that humor is an effective resource in teaching Hong Kong, since humorous texts in the broad sense are often nuanced and multi-layered, which are important qualities that match Hong Kong’s (in)famous plurality and hybridity. This study draws on Shu-mei Shih’s decentralized and pluricentric concept of Sinophone studies (as opposed to monolithic “Chineseness”), whereby subjects related to Sinitic languages or regions are not seen as inherently part of the cultural mainland China. Under Shih’s pluricentric view, this study argues that humorous texts help learners better appreciate the diversity and dynamicity in the culture of Hong Kong and Cantonese. We illustrate this by two parallel examples of courses related to teaching Hong Kong culture and Cantonese through humor. In the context of heritage language learners, we show that humor and parody are excellent vehicles to allow students to connect with the target language in their own style, rather than tracing back to certain stereotypical yet imaginary roots of “homeland” that goes against the psychological ownership of students’ learning. In the Asian (“homeland”) context, we illustrate the importance of comedy studies through a course in the popular education setting outside of universities. Through the course on humor studies and the stress on Cantonese language, aspects related to the Hong Kong identity are introduced while covering various topics, such as popular culture, parody and the negotiation of the Hong Kong identity. Teaching Hong Kong in the local context can therefore be greatly enhanced through the use of humor in Cantonese for the relatability and expressiveness. This study shows how humor engages with the audience and enables dialogues and discussions on the otherwise divisive and abstract topic of identity, even in the local “homeland” context, in which speakers assume a relatively stable and homogeneous identity. Furthermore, we stress the learners’ active engagement can be leveraged by the incorporation of both consumption and production (also known as prosumption) of humorous content and learning materials that suit their own learning style and motivation, which is particularly significant for adult learners.

References

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ABOUT CHARLES LAM

Charles Lam is Assistant Professor in the Department of English at the Hang Seng University of Hong Kong. He received his PhD in Linguistics from Purdue University, USA. His research interests include the syntax-semantics interface, corpus linguistics, humor studies, and digital humanities.

ABOUT RAYMOND PAI

Raymond Pai is a Lecturer of Cantonese in the Department of Asian Studies at the University of British Columbia (UBC). He is also a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada-funded PhD student in the Department of Language and Literacy Education at UBC. His research and teaching interests include heritage language education, language ideology and learner identity, language technology and testing, and popular culture in language education.

2.

10:30 am – 11:00 am

A City That Studies

An (auto)ethnographic study of Hong Kong

Kelly Ka-Lai CHAN

ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic has ruptured the order of formal schooling bringing a drastic shift of teaching and learning to virtual classrooms worldwide. Meanwhile, in Hong Kong, the imposition of national security law in mid-2020 has seen aspects of formal education systems co-opted as tools of oppression and surveillance, such as monitored online lessons and the disqualification of teachers. From the 2014 Umbrella movement to the 2019 Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill (ANTI-ELAB) movement, Hong Kong people and artist-activists have utilised public spaces to demonstrate novel ways to create activist, experimental and demonstrative transformations (Biesta, 2013). However, the ongoing exodus from Hong Kong presents evidence of growing fears and uncertainty for the city's future. How can we *study* and *care* about the city amid the radical changes that impact Hong Kong and cities in general?

Undertaken during the pandemic and political unrest in the city, this project presents an ethnographic study of artist-activists in Hong Kong since mid-2019. In my work, I follow Harney and Moten's (2013) conceptualisation of 'study' in *the Undercommons*, that *study* is a form of sociality that is always happening. I extend the notion of *study* to my study of Hong Kong in multiple crises to show that citizens in Hong Kong *study* through improvising and modifying ways of acting and being together, which I call urban public pedagogies of resistance. Through the ethnographic study of artist-activists in Hong Kong, these findings are presented alongside autoethnographic reflections (Harris & Holman Jones, 2019) on disruptive historical events in the midst of the pandemic. These events had exposed deep-rooted issues of post-coloniality before decolonisation and surfaced conflicting ideologies that further divided the city. The paper draws attention to the Care Collective's (2020) notion of interdependence in care and solidarity, emphasising the importance of commonalities and affirming egalitarianism in the presence of difference.

As a Hong Kong-born and trained teacher, I undertake this study of my home city while removed from it. Throughout the protest movement, the pandemic and ongoing political arrests, and radical changes in the education systems, I have been an international student living and working in Melbourne, Australia, a city that has experienced the longest

accumulated lockdown for any city in the world. From this perspective, I *study* how my host city learns to comply with lockdown restrictions and cares (and does not care) for international students during the pandemic. As an outsider in Australia, I have experienced racist encounters and witnessed the Australian government's privileged treatment of migrants from Hong Kong. What are Hong Kong migrants learning from and teaching the world?

Through the lens of crises as processes (Burdick & Sandlin, 2021), I rethink teaching and learning as ongoing relational, anarchic practices of sociality. I approach cities as sites of deformed *study* and an assemblage of teachers, learners, and makers. Within multiple crises, I make the case that a renewed consideration of the shifting role of the public(s) and pedagogies is emerging, hence makes Hong Kong a city that studies.

References

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ABOUT KELLY KA-LAI CHAN

Kelly Ka-Lai Chan is a video ethnographer and educator who makes videos to tell stories about humans and more-than-humans. Kelly was a lecturer at Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts & Hong Kong Art School before joining RMIT School of Education for her PhD study on using visual methods to explore subjectivities of artist-activists in Hong Kong. See some of Kelly's work here: <https://vimeo.com/user27450697>

3.

11:00 am – 11:30 am

Storytelling as Decoloniality in/as Praxis: Autoethnographic Reflections on Literary and Cultural Production by Ethnically Diverse Communities in Hong Kong Christine VICERA

ABSTRACT

Drawing on the experience of co-organising two creative arts projects, *be/longing* and *The Writer's Toolbox* throughout the summer of 2021, this paper situates Hong Kong's creative landscape as one of many starting points to think about decoloniality in Hong Kong. As a Filipino-Hong Konger, this paper moreover offers autoethnographic reflections on the impact and implications of doing research, alongside one's communities in one's own home. *be/longing* is an arts-based participatory action project funded by HK Unison, a non-profit organization committed to advancing racial equality and equal opportunities for ethnic minorities (EM) of Hong Kong. In collaboration with *Cha*, a Hong Kong-based international literary journal, and *Lensational*, a social enterprise that provides media training to migrant

domestic workers in Hong Kong, *be/longing* ran a series of creative writing and photography workshops throughout July. The work produced in these workshops were featured in an exhibition that took place at Chungking Mansions in Tsim Sha Tsui throughout August 2021. *The Writer's Toolbox*, a series of creative writing workshops catered to migrant domestic worker writers, was co-organised by *Migrant Writers of Hong Kong*, an online literary space created for migrant writers in Hong Kong to create and share their writing, and the *Mobile Methodologies and Migrant Knowledges* project (mmmk.hku.hk).

Given its powerful position in today's transnational economy, its colonial history, and proximity to Western modernity, Hong Kong is a key site to interrogate questions of inclusion, difference, and belonging. While the primary focus of these art-based initiatives is to hold space for the creative expression *by* underrepresented communities, *for* underrepresented communities in Hong Kong, spaces of cultural production, particularly that of the "creative arts workshop," offer alternative modes of imagining contemporary Hong Kong beyond the limited binaries of "East vs. West" or its clichéd caricature as a "melting pot of cultures" in the global (literary) imaginary. The writing and photography created in the aforementioned workshops unsettle dominating discourses about EM communities in Hong Kong such as the narrative of "multiculturalism" which frames EMs as tokens for diversity, as well as damage-centered narratives that frame them through the lens of shared tragedy, sorrow, and loss, or narratives which romanticise the resilience of these communities. This paper engages Hong Kong in dialogue with decolonial thinkers and movements elsewhere to suggest that storytelling is decoloniality in/as praxis. The "creative arts workshop," as a space that harnesses the transformative power of storytelling, centers EM voices in the narration of EM stories—stories which have often been left in the footnotes of Hong Kong's history. In recognizing their lived experiences as knowledge production, a practice considered supplementary to 'scientific' or 'rational' knowledge, the act of writing "make[s] visible [...] distinct perspective and positionalities that displace Western rationality as the only framework and possibility of existence" (Walsh & Mignolo 2018, 17). The very act of writing allows these communities to participate in the very *worlding* of these experiences, opening up possibilities for alternative modes of thinking, being, knowing, understanding, and living.

ABOUT CHRISTINE VICERA

Christine Vicera is a Filipino writer, researcher, and filmmaker from Hong Kong. At the heart of her interdisciplinary research and praxis lies a broader interest in the relationship between memory, diaspora, and post-/anti-/decoloniality in the context of Hong Kong and Southeast Asia, specifically the Philippines. Storytelling and community building are integral to her praxis. She is co-director of *Sisig and Puchero* (2021). Screened at the 2021 Southeast Asia x Seattle Film Festival, the documentary short questions what remains constant for migrant workers in a world that has been put on pause by COVID-19. She is co-director of *be/longing*, an arts-based community project that harnesses the transformative power of storytelling to provoke dialogue about social justice, build community, and inspire change amongst communities in Hong Kong. Her writing has been published in the *International Journal of Diaspora & Cultural Criticism*, *Ekphrasis*, *Kritika Kultura*, and *Voice & Verse*. <https://christinevicera.wordpress.com/>

4.

11:30 am – 12:00 nn

Hong Kong Through a Speculative Lens: Teaching Misrecognition

Roy CHAN

ABSTRACT

I will discuss my experience teaching a graduate-level seminar about Hong Kong culture in Winter 2021. My choice to offer this seminar was directly inspired by the monumental upheavals occasioned by the Anti-Extradition Movement and the implementation of the National Security Law. My graduate students were all from the People's Republic, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, and the recent events only fueled their desire for an intellectual space to discuss Hong Kong, and what it means for both the People's Republic and the Sinophone world. The question of how to define Hong Kong's "identity" constituted a major problematic for the seminar, as the territory toggles between antinomies of cosmopolitan and local, Chinese and Sinophone, colonial and national, etc. However, rather than attempt to derive a settled proposition of what Hong Kong "is," I decided to thematize the very split between antinomial terms as itself central to arriving toward any understanding. Inspired by the work of British philosopher Gillian Rose, our seminar aimed to explore the question of Hong Kong through the means of speculative experience, that is, to understand Hong Kong both as "identity" and its lack. Rose formulated her ideas of speculative experience via Hegel's immanent critique of bourgeois law: as Hong Kong had once enshrined itself as the home of liberalism and rule of law in the Chinese-speaking world, a speculative exploration of both Hong Kong liberalism's immanent contradictions in its historical colonial entanglements *and* its emancipatory possibilities became a focus for the course. Rose's account of speculative experience as entailing the necessary misrecognition of identity (and its subsequent "re-cognition") also became a lens for understanding Hong Kong beyond reified terms. As such, Hong Kong constitutes an equally political and philosophical conundrum for the whole Chinese-speaking world, and affords a vantage point from which we can subsequently view the misrecognitions that lie at the very heart of constructions of "Chineseness." As both the protest movement and the National Security Law revolve around the meaning of law, I would like to end with reflections on the relation between law and cultural identity, and how these terms must be thoroughly explored dialectically; after all, much of what constitutes Hong Kong cultural identity resides in its own curious historical relation to law itself. In embracing the teaching of "misrecognition," I aim to thematize the very difficulty of coming "to know" Hong Kong as constitutive of that knowledge itself.

ABOUT ROY CHAN

Roy Chan is Associate Professor of Modern Chinese Literature in the Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures at the University of Oregon. In addition to his work in Chinese studies, Dr. Chan is also a comparatist who specializes in modern Russian literature as well. His first book, *The Edge of Knowing: Dreams, History, and Realism in Modern Chinese Literature*, was published by the University of Washington Press in 2017. He is currently completing a monograph focusing on modern Chinese literature's speculative relation to Russia and the world. He is developing a new project on the relations between law, philosophy, normativity, and crisis in modern Chinese-speaking cultures.

5.

12:00 nn – 12:30 pm

**Teaching Hong Kong in a Silenced Time:
Experience Sharing on teaching Hong Kong Literature
WONG Ka Ki**

ABSTRACT

One of the “starting points” of Hong Kong literature is said to be Lu Xun’s talk in YMCA in 1927. His topic was “The Silent China” and lectured the urgency of using vernacular Chinese so that we could articulate our own “voice.” Regardless of whether his message caused the impact he hoped for, Lu Xun’s metaphor of the voice and the subjectivity of a place inspires us to ponder how Hong Kong could obtain her voice in Sinophone literature. Language is just one aspect and Hong Kong seems to preserve an unrestrained cultural space because of colonialism. Now that the “voice” of our city is being tuned and synchronized with the “main melody”, how do we teach Hong Kong literature in a voice we choose?

This presentation would be a modest sharing of my experience of teaching the undergraduate course “Hong Kong Literature” for five years, during which too many has changed. The rapidly shifting atmosphere of Hong Kong society subtly yet deeply affects the classroom, and I would be lying if I say I do not feel the fear and need for self-censorship. There was a time when half the classroom was empty because my students were on the streets, participating in the historical moments of our city. Now the classroom is full again after COVID-19 but covered with darker shadows than ever. I cannot help but feel like I am talking about the ghost of Hong Kong when I say once upon a time, we were proud to absorb and tolerate writers from all kinds of political and aesthetic stands.

One of the great challenges of teaching Hong Kong at such a time is to respond to students’ strong political stand. Though the interest in “bun tou” (localness) is a motive to study Hong Kong literature, it might also cloud our perspective on literary history. The balance of passion and objectivity is also a necessary reminder for my research. To convey a broad perspective on Hong Kong literature study, my course is designed with a two-dimensional framework: to posit the “local” diachronically and synchronically, that is, in the historical perspective and regional comparison of Asia. It is of course not my original invention but takes after the insights of so much great research on Hong Kong literature.

The course covers key issues and canonical works of Hong Kong literature from the 1930s to the 2000s. It emphasizes the relationship between Hong Kong and other Asian regions throughout the 20th century. For example, the interaction of Hong Kong and Shanghai modernism in the 1930s, the influence of the leftist literary movement of mainland China in the 1940s, the intersection of migrant writers from mainland China and the Cold War context of Asia in the 1950s, the relationship between Hong Kong and Taiwan literature in the 1960s and 70s, etc. The course also comprises interdisciplinary elements such as urban culture, travel writings, postcolonialism, and so on to study Hong Kong literature. Though it is far from a comprehensive account of all aspects of Hong Kong literature, students should get a basic understanding of Hong Kong’s literary history and the role of Hong Kong in an Asian context.

ABOUT WONG KA KI

WONG Ka Ki (王家琪) is an Assistant professor and the Associate Head (Programme) of the Department of Chinese Language and Literature, Hong Kong Shue Yan University. She recently published two scholarly books, *Forty Years of Suyeh* (《素葉四十年》, 2020) and *The Hong Kong Story of Yesi* (《也斯的香港故事：文學史論述研究》, 2021). Her research interest is in Hong Kong literature, modern and contemporary Chinese literature, and periodical studies.



~ LUNCH BREAK 12:30 pm – 2:30 pm ~

AFTERNOON SESSION: Roundtable Sharing and Discussions
(2:30 pm – 4:30 pm)

Roundtable participants:

Emily CHOW-QUESADA

Emily Chow-Quesada is an assistant professor at the Department of English Language and Literature, Hong Kong Baptist University. Her research focuses on world and postcolonial anglophone literature, and the representations of Africa in Hong Kong. She has published journal articles and book chapters on anglophone African literature and taught courses in world literature, postcolonial literature, African literature, and representations of blackness.

HEIDI HUANG

Heidi Huang is an avid reader and firm believer in the power of love. She has taught at universities in Europe, Hong Kong, and mainland China. She is currently based at The Centre for Humanities Research, Lingnan University.

MICHAEL O’SULLIVAN

Originally from Ireland, Michael O’Sullivan is a Professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He is also an editor of *Hong Kong Studies*, the first peer-reviewed academic journal devoted entirely to Hong Kong. Michael has published a number of scholarly books, including *Cloneliness: On the Reproduction of Loneliness* (2019). His poems have been published in *Cha: An Asian Literary Journal*, *Desde Hong Kong: Poets in Conversation with Octavio Paz*, *Voice & Verse Poetry Magazine*, *Quixotica: Poems East of La Mancha*, and *Asian Signature*. His personal essay, “Reflections from a Gweilo on Being Out of the Loop”, can be found in *Hong Kong 20/20: Reflections on a Borrowed Place* (Blacksmith Books, 2017). His first novel is *Lockdown Lovers* (Penguin SEA, 2021).

CHRIS SONG

Chris Song is a poet, translator, and editor. He has published four collections of poetry and many volumes of poetry in translation. He received an “Extraordinary Mention” at Italy’s

UNESCO-recognised Nosside World Poetry Prize 2013 and the Young Artist Award at the 2017 Hong Kong Arts Development Awards. In 2018 he obtained a PhD in Translation Studies from Lingnan University. More recently he won the Haizi Poetry Award in 2019. Chris is Executive Director of International Poetry Nights in Hong Kong and Editor-in-Chief of Voice & Verse Poetry Magazine (聲韻詩刊). He is an Assistant Professor at the University of Toronto Scarborough.

NOAH SHUSTERMAN

Noah Shusterman is Associate Professor of History at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He is the author of *Armed Citizens: The Road from Ancient Rome to the Second Amendment*; *The French Revolution: Faith, Desire, and Politics*; and *Religion and the Politics of Time: Holidays in France from Louis XIV through Napoleon*. He earned his Ph.D. in European History from the University of California, Berkeley. Before moving to Hong Kong, he taught at Temple University. In his current research, he looks at the history of a group of nine Atlantic Revolutionaries – people who traveled to take part in Revolutions away from their native lands. When not working or with his family, he enjoys spending time on Hong Kong's trails or eating in its chah chan tengs. He has been studying Cantonese since 2015 but still isn't very good at it.

MICHAEL TSANG

Michael Tsang is a native of Hong Kong, and is Lecturer in Japanese Studies at Birkbeck College, University of London, with previous academic experiences in Newcastle University, the University of Warwick, and the Chinese University of Hong Kong. His interests lie in East Asian literatures and popular cultures, as well as postcolonial and world literatures at large. He is the co-editor of *Murakami Haruki and Our Years of Pilgrimage* (Routledge, 2021). He writes stories and poems in his spare time, and is always interested in languages, literatures and cultures. In April 2012, Michael joined Cha's editorial team as Staff Reviewer. He is a founding co-editor of the academic journal, *Hong Kong Studies* (Chinese University Press).

END: 4:30 pm

