

UHM Center for Chinese Studies

Spring 2018 Research Seminar Series

TUESDAYS, Moore 109 • Noon to 1:30 pm, unless otherwise noted

January 16: *George Wang, Academy of Creative Media.* “The Battle of Ono” was supposed to be King Hu’s American feature film debut. After more than two decades of devoted efforts to develop and finance this ambitious project, King Hu suddenly passed away before principal photography could begin. This talk chronicles the development of “The Battle of Ono” and the great filmmaker’s dauntless yet futile navigations through the American film industry.

January 30: *Cathy Clayton, Asian Studies.* Many U.S.-based film critics have criticized the blockbuster animated feature film as one more in a long stream of Hollywood’s orientalist appropriations of Chinese culture. Some critics in China have argued, to the contrary, that represents Chinese philosophical and ethical concepts remarkably well, and that the film helps promote “Chinese culture” overseas. I argue that these multiple readings suggest that although concepts such as orientalism, appropriation, and soft power have their uses, they are limited when it comes to thinking about the intersections of culture, power and representation in the era of globalization and China’s rise.

February 13 (1:30-2:45): *Jonathan Pettit, Religion.* This paper uses a well-known but understudied millenarian movement of early Republican China, Yiguan Dao, to understand the production and circulation of religious literature in the early 20th century. I offer a detailed analysis of the *金公妙典*, a lengthy revelatory text about the impending doom facing Earth, to analyze the kinds of rhetorical strategies common among writers of this literature. I argue that such texts offer important clues about how the audience engaged and internalized messages thought to be sent from the heavens.

March 6 (1:30-2:45): *Carsten T. Vala, Associate Prof. & Chair, Political Science, Loyola University, Maryland.* Among China’s restive religious and social groups, Protestants have arguably created the most sustained structural challenges to the Chinese Communist Party’s ordering of society. By drawing on grassroots fieldwork conducted across the country, this talk charts the ambition of the government to restrain Protestant population growth and direct it towards regime purposes.

Thursday, March 15: *Reginald Kwok, Asian Studies/Urban & Regional Planning.* On the final day of the 19th CCP Plenary Session on Oct. 24, 2017, Xi’s “Thoughts,” mainly renewing Confucianism, were enshrined in the Communist Party Constitution. Political commentators hail that he has raised his status equal to that of Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping. Has Xi established himself as the most powerful leader in

the world? Xi’s re-introduction of Confucianism is recognized as the new ideology to direct Chinese nationalism and determine China’s development. Is neo-Confucianism a realistic or sufficient philosophy to formulate contemporary political culture?

April 3: *Wei Zhang, Sociology.* Due to factors such as increased life expectancy and the effect of the one child policy, China is experiencing a dramatic change in its demographic structure. According to 2015 UN estimates, the population of China is aging rapidly and the percentage of its older population (60+) is projected to reach 19.5% in 2025 and 29.9% in 2050. Our study examines cultural origins and the health effects of providing support to the family, underscores the role of family values in shaping productive aging and highlights the roles of gender and living arrangements in affecting contributory behaviors and their health consequences.

April 10: Hamilton Library Room 401 *Shana Brown, History.* What was the impact on China’s future President and revolutionary leader of his early education in Hawai’i? This talk explores some of Sun Yat-sen’s experiences and how they affected his future politics. AND *Yen Chun, Trustee, China Soong Ching Ling Foundation in Beijing & Shanghai, & Director/Executive Vice President, Dr. Sun Yat-sen Hawaii Foundation.* Soong Ching Ling, a loyal follower and supporter of Sun Yat-sen and his cause, dedicated her life to improving the welfare of women and children in China. Yen Chun, a relative of Soong, will give her personal perspectives on this great lady. *This panel presentation anticipates the establishment of the Soong Ching Ling and Sun Yat-sen Research Room in UHM’s Hamilton Library. Come and celebrate with us!*

April 17: *Shawna Ryan, English.* Shawna Yang Ryan discusses the research and writing of her novel *Green Island*, recipient of the 2017 American Book Award. The novel centers on the effects of Taiwan’s 228 Massacre on an individual Taiwanese family and on Taiwanese society and politics.

April 24: *Song Jiang, East Asian Languages & Literature.* Chinese characters are an important carrier of Chinese culture and civilization. This talk explores the ways in which characters were constructed; the relationship between characters, the physical world, and human cognition; the embodied roots of characters; and the myth of their disembodied meaning. The future of Chinese characters and educational implications for literacy teaching in Chinese will also be addressed.