New Staff Appointments

The Faculty was pleased to welcome the following academic and academic-related staff who took up new full-time and fixed-term positions during the period of April 1, 2014 and November 1, 2014.

School of English
Dr Jessica Valdez, Assistant Professor

School of Humanities
Dr Kathleen Wyma, Assistant Professor (Fine Arts)
Dr José Neglia, Assistant Professor (Music)
Dr Jamin Asay, Assistant Professor (Philosophy)
Dr Andrew Loke, Research Assistant Professor

School of Modern Languages and Cultures
Dr Facil Tesfaye, Assistant Professor (African Studies)
Dr Timothy Goddard, Assistant Professor (Japanese Studies)
Dr Daniel Poch, Assistant Professor (Japanese Studies)
Dr Chee Wai Chi, Research Assistant Professor (Hong Kong Studies)
Dr Javier Cha, Post-doctoral Fellow (Korean Studies)

Centre for Applied English Studies
Dr Peter Crosthwaite, Assistant Professor
Dr Michael Yeldham, Assistant Professor

Centre for the Humanities and Medicine
Dr Ria Sinha, Post-doctoral Fellow

Centre of Buddhist Studies
Dr G A Somaratne, Assistant Professor

Existing Staff

The following existing members of staff took up new full-time and fixed-term positions during the period of April 1, 2014 and November 1, 2014.

School of Chinese
Dr Song Gang, Associate Professor

School of Humanities
Professor Chan Hing-yen, Professor (Music)
Professor Timothy O’Leary, Professor (Philosophy)
Dr Robert Peckham, Associate Professor (History)
Dr Youn Kim, Associate Professor (Music)

School of Modern Languages and Cultures
Dr Janet Borland, Assistant Professor (Japanese Studies)
Dr Selina Lai, Research Assistant Professor (American Studies)
Dr Samuel Wong, Post-doctoral Fellow (China Studies)
Ms Dora Almeida, Assistant Lecturer (Portuguese)
Mr Álvaro Acosta Corte, Assistant Lecturer (Spanish)
Mrs Alejandra Serrano Jiménez, Assistant Lecturer (Spanish)

The Faculty was sad to lose three great friends and colleagues this year. They will be very much missed.

Emeritus Professor Laurence Goldstein

Professor Goldstein, who passed away peacefully on May 19, 2014, first arrived at HKU in 1976 as a young Lecturer in Philosophy. He was promoted to Senior Lecturer in 1983, to Reader four years later, and to Professor in 1991. He held positions as Head of the Department of Philosophy and Master of Graduate House, as well as a number of shorter-term appointments in Comparative Literature, History, and the Institute of Human Performance. He retired from the University in 2004, but continued his close commitment to HKU through a series of Honorary Professor appointments.

Dr Felix CH Wong

Dr Wong, an Assistant Professor in the School of Chinese, sadly passed away on June 3, 2014. Dr Wong graduated from the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 2000 and went on to pursue further studies at Tokyo University and the University of London before obtaining his PhD from HKU in 2008. He joined the School of Chinese as an Assistant Professor in September 2013. As a young and promising academic, Dr Wong was committed to the promotion of historical and cultural scholarship.

Professor Ho Peng Yoke

Professor Ho Peng Yoke, an internationally renowned scholar who served as Head of the Department of Chinese (later School of Chinese) from 1981 to 1987, passed away on October 18, 2014. He received his DLitt (honoris causa) from the University of Edinburgh and was a leading expert in the East Asian history of science, religious Daoism and the history of Chinese alchemy and medicine. He maintained close ties with the School serving as External Examiner for its MPhil and PhD programmes, amongst other contributions.
Arts and Humanities research typically involves long hours spent working alone with texts, archives, artworks and critiques. But the new Associate Dean (Research), Professor Adam Jaworski, takes the view that research also requires social activities to which young scholars in particular need to be introduced.

“Apart from writing their thesis and becoming independent researchers, early career scholars need to be socialised into academic life. They need to be involved in making presentations, sharing, and talking about their research. These are all activities which of necessity involve networks,” he said.

Professor Jaworski is looking at how to improve research students’ social training by supporting seminars, workshops and conferences organised by and for them. He also wants to see them take part in more academic events.

“The Faculty of Arts has a rich tradition of encouraging and involving its Postgraduate Research Students and Early Career Researchers in academic events locally and further afield, and it is very much one of my goals to carry on fostering these kinds of links and opportunities.”

Even the more established academics need social support, he said, and he will continue the mentoring programme for tenure-track staff that began under his predecessor, Professor Timothy O’Leary. Staff have the option of being paired with a colleague for career advice and guidance if they desire.

Visitors and exchanges are another aspect of networking, and Professor Jaworski said this was important not only to individual scholars, but also the reputation of the Faculty. Some rankings are based on qualitative comments from members of the international academic community so it helps to have a lot of colleagues and friends around the world who can testify about the high quality research in the Faculty. More importantly, interaction with people from different institutions, cultures and specialities enriches learning and research.

“This is the best way for ideas to travel and people to get inspired. For example, academic visitors act as ‘messengers’ between well-established networks and they are crucial in fostering change in how people work in their intellectual environment. It’s not change for the sake of change but for progress. That is why internationalisation has such a big role to play in academia,” he said.

Departing from the theme, Professor Jaworski also reflected on the purpose of Arts and Humanities research in serving a wider audience than academia.

“Politicians around the world ask why Arts and Humanities should be funded, what benefits they bring to the community.

“Each community needs to have a sense of its history and identity, to create a ‘narrative of place’. The people who are best-placed to unravel, document and comment on all aspects of social life are academics.

“Imagine if we stopped doing this research for any length of time, or if we were unable to feed back our research into teaching. Very quickly, future generations would lose their ability to chronicle and self-reflect on their lives, and on the lives of others.

“Our ideas may not always be very easy, tangible or popular, but I think that through research and teaching Arts and Humanities have an enormous role to play in safeguarding the memory, identity and history of place, and connecting whole communities to the rest of the world.”

In Hong Kong in particular, such perspectives are and will be essential to understanding the city’s current momentous times.
The single-minded focus that characterises traditional scholarly work is under challenge. In a globalised, interconnected world, new problems and new situations demand fresh perspectives. This explains the surge in interdisciplinary research, not only in science-based faculties but in Arts, too.

The Faculty has embraced this approach through its China-West research focus, which receives seed funding under HKU’s Strategic Research Themes programme. China-West was pioneered six years ago under the previous dean, Professor Kam Louie, and now it is led by Professor Stephen Chu, who is also Programme Director of the cross-disciplinary Hong Kong Studies undergraduate programme.

“China-West Studies is seen as somewhat ‘old school’ by some critics because in an age of globalisation, it is difficult to dichotomise the two. Sometimes China is West and the West is China. But we want to explore topics of interaction and hybridisation,” he said.

“There are many experts in HKU in different departments and faculties who are interested in China-West topics – history, law, literature and so on. The SRT gives us a platform to capitalise on our strengths, pull these experts together, and encourage them to develop new areas of research.”

The SRT has members from the Faculties of Arts, Law, Social Sciences, Architecture and Education, and over the past four years it has organised several conferences, published several books and “made noise in academia that HKU is focusing on China-West Studies,” Professor Chu said. It also proposed an Area of Excellence in Chinese masculinity studies, which made it to the final round of consideration by the Research Grants Council – close enough to encourage members of the research potential in this new field.

Upcoming conferences give an insight on other ideas that are being explored. “Hong Kong as Method” will consider Hong Kong’s potential as a route through which to understand the cultural and intercultural dynamics of China and the West. And a conference co-organised with New York University on “Siting Postcoloniality” will look at post-colonialism in the Hong Kong and Asian context. The SRT will also co-sponsor an international conference on “Food and Health” organized by the Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences. These activities will be attended by top international researchers (including researchers at HKU) in the particular themes that are under the China-West Studies rubric.

Professor Chu hopes in the near future to tap into the expertise of Professor Shih Shu-Mei, Hon-Yin and Suet-Fong Chan Endowed Professor of Chinese, who is a pioneer globally in Sinophone studies, and also to find yet more research collaborators outside Arts.

Architecture and urban planning academics, for example, worked with our Department of Comparative Literature on knowledge exchange projects that addressed the interplay of cultural, architectural and community preservation, and could be potential partners in research. “Each discipline can contribute a different perspective for analysing our city,” he said.

More large research projects are expected to emerge from the SRT and Professor Chu said they hoped to propose a China-West topic to the Research Grants Council’s Collaborative Research Fund in the near future.

“The most fruitful achievements can be made from the chemistry that happens when different disciplines meet each other and interact,” he added, a point that will also be relevant to a new research theme, the Emerging SRT on Law, Literature, Language, with the Faculty of Law.

**Upcoming Conferences Sponsored By The China-West SRT:**

**Hong Kong as Method** - December 7 to 9, 2014
This international conference provides an arena for scholars from different disciplines to address the reconfiguration of Hong Kong culture and society in the age of global modernity.

“Hong Kong As Method” will open with a public seminar featuring novelist Mr Chan Koonchung, scholar Professor Leo Ou-fan Lee, and chaired by Professor Anthony Fung. The seminar, in Cantonese, will be held in Rayson Huang Theatre on Sunday, December 7, 2014, from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm.

The conference is co-organised by the Department of Comparative Literature, the Hong Kong Studies Programme, and the Center for the Study of Globalization and Cultures.

**Siting Postcoloniality** - June 25 to 27, 2015
This conference and workshop, organized by the School of English, will take as its points of departure the postcolonial critiques of nationalism and colonial cultural hegemony, and their focusing in particular on moments of opposition and resistance and the possibilities of strategic subversion in the colonial archive, literary texts and cultural processes.
Chinese painting until the mid-19th century was dominated by the literati, who favoured landscape and calligraphic art. But research by Dr Yeewan Koon is showing that a small revolution was brewing on the fringes of this world, by artists who were near the frontlines of the extraordinary changes happening in their country.

Quite apart from tranquil landscapes, their work absorbed and reflected on the upheavals around them, and toyed with the conventions.

Prominent among them was Su Renshan, a rebellious, Guangdong-based artist whose work was in the traditional style but featured thick, black calligraphy and unexpected images, such as women representing the gods of wealth, longevity and luck. Dr Koon recently published a monograph, *A Defiant Brush: Su Renshan and the Politics of Painting in Guangdong*.

“Su didn’t operate within the larger cultural hub. He was always an outsider and this allowed him to comment on what was happening. He was very angry and that is something that you don’t really get in Chinese painting,” she said.

His anger stemmed both from personal troubles (his father had him placed in the local *yamen* - bureaucratic office - for at least a year, reputedly for “filial impiety”) and political ones. He painted around the time of the Opium Wars, which affected Guangdong in particular. People were anti-government and anti-Western, and Su’s paintings reflected this challenge to authority.

Most importantly to an art historian, his work also represented a missing link between the traditional literati paintings and the bolder, more modern art that emerged in Shanghai from the 1860s. The commercial trade at the time, combined with Su’s works, suggest his influence reached Shanghai.

In fact, Dr Koon thinks the Guangzhou art world in general had a role to play in the transition from the landscape literati tradition to the modern art world in late 19th century Shanghai.

“When we read about Chinese art history, we tend to think of Hangzhou, Suzhou, Beijing as the centres of production and particular styles – as the cultural centres. You rarely hear regional centres such as Guangzhou being mentioned,” she said.

This led her to her next project, “The Self-knowing Copy: Replications, Revisions and Citations in Chinese Painting”, which recently received GRF funding.

Guangzhou was a production centre for export art, which involved a lot of copying. The work was typically dismissed as a documentary rather than real art, but Dr Koon thinks the painters were making an artistic choice. While they followed the long tradition of copying in Chinese painting, they chose to copy 18th-century images that reflected nostalgia for the pre-Opium War years, she said.

Copying as a statement also had an antecedent in the revered 16th-century artist, Qiu Ying, who copied the famous scroll painting *Going Up the River During Ching Ming Festival*, but changed the ending to make a statement in support of Suzhou, which was being punished by the emperor for backing one of his opponents.

“My interest in regional identity came with *A Defiant Brush* and now I’m picking up where I left off,” Dr Koon said.

*A Defiant Brush: Su Renshan and the Politics of Painting in Guangdong* is published by the University of Hawaii Press.

Detail from *Qingming shanghe tu*, attributed to Qiu Ying.
Dr Lee Tong King of the School of Chinese flips through two books of poetry, one in graphic black-and-white, the other a full technicolour rendition of the same text but with the pages (and poems) cut in half. The layout lets him mix and match the different halves to turn the original 163 poems into more than 26,000 new poems, and create new meaning in the process.

This is cutting-edge stuff in the literary world and especially in Chinese literature where little study has been made of such experimental writing. Dr Lee is hoping to address the gap through his new GRF-funded project “The Chinese Cybertext”.

“The first thing that may come to mind when we hear ‘cybertext’ is the computer and digital literary text, but it is actually about dynamism. It involves non-trivial action on the part of the reader, who contributes much more effort beyond merely turning the page,” he said.

“Cybertext also goes one step further than interpretive freedom. One of the inherent principles behind postmodern writing is that the meaning is not controlled by the author — the final meaning of the work does not exist in and of itself within those words. Rather, those words provide a form that contains meaning potential to be drawn out by the readers themselves.”

Dr Lee’s project will examine three modalities of cybertext. The first is the printed form, as exemplified by the example mentioned above, which was published in 2011 by Taiwanese poet Hsia Yü.

“This is a physical and sensorial experience, very unconventional, whereby the reader is engaged on several fronts. Interpretation is somewhat less relevant in this context although it is still there,” he said.

The second modality is more conventional, drawing from the digital world. Again using Taiwanese poetry, Dr Lee will examine a website where users click on words or phrases and activate new things, such as characters morphing into new words, that influence the meaning of the text.

Third is text as art. The example he will draw on is an art installation that is in effect a poetry-generating machine. The machine poses mundane questions to users, such as their favourite weather or food, then generates a poem.

“This may seem like play, but it has theoretical significance. It’s deliberately trivialised to show people that poetry writing need not be something that is distanced from you and me. Everyone can participate.”

While these texts seemed unrelated in their physical forms, they have continuity in their structural and interactive features, which could constrain or facilitate the generation of text. Dr Lee will be exploring this in his research and hopes to develop a paradigm of Chinese cybertext.

“Chinese literary criticism does not take experimental literature in general, and Chinese cybertext in particular, into serious account. But in future, when we have a textbook called contemporary Chinese poetry, we eventually have to look at these examples and give them consideration because they are a force to be contended with alongside other traditional forms of writing,” he said.

Dr Lee Tong King

The RGC General Research Fund Recipients 2014-2015 Are:

School of Chinese
Dr TK Lee – The Chinese Cybertext
Dr YF Yeung - The Literary and Cultural Significance of Cantonese Branch of Nanshe in Modern Context

School of Humanities
Dr Alexandra Cook - The Herbarium as Scientific Object: 1545-present
Dr Picus Ding - Child Acquisition of Lexical Tones in Prinmi: A Project for Basic Research
Dr Yeewan Koon - The Self-knowing Copy: Replications, Revisions and Citations in Chinese Painting
Dr Dan Robins - The Mohists and the Beginnings of Chinese Philosophy
Dr Mirana M Szeto - Hong Kong SAR New Wave Cinema: Between Mainlandization and Localization in the Neoliberal Context

School of Modern Languages and Cultures
Dr Izumi Nakayama - Be Polite, Be Healthy, Be Feminine: Gender, Body Culture, Etiquette, and Health in Modern Japan
Zhang Yun thought she would never do two things: she would never do a PhD and never study at Harvard. She had opportunities to do both through her association with the Faculty of Arts.

Yun was studying for her Master’s degree at Peking University when Professor Louise Edwards arrived to talk about the Faculty’s China Studies programme in 2010. Yun was so impressed she made a snap decision. “I was not thinking of doing a PhD, but she got me interested. I only applied to one university and that was HKU.”

Upon arriving in 2010, she started receiving information about fellowships and exchanges and saw an opportunity too good to pass up. The Harvard-Yenching Visiting Fellowship in particular caught her eye. She was the first Arts student to apply in some time.

“I had no one else to consult so I had to imagine the interview questions myself and try out different scenarios. It was crazy but interesting,” she said.

It proved to be a winning approach. In August 2012 Yun was on her way to Harvard. “I didn’t think I would ever go to Harvard, but I did want to go abroad. China Studies as a discipline was started by scholars in the West after all. It was good for my research and for personal maturing,” she said.

Her research focused on women’s journals in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Before then, women’s writing concerned private matters and their public identity was constructed through male writers. But during this period, women began to engage in topical issues and state affairs, and to write themselves into the discourse on such topics as nationalism, feminism, and anti-imperialism. “I’m saying they were not submissively subscribing to men’s views all the time,” Yun said.

Her 18 months at Harvard gave her access to valuable library resources that she could not find elsewhere, and to scholars at other institutions in the Boston area. She also found support for showing initiative. Harvard-Yenching agreed to fund weekly workshops she initiated where Fellows could interact with renowned academics and get advice on their writing and research skills. It also agreed to pay for a senior PhD student at Harvard to copy-edit Yun’s research.

Coming back to HKU was something of a shock – the Faculty had moved to a new building, many of her friends had graduated and her supervisor had moved on. But she received a lot of support in settling back in and found she was happy to be in Hong Kong. “I never realised how much I loved Hong Kong until I went away. HKU in some ways is better than Harvard, I have received so much support here. I’m very thankful for that,” she said.

She advises potential applicants to the Harvard-Yenching Visiting Fellowship to be adventurous and challenge themselves. Who knows where it might lead? Yun completed her PhD requirements and has landed a teaching fellowship at the Schwarzman Scholars Programme at Tsinghua University, a kind of Rhodes Scholar programme focused on cultivating future leaders knowledgeable about China.

Ms Zhang Yun at Harvard

**Postgraduate Student News**

PhD Candidate in the Department of Music, Mr Gordon Fung Dic-lun, has been recognized for his work at two recent competitions. He received an Honorable Mention at the Atlas Ensemble’s Fifth Atlas Academy at the Conservatory of Amsterdam for his work “Quatre Images de ma Ville”. He was also the only Hong Kong composer among 50 selected by jury members of the “Feeding Music – Music for Expo Milano 2015”. Each of the 50 finalists will be asked to create a new composition connected to the Expo 2015 theme ‘Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life’.

Ms Alice Yau, a PhD Candidate in the Centre for the Humanities and Medicine, has been given the Fawzia Braine Memorial Award for Best Journal Article Published by A Novice Scholar 2013/2014 for her co-authored publication entitled, “I Don’t Want to See My Children Suffer After Birth: The ‘Risk of Knowing’ Talk and Decision-making in Prenatal Screening for Down’s Syndrome in Hong Kong”. The Award is given annually by the Hong Kong Association for Applied Linguistics.

Ms Sarah Downes from the School of English is the first graduate of the Joint PhD programme offered by HKU and King’s College London (KCL). Under the joint supervision of Dr Otto Heim at HKU and Dr Anna Snaith at KCL, Sarah’s research project, entitled “Reading Jean Rhys: Empire, Modernism and the Politics of the Visual”, considered the relationship between literary modernism and visual culture in the work of Caribbean modernist Jean Rhys. She will be conferred her degree at the 192nd Congregation on December 3, 2014.
Students with physical disabilities face greater challenges in everyday life, despite the fact HKU is recognised in the community for its accessible campus and special needs support. Opening doors, moving quickly between classes and being well positioned to hear a lecture are examples of the difficulties they can encounter.

But two Arts students are among the 140 or so students with physical and other special needs at the University who are making it work.

Rainbow Tang, a Year 2 BA student studying Linguistics and Psychology, has cerebral palsy and gets around campus with crutches and occasionally a wheelchair. Persistency and friends help her to cope.

“Although the environment at HKU is quite barrier-free, at the beginning I found it difficult to push open some doors by myself. I had to practice for one semester but now I can manage. Sometimes I also have to hurry from Centennial Campus to classes in other buildings. Luckily I have met many friends who will reserve a seat for me so I don’t need to rush.

“I have challenges but it is important that I find ways to overcome them so I can maximise my participation in every aspect of my daily life. I try to face my challenges in a cheerful manner and I don’t give up easily.”

Ona Wong, also a Year 2 BA student studying English and Psychology, has poor hearing and wears hearing aids in both ears. She is careful to sit close to lecturers so she can lip-read if necessary.

She also gets help from the Centre of Development and Resources for Students (CEDARS) in arranging seating for examinations, but has otherwise coped without special arrangements. In fact, when CEDARS paired her with a Year 2 student to help her through the first year, their conversations focused on topics all students talk about – how to get better grades, academic regulations and so on – rather than her special needs. The helper ended up being her first friend at HKU.

“Some of my friends don’t know I have a hearing impairment. If they talk on my right side, where it’s more severe, I will just move to the other side. It’s not a must to tell them,” she said

Both students are making the most of their time at university. Ona has joined a student society and is helping with their publications and orientation camp. She also works part-time as an English tutor, and with CEDARS once a week.

Rainbow has competed in local paralympic swimming events and won gold and silver medals this summer. She also plays piano for two hours every day and recently passed recital exams with Trinity College, London.

Both students have also done summer internships with the Mass Transit Railway Corporation, and are recipients of several scholarships. And they have been fortunate to have strong practical support from their families.

First Issue Of “Mercury” Published

Mercury, a new student-run, peer-reviewed journal established in the Faculty of Arts, has published its first issue under the theme of “Identity”.

Articles included in the Autumn 2014 issue include, “From Paocai to Xinqi – The Role of Kimchi in Korean Culinary Nationalism and Cultural Identity”, by Chung Wing Tung Elaine, an undergraduate in the Korean Studies Programme, and “The Revival of Irish: Why Bother?” by Mak Bo Yue Bonnie from the School of English. Other submissions came from students in the School of Chinese, the Departments of Comparative Literature and Fine Arts, as well as the Faculty of Law. Karen Parker, a PhD student at the Centre for Research on Language Diversity at LaTrobe University in Australia, was the first issue’s postgraduate guest author.

To find out more about the journal and meet the team behind it, please visit http://www.artsfac.hku.hk/mercury/.
Sitting down with the Arts Association, H.K.U.S.U. Chairperson Ingrid Wong in October, with Hong Kong streets occupied by protestors, the conversation keeps returning to one topic: elections.

The protests started with a student boycott of classes over the decision to restrict civic nominations for Hong Kong’s next Chief Executive. Ingrid reflected that she had gone through an election herself to become chairperson in autumn 2013.

“I got something like 430 votes, almost as many as CY Leung,” she joked, referring to the 689 votes received by the current Chief Executive in 2012. “I like our election system because it’s a real democratic system where every Arts student has a vote.”

Like democratic systems elsewhere, it also tends to put its candidates through the wringer. The easy part is facing the voters — over a campaign period of a few days, students can question candidates about their platforms. But candidates also have to face a gruelling three-day session with former members of the association’s Executive Committee.

“They ask really tough questions, like the details of every plan and event that we suggest. Each session can go on for 20 hours and you only get a few hours’ sleep before you come back for the next session. At the time it was really hard but afterwards I realised it trained me for what was ahead,” Ingrid said.

What lay ahead were two clusters of activities. First were the regular association activities — an Arts Festival, book fair, forums, movie viewings, a city tour of old printing shops, and the production of a student magazine, Our Selection, among other things. Ingrid and her team periodically worked through the night to get everything ready on time.

The other cluster involved Hong Kong’s political situation, which heated up over the summer.

Several Arts students were arrested after a mass protest on July 1 over Hong Kong’s future political development, including Alex Chow Yong-kang, the Secretary-General of the Hong Kong Federation of Students.

“The night of their arrest was horrible,” Ingrid said. “We were really worried about our students and some members of the executive committee waited outside the police station to offer them help when they were released. During times like that you don’t sleep, you just rest.”

The arrests, as well as a class boycott in late September and the October protests, have also required Ingrid to adopt a careful balancing act because not all students support the actions. “I have had to make the time to canvass members and faculty staff before coming to a position. I can’t just tell my personal stance because what I say could affect the image of the Arts Association and of Arts students.”

Her term ends in November and she said she would take away better time management and multi-tasking skills and a stronger sense of belonging to the Faculty. One thing she will leave to others, though, is the Arts Association’s centenary next year. “That’s up to the next committee to plan,” she said. After a year like the one just passed, that seems fair enough.

The School of Humanities organised a Forum on October 31, 2014, bringing together a group of teachers and researchers from HKU to discuss Hong Kong’s Umbrella Movement. It aimed to address questions such as whether the Movement is a new form of politics, what experience of cultural identity has shaped the demands of the students, and what role should academics and universities play in the unfolding events. A large portion of the time was devoted to open discussion.

The Panel included Dr Joe Lau from the Department of Philosophy, Dr Mirana M Szeto from the Department of Comparative Literature, Professor Stephen Chu from the Hong Kong Studies Programme, Professor Joseph Chan from the Department of Politics and Public Administration in the Faculty of Social Sciences, and Dr Marco Wan from the Faculty of Law. The Forum was chaired by Professor Timothy O’Leary, Head of the School of Humanities.
Imagine students in five continents connected through the Internet, bringing their different perspectives and experiences to a shared course of study. That is the promise of MOOCs – massive open online courses – and now the Faculty of Arts is part of this pioneering experiment.

HKU has joined edX – a MOOC network of top-tier universities, founded by Harvard and MIT – and Arts will be offering one of the University’s first three online courses (the others are from Medicine and Architecture).

The course, Humanity and Nature in Chinese Thought, draws on the Faculty’s strength in bridging China and the West and offers an overview of the classical Chinese philosophers, such as Confucius and Mozi, as well as a brief introduction to Western philosophical thought, so students can compare approaches towards ethical guidance.

Unlike the Western focus on laws and rules that originated with the Ten Commandments and are dominated by a supernatural authority, Chinese philosophy takes a more naturalist approach rooted in the metaphor of natural paths that evolve by placement and movements of material over time.

“In [ancient] China, the central metaphor for understanding normative guidance was a 道 (dào) not the command of a divine authority—the Law. This metaphorical contrast lies at the heart of the difference between the two world views,” said Emeritus Professor of Chinese Philosophy, Chad Hansen, who is teaching the MOOC.

Chinese philosophy’s metaphor places more emphasis on permissibility/possibility while the Western one is linked to obligation and duty. It’s less about commands and obedience and more about how to find, choose and follow paths of varying probability of rewarding effort with outcome – 道. The Chinese metaphor makes it harder to reduce ethics to sets of verbal rules and emphasizes more fine-tuned guidance that comes from being an experienced path-finder. In art it regularly finds expression through visually following a path along water, and up mountains. We are not obeying a sequence of instructions, counting the steps north, then west, etc, but “reading” the path in real time to guide where we turn. Paths are an important alternative to laws/commands as a metaphor for natural guidance.”

Conveying these ideas over the Internet in an engaging way will, he admitted, be a challenge. The course, whose theme is illustrated in surveying Classical Chinese normative discussions, is set to start in the spring. Professor Hansen has done a dry run lecturing before a camera. “That turned out to be very difficult to watch and not very interesting. It doesn’t work the way it does in the class. One of the big theoretical issues with MOOCs is whether they can work as effective teaching devices,” he said.

He has engaged a Teaching Assistant, Mr. Jin Lee, and with the aid of the University’s eLearning Pedagogical Support Unit (EPSU), they will take on that challenge by filming more live discussions with students, before a class, adjusting his teaching style to the small confines of a camera, and enhancing his lectures with visuals for online users.

Nearly 1,000 students from around the world have already enrolled in the course, which is free, and the EPSU, Professor Hansen, and his T.A. are working on ways to promote interaction and enable assessment. Participants will receive a certificate without grades, so assessment will likely be based on their participation in interactive forums and completion of short written assignments.

“I think we’re in for a period of extensive experimentation to see how to make it work,” Professor Hansen said.

In any case, the MOOC will enable those who do not have the time, money or opportunity to attend HKU, to learn from one of our eminent professors.


**Arts Student Hayley Chan Hei-Man Wins Gold**

Arts Student Hayley Chan Hei-man won a gold medal for Hong Kong at the 2014 Asian Games in Incheon, South Korea, competing in the women’s RS:X windsurfing event. Hayley came first in all twelve races of the event.
To the casual observer, Hong Kong appears to be a Cantonese-speaking city with some English and Putonghua added in. But like major cities the world over, Hong Kong has attracted people from many different places. Beneath the homogeneous Cantonese front is a mosaic of languages and cultures, and now they are the focus of a website launched in the School of English.

The website, LinguisticMinorities.HK, is a project of Assistant Professor Dr Lisa Lim to recognise the richness of Hong Kong’s linguistic environment and give a voice to those communities whose languages are marginalised or in danger of dying out. Her initiative is in line with the increased attention world-wide to linguistic and cultural diversity, especially urban linguistic diversity, and language documentation and description as a scholarly enterprise, as well as the growing awareness of heritage and conservation in the Hong Kong community.

The website amasses information, resources and research on linguistic minorities, including the final-year projects of Language and Communication undergraduates who go into the field and interview speakers of minority languages. They have covered over a dozen communities so far – from Filipina domestic helpers to Hakka grandparents to African and South Asian families.

Some of the languages they focus on are dialects from China that are decreasingly being passed down to younger generations, such as Weitou, Hakka and Chiu Chau, or even in danger of dying out, such as Tanka, the language of boat-dwelling fishermen.

“We are trying to highlight the diversity of minorities in Hong Kong who are often overlooked,” Dr Lim said.

“The Census and Statistics Department can provide data in broad brushstrokes on the proportion of minorities who speak selected languages, but we are on the ground, doing detailed research and scratching far below the surface to reveal everyday issues and challenges. People talk to us about their identities, why they prefer one language over another, their frustrations.”

For example, South Asian children have very limited opportunities to study their native languages in local schools. This puts them at a disadvantage given the importance of mother-tongue learning.

Feedback on the website has been very positive. The linguistic communities appreciate the interest in their language situation, the students, whose high quality of work inspired the website, find it gratifying and eye-opening to engage in fieldwork and contribute to a collective resource, and journalists and other scholars have said the website plays an important role in showcasing the linguistic diversity of Hong Kong.

Dr Lim hopes that the website, which is supported by the Knowledge Exchange fund, can contribute to decision-making on policy on diversity and inclusion, and be further developed so that the linguistic communities can become more involved “and have some ownership of the website”. A Chinese version is currently being developed, and versions in the minority languages are also in planning.

For her work on http://linguisticminorities.hk/, Dr Lisa Lim was awarded the Faculty Knowledge Exchange Award 2014.
Xu Bing is one of the most admired contemporary Chinese artists today. When the Asia Society in Hong Kong decided to hold an exhibition of his works, it recruited Dr Yeewan Koon to curate, and she in turn brought in a group of undergraduate students who played an important supporting role in the project.

The theme (and name) of the exhibition, held at the Asia Society from May to August, was “It Begins with Metamorphosis: Xu Bing”. It featured some of Xu’s works using silkworms – live silkworms, that is, which had to be kept at 25 degrees Celsius and monitored throughout their six-to-eight week life cycle. This is where the students came in.

The team was tasked with procuring and raising the silkworms, which were central to two works – one involving a mulberry tree whose leaves are slowly eaten by the creatures, the other a book across which they spin their silk.

Bachelor of Fine Arts students Erin Li (third year) and Miles Dugan (just graduated), who were part of the student team, said it was exciting to contribute to the show of such a famous contemporary artist. They also developed workshops to convey Xu’s concepts to primary and secondary school students.

“What is special about Xu’s work is that he wants it to be artwork for the people, so that almost everyone can get something out of it. We designed the workshops with this in mind,” Erin said.

But first, the silkworms had to be raised. Silkworm-raising used to be fairly common in Hong Kong and China, particularly among schoolchildren – Xu himself started raising them when he was in New York City and lonely, which gave him the inspiration for his art. But hardly anyone has this experience these days.

The students and exhibition organisers were able to find a source for the silkworms in Mong Kok, and they kept them in boxes in an empty room on the 10th floor of Run Run Shaw Tower. Mulberry leaves were ordered via Taobao.

A steady stream of silkworms was needed for the exhibition – at one point there were up to 900 worms living on the 10th floor – and the students had to monitor their lifecycles to meet the exhibition demands. “For the opening, the curator, with the blessing of the artist, wanted to have some worms ready to spin silk for the book. We calculated that it took four or five weeks for them to get to silk spinning,” Miles said.

The silkworms also had another use. They became the basis for a workshop for primary school children and their parents on metamorphosis in the silkworm’s life and their own lives. The workshop also had a component related to another feature of Xu’s art, symbols and communication, which figured more prominently in sessions for secondary school students.

The workshops were supported by the Student Knowledge Exchange Fund and Dr Koon said they had been a great success in exciting young people about art. “We want to encourage young people to enjoy seeing exhibitions. This habit isn’t really there in Hong Kong, The silkworms added a dimension that young people could relate to.”

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Building A Reliable Apparatus For Chinese Language Assessment

The Chinese Language Enhancement Programme in the School of Chinese and the Centre for Language in Education at the Hong Kong Institute of Education joined hands to put together a proposal for a collaborative initiative entitled “Inter-institutional Collaboration on the Development of a Generally Recognized University Chinese Test and the Construction of a Complementary Repository of Question Papers”. Funding in the form of a substantial grant of HK$ 2.8 million has been approved by the UGC under a new arrangement in connection with “language-related collaborative projects”.

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The world’s environmental problems are usually left to scientists and engineers to sort out, but an Arts student has shown philosophers have a role to play, too.

Philosophy MPhil Kathleen Ho Ka-yan spearheaded a project that took secondary school students into the natural environment, and asked them to think deeply about biological diversity, the human impact on the planet and how they can help.

Kathleen joined forces with two PhD students to plan the programme, Xoni Ma from the Kadoorie Institute and Li Pui-sze from the Faculty of Science. They also brought in 16 undergraduates who are studying Ecology and Biodiversity to assist during the full-day sessions.

“We wanted to create an experience where local high schools students came into contact with nature in a way they perhaps hadn’t had the opportunity to do before. We thought this could inspire them and make them aware of their own impact on the environment, and encourage them to take an interest in these issues,” she said.

The project, called “Take Action! Youth Biodiversity Conservation Leadership Training Scheme”, involved four full-day sessions that ran over several months in the spring for 64 Form 4-6 students from 16 local secondary schools. Each session tackled human interaction with the environment.

On the first day, the theme was “See the Perceptions”. Students played an empire-building game that resulted in heavy resource use and environmental impacts and they were asked to reflect on this. They then visited a country park to better understand the role that such green spaces play in Hong Kong. They learned how to identify plant species, and were given a take-home survey for their parents, teachers and classmates.

The second session, “See the Values”, involved a visit to Long Valley to learn about wetland biodiversity, and to Tai Po Kau Nature Reserve to learn about the differences between native forest and human planting. “One boy said it was chilling that it was so quiet in the middle of the forest. I found that fulfilling because he had noticed and had an emotional reaction to it,” Kathleen said.

Day three, “See the Problems”, covered overfishing and seafood consumption with a visit to a supermarket to survey the sources of seafood there. The students also visited Fung Yuen Butterfly Reserve to consider the challenges of conservation on private land under Hong Kong law.

The final day, “See the Solutions”, involved a role-play debate using real life case studies of development projects in Hong Kong. Students argued different viewpoints, such as pro-development and pro-conservation, as well as that of residents in the area.

“Our message was that we are not here to give bite-sized solutions to Hong Kong’s environmental problems. Instead, we want them to see how many obstacles there can be,” she said.

The students were required to come up with action plans for their schools. Most executed their plans, such as labelling tree species around the school, building a birdhouse from scrap, and negotiating with school management for more field trips.

The project received funding from the Student Knowledge Exchange Fund, and was mentored by Dr Alexandra Cook in the Department of Philosophy. It also had the support of The Conservancy Association and gained recognition from the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department as a Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan - Public Awareness and Engagement event.

“I was struck by how the student’s attitude towards environmental conservation changed quite quickly with some help and a push from us. It made me think we should continue to provide this sort of education for the younger generation,” she said.

A ceremony was held on June 21, 2014 to celebrate the participants’ graduation as young leaders of local biodiversity conservation. During the event, several student groups presented their “School Biodiversity Conservation Plans” — initiatives wholly designed and implemented by students to encourage conservation activities within their school area.
Six highly respected artists from the disciplines of Film, Music, Literature and the Visual Arts have been appointed as University Artists for 2014-2016.

**Film**

Fruit Chan
Award-winning independent Hong Kong filmmaker, screenwriter and producer Fruit Chan is best known for his films depicting the everyday life of local people. His internationally acclaimed films include *Made in Hong Kong* (1997) and *Durian Durian* (2000). Fruit Chan’s latest film, *The Midnight After*, had its world premiere in the Panorama section of the 64th Berlin International Film Festival in February 2014.

John Sham Kin Fun
John Sham has over 35 years of experience in the film industry. He is one of Hong Kong’s most important film producers, as well as a distributor, cinema house investor and operator, actor and scriptwriter. With his depth of understanding of all aspects of the filmmaking process, John offers an invaluable opportunity for students and the public to engage with the creative industries in Hong Kong, China, Asia, and beyond.

**Fine Arts**

Artstation: Glenn Davidson and Anne Hayes
Anne Hayes and Glenn Davidson are co-directors of Artstation, a multi-disciplinary art and technology partnership formed in 1989 and based at Chapter Art Centre in Cardiff Wales. Artstation is known for international architectural paper installations, interactive media projects, and socially-engaged practice and practice-led research. Their work has been seen across the UK, USA, Canada, Japan, Australia and in many European countries.

**Music**

Trey Lee
Born in Hong Kong, Trey Lee is an internationally-renowned cellist who has been awarded several major international prizes. He has appeared in important venues and collaborated with esteemed conductors, composers and orchestras worldwide. In 2012, Trey was appointed UNICEF Hong Kong Ambassador. His virtuoso playing and dedication to charitable causes are an inspiration to young people in Hong Kong and overseas.

**Poetry**

Henri Cole
Henri Cole was born in Japan and grew up in Germany and the US. He holds an MFA from Columbia and has been an artist-in-residence at numerous institutions, including Harvard and Yale. His body of work already establishes him as a major writer of our times. Through his poetry, Henri provides a creative means for young people to express the confusion that many of them feel in today’s constantly-evolving world.

Trey Lee generously shared his time with students from the Department of Music’s Advanced Music Performance course at the beginning of October. John Sham has visited the campus twice this semester: for a dialogue with award-winning director Derek Yee in a packed Rayson Huang Theatre, as well as a class visit to the Common Core Course, “Hong Kong Culture in the Context of Globalization”.

Upcoming events held as part of the Scheme include three performances by Trey Lee and renowned international musicians on November 28, 2014, in the University Museum and Art Gallery as part of the Musicus Fest 2014 Heritage programme, and a scriptwriting workshop led by Fruit Chan. Glenn Davidson and Anne Hayes will spend two weeks at the university early next year to work with students on an art installation.

The University Artists Scheme was officially launched in 2008 and is the first programme of its kind to be held at HKU. The Scheme aims to bring artists of international caliber to our campus to enrich the lives of our students, staff, and the wider Hong Kong community through a series of activities usually held over a two-year period.

The University Artists Scheme is hosted by the Faculty of Arts and is supported by Dr Alice Lam.
MB Lee Distinguished Lecture In The Humanities

Professor Naoki Sakai, Goldwin Smith Professor of Asian Studies at Cornell University, delivered the third MB Lee Distinguished Lecture in the Humanities on October 14 in Rayson Huang Theatre. In his lecture, entitled “The Loss of Empire and the End of Pax Americana”, Professor Sakai discussed the end of Pax Americana in East Asia and the rise of jingoism in Japan in recent decades as one of its most conspicuous consequences. He argued that the Japanese Government openly wishes to return to the containment policies of the Cold War years while resurrecting the glorious image of the Japanese Empire that was supposed to have perished at the end of the Second World War. He then went on to examine this peculiar form of Japanese ultra-nationalism from the perspective of collective shame and hikikomori (reclusive withdrawal) in Japanese society.

Professor Sakai also led two Faculty and Graduate Workshops during his visit: the first on “Bordering” on October 13, and the second on “Asian Humanity and Theory” on October 15.

M+ AT HKU

The Department of Fine Arts hosted two events in October in conjunction with M+, Hong Kong’s new museum for visual culture that will be a centerpiece of the West Kowloon Cultural District.

The first, on October 18, was a special forum, entitled “Theorising Art Histories Globally”, gathering leading art historians to contemplate the rapidly transforming landscape of contemporary art. Speakers included Ute Meta Bauer, a Professor of Contemporary Art at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, Michio Hayashi, a Professor of Art History and Visual Studies at Sophia University in Japan, and David Joselit, Distinguished Professor in the Department of Art History at the City University of New York. The forum was held as part of M+ Matters – a series of public talks initiated in 2012 to build and deepen the engagement between M+, its local community and international network of colleagues.

The second, on October 20, was a class visit by Doryun Chong, Chief Curator, M+ to the Fine Arts course “Art History and Its Methods”.

Open Dialogue Between Gao Xingjian And Liu Zaifu

The School of Chinese hosted an open dialogue between Nobel Prize for Literature winner Gao Xingjian (高行健) and renowned literary critic Liu Zaifu (劉再復) on October 28, 2014. The dialogue was moderated by Hong-yin and Suet-fong Chan Professor in Chinese Shih Shu-mei, with commentary from Professor Gilbert Fong Chee Fun, Dr Jessica Yeung Wai Yee and Dr Janet Shum Sau Ching. The event, which was held in the Grand Hall of the Lee Shau Kee Lecture Centre, was co-organized by Ming Pao Monthly.

Only Through Time

The HKU Black Box Theatre welcomed its first audiences in a soft launch for three performances of the play “Only Through Time: Minding the Gap” featuring Hong Kong actors and former students of the MFA in Creative Writing in English, overseen by Dr Page Richards and a new creative consortium Thirtyspokes.

The original play, inspired by a line from T.S. Eliot’s poem Four Quartets, tells a new story of time in Hong Kong. It is a dramatic work about coming of age twice-over in Hong Kong, once at 21 and again at 42. This new piece is a time-bending performance incorporating theatre, art, movement and dance produced by Thirtyspokes and the Creative Writing Studio in the School of English.

The performances were held as part of “The Still Point”, a three-week line-up of exhibitions, performances and talks engaging art, faith and humanity consisting of a touring presentation of the QU4RTETS and showcase of works by artists in Hong Kong, conceived in response to the larger themes of T. S. Eliot’s Four Quartets.
Property development is not a typical sector for Arts graduates, let alone those who study comparative literature, philosophy and European languages. But Wendy Gan (BA 1987) made the transition with seeming ease – helped in no small part, she said, by her Arts degree.

Gan was hired immediately upon graduation by the Swire Group, which had her do the rounds as a management trainee. During her rotation with Swire Properties Ltd, she made such a positive impression that they brought her in full-time before her training period was up. Since then, she has climbed the corporate ladder to become head of sales and marketing at Swire Properties and executive director of Pacific Century Premium Developments, involved in everything from the Bel-Air luxury residences to office blocks in Jakarta to ski resorts in Japan.

She said one of the keys to her success was that she brought a different perspective to the table from the architects, engineers and other professionals involved in her projects.

“I tend to think out of the box, to come from the end-user’s point of view. I’m able to look at a flat or office and think, if I was going to purchase it, what would be important for me? I think that different approach comes from having done an Arts degree.

“An Arts degree prepares you for everything. You learn how to communicate well and how to understand human nature. I took a course on logic, too. If you have training in logical thinking, critical thinking, and languages, it’s really easy for you to pick up any subject.” Gan herself has a qualification as a chartered surveyor and an EMBA.

She has also brought her talents to the aid of HKU, mentored by former Convocation Chairperson, Dr Mary Rodrigues, who also first hired her at the Swire Group. Gan became Convocation Chairperson herself, from 2001 to 2004, and sat on the University Council until 2011.

The experience strengthened her connection with HKU and, in a sense, helped her to cope with a personal period of change and upheaval. In early 2013 her sister passed away from cancer. Gan set up the Anissa Gan Scholarships for Arts Students Worldwide Exchange at HKU in her memory.

“I thought, let’s have a lasting memory that would help others. Instead of just being sad and crying, why not make something positive out of it? I spent a summer studying in Europe as an Arts student and I think it’s an important way for students to open their minds and see what other people are doing, what other cultures are like. The scholarship has that aim,” she said.

She hopes other alumni will also be inspired to give back to HKU in any way they can. “I think alumni can give back in many ways. I started off giving my time. When I could afford it, I made a donation. It’s an important way for alumni to have a sense of belonging to the University,” she said.

The two recipients of this year’s Anissa Gan Scholarships for Arts Students Worldwide Exchange are spending a full year studying abroad, one at the University of Edinburgh and the other at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.

In recognition of her contributions to the University and the community, Wendy Gan was honoured with an Honorary University Fellowship in September 2014.

Recent Publications By Members Of The Arts Faculty

A Kryptic Model of the Incarnation, Ashgate.
By Andrew Loke

Men and Masculinities in Contemporary China, Brill.
By Geng Song (co-authored with Derek Hird)

Statistique(s) et Génocide au Rwanda: La genèse d’un système de catégorisation “génocidaire”, L’Harmattan.
By Facil Tesfaye

《一战中的华工》，Shanghai People’s Press
By Xu Guoqi

Chinese and Americans: A Shared History, Harvard University Press
By Xu Guoqi