

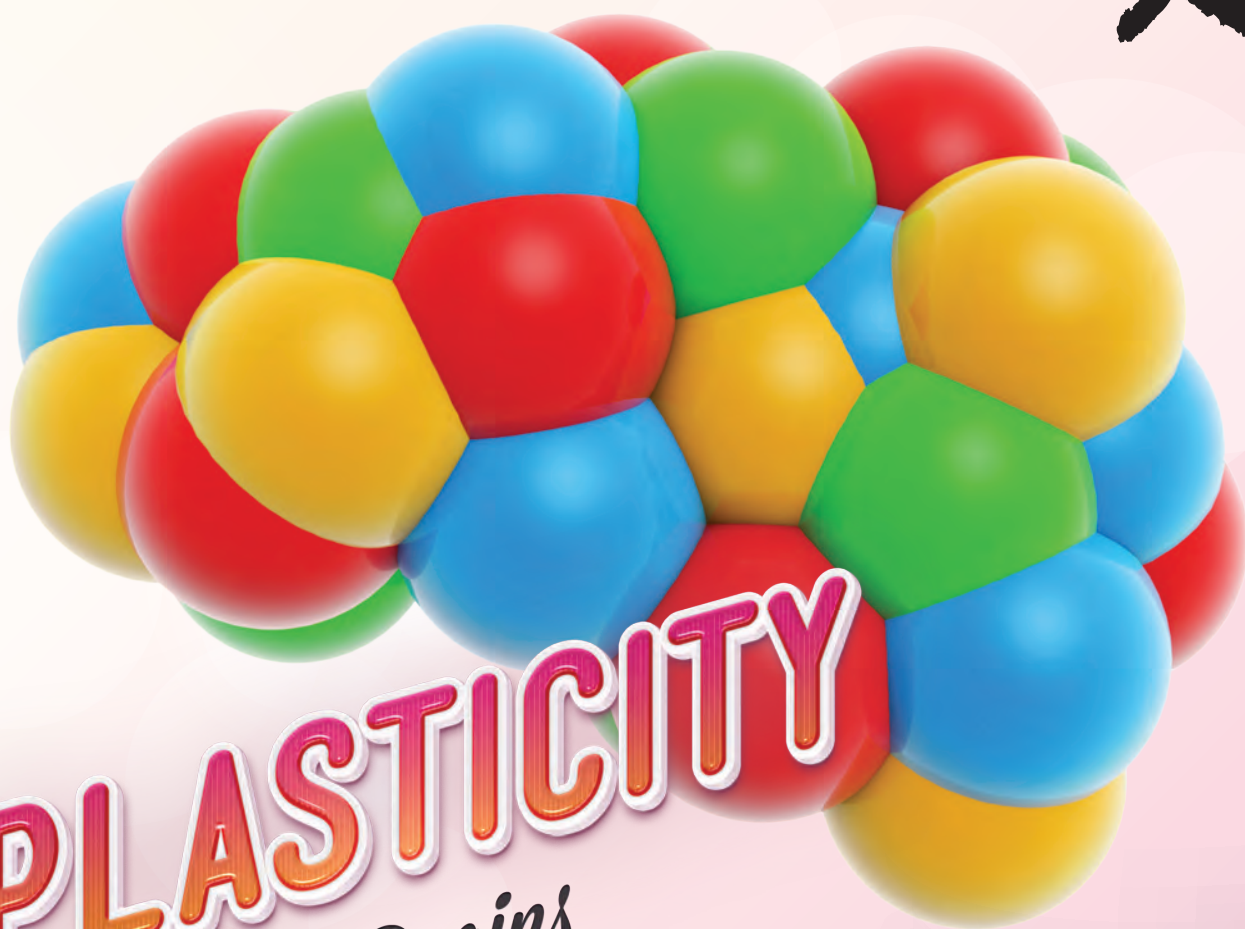
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Socien**tist** 社

科人



PLASTICITY

of Human Brains

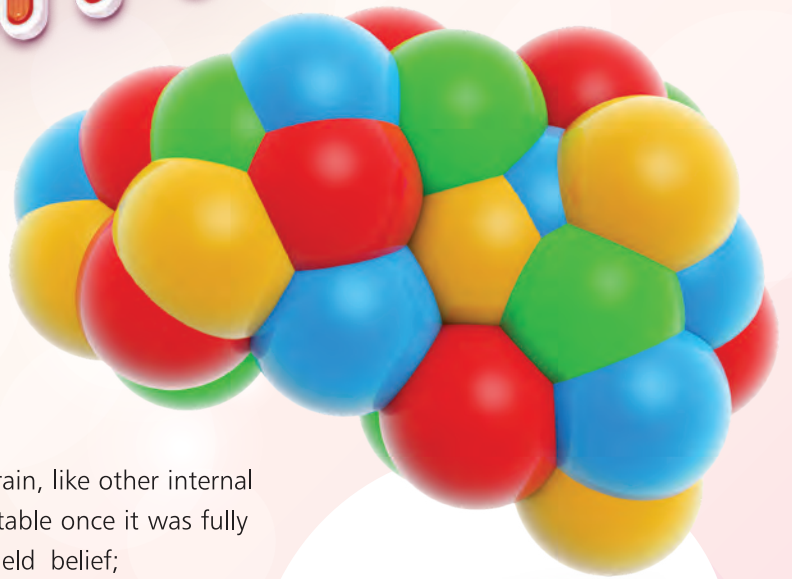
Community
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Special Education Services
in Hong Kong kindergartens



PLASTICITY

of Human Brains



For a while, people believed that an adult brain, like other internal organs in the body, was largely fixed and stable once it was fully developed. Contrary to this previously held belief; recent research in neuropsychology and neuroscience has revolutionised this concept with evidence showing that our brain is actually more plastic and malleable than we once thought. Indeed, the structure and function of the brain is changeable. It is capable of reorganising itself depending on the experiences generated from within the body or that received from the external world. The modifiability of the brain in response to this internal or external experience is called "brain plasticity" or "neuroplasticity".

What is **NEUROPLASTICITY** ?

Our brain is a highly efficient organ. In the 1980s, neuroscientists Michael Merzenich and his associates at the University of California in San Francisco observed that after one of the fingers of the monkeys was surgically removed, the cortical map that represented that finger would rearrange itself. The cortical map that corresponded to the removed finger would now represent the finger adjacent to it. These animal studies shed light on how efficient and how plastic a brain could be and prompted researchers to find similar changes in the human brain.

One interesting study in the human brain comes from the London Taxi Drivers' study (Maguire et al, 2001, 2006). Similar to Hong Kong, London is known for its complicated road networks with many side streets and road regulations. Maguire and his associates wondered if taxi drivers who navigated in different parts of the city daily would have a different representation related to navigation in their brains compared to those of bus drivers, who drove a similar route every day. The results agreed with their prediction. Compared to bus drivers, London taxi drivers showed a larger grey-matter volume in their posterior hippocampus, a region that implicates spatial memory and navigation. This study, along with others, shows that the adult human brain is highly malleable.

In fact, when we learn to play a new musical instrument or master a different language, neuroplasticity takes place in our brains. Acquiring complex motor skills such as juggling a classic three-ball cascade could bring structural changes to the mid-temporal area in the brains of young adults (Draganski et al., 2004). ▶



Are there **CRITICAL PERIODS** for neuroplasticity?



There are critical periods, or window of time, for each neural system to develop. During the critical period, the corresponding neural system is particularly sensitive and plastic to the environmental stimuli. For instance, language development has a critical period that begins in infancy and ends before puberty. After this critical period closes, it is hard to learn a second language without an accent. The regulation of these critical periods is crucial to healthy brain development.

Does it mean that our brain will not change after the critical period of development? The answer is *no*; neuroplasticity does not come to a halt as we age. As Dr. Michael Merzenich describes in a vivid way, "Plasticity exists from the cradle to the grave". In examining the post-mortem brains of terminally ill patients, Dr. Frederick Gage of the Salk Institute in California, U.S. and Dr. Peter Eriksson of Sahlgrenska University Hospital in Sweden, discovered that new cells continued to be formed in adult brains (Eriksson et al., 1998). Their finding provides solid evidence that our brains

are capable of change in adulthood. With these new cells in place, we can imagine there are unlimited possibilities for our brains to adapt and evolve throughout the life span. Exciting advances in stem cell research has shown that stem cells are capable to divide and differentiate themselves to become neurons or glial cells, which are the basic building blocks of our brain. The formation and growth of neurons is called neurogenesis. To date, neuroscientists demonstrated that adult neurogenesis can be found in the subventricular zone adjacent to the caudate, which is incorporated into the olfactory bulb, and in the subgranular zone of the dentate gyrus, which incorporates into the hippocampus (Curtis, Kam, & Faull, 2011).

► Neuroplasticity does not only happen during the interaction with the external world. Research has demonstrated that experience generated in our own mental world could also induce structural and functional changes in the brain. Mental training in the form of meditation was able to induce a grey matter volume change in brain regions that are important for regulating our attention and emotions (Lee et al., 2012; Leung et al., 2013). Hence, both internal and external experience can induce neuroplasticity in our brains. Moreover, different forms of experience can induce a specific change in the structures, activities and/or networks of our brains, leading to what we call an experience-dependent neuroplasticity. For instance, practitioners on loving-kindness meditation, a form of meditations that emphasises a state of universal love and compassion for the self and others, showed a long-lasting change in the brain regions involving in empathy and emotional regulation. In contrast, practitioners on focused-attention meditation, a form of meditations that focuses on focusing attention on a particular subject or body sensation, showed a greater neural activation in the attention-related network when engaging in a sustained attention task.



Abnormal neuroplastic changes to the brain are implicated in some brain pathologies. Some researchers believe that Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) may be a consequence of hyper-plasticity in the brain. With excessive connections among different networks, the brain of individuals with ASD is "too noisy" and hence cannot function properly to fit the demand of the current environment. Alternatively, some researchers suggest that individuals with dementia may represent a loss of neuroplastic change in their brains, which leads to a decline in cognitive functioning. Aberrant neuroplasticity has also been implicated in obsessive-compulsive disorders, depressions, psychosocial stress, and other neurodegenerative disorders. Researchers are yet to explore the exact mechanism on how the abnormal neuroplastic changes lead to symptoms found in the neuropsychiatric disorders. The current understanding is that the human brain can work properly only when optimal neuroplastic changes take place.



NEUROPLASTICITY and BRAIN HEALTH

An organ weighting an estimate of one and a half kilograms, the brain defines who we are and what we are capable of doing. Considering that the central role of the brain is to orchestrate different bodily systems, its health status is not an issue that we can afford to overlook. A healthy brain is necessary to provide an environment for neuroplasticity to take place. Research data has shown that the regular practice of mental and physical exercise may protect the ageing brain (e.g. Leung, 2015). While we work hard to keep our physical body in good shape, we should not forget that also we need to exercise our brain to keep it fit and

healthy. Recent research has pointed at the direction that regular cognitive activity, physical exercise, a healthy life style, and positive affective states are protective factors of brain health.

Unfortunately, chronic negative affective states are unwelcome and depression has become increasingly prevalent. We know well that the brain regulates both cognition and emotion, which themselves interact closely with each other. Hence, depression does not just consume our mental well-being but it also minimises our cognitive performance, e.g. poor attention and memory. In this connection, evidence has shown that mental exercise helps build resilience to adversity and oddity in life (Kemper & Khirallah, 2015). Open-minded alternative explanations of life circumstances may also help acquire a balanced view on issues that seem bothersome or even unresolvable. Therefore, adaptive affective styles are important for building a pleasant and meaningful life.

Professor Tatia Lee Mei-chun (李湄珍教授)

Head

Department of Psychology



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Social Sciences Outstanding Teaching Award

I believe that there are artistic elements and beauty in Science and logic and scientific elements in the Arts. My teaching is grounded on this belief. Through facilitating students to appreciate and practice both sides; they can gain knowledge and insights beyond these particular subjects. This guiding philosophy also gave me motivation to set up a common core course 'Creative Arts as A Way of Knowing' in which I try to demonstrate how creative arts can help us understand ourselves and the world, and the scientific basis of that. The Master of Expressive Arts Therapy program, emphasis that the artistic process along with scientific evidence is equally important.

Creativity helps open one's mind and creates new perspectives and knowledge. Likewise, creativity is equally important in teaching and learning. Some examples of innovative approaches and tools are electronic aids, multimedia, experiential learning, live-demonstrations to assist teaching; creative integration of knowledge from different disciplines to provide new insights for students; and encouraging students to learn and apply what they have learnt in practice creatively. In this regard, as a teacher, I also need to learn and update my knowledge constantly. This will at the same time, serve as a model for the students.

With the support from the Faculty and Department, I have the space and courage to create, innovate, lead, try, and to pioneer my philosophy of teaching and learning. I am very grateful for that. Recently, the Master of Expressive Arts Therapy programme has received international recognition based on the good academic and professional quality and standard of the programme. I believe that the students of the programme can creatively apply their knowledge for the betterment of the community.

Dr Rainbow Ho Tin-hung (何天虹博士)

Associate Professor

Department of Social Work and Social Administration





Social Sciences Outstanding Research Output Award – Applied Research

The Effectiveness of Psychoeducational Family Intervention for Patients with Schizophrenia in a 14-year Follow-up Study in a Chinese Rural Area

It is unclear if the impacts of psychoeducational family interventions for persons with schizophrenia can be sustained over the next ten years. Our earlier research tested the nine-month effectiveness of psychoeducational family intervention in rural China. Even though it is difficult to carry out a long-term follow-up, we firstly explored the fourteen-year effect of psychoeducational family intervention for persons with schizophrenia in a Chinese rural community. The data from a cluster RCT study of psychoeducational family intervention in a prospective fourteen-year follow-up was analysed. All persons with schizophrenia ($n=326$) who participated in the cluster RCT were drawn from six townships in Xinjin County of Chengdu in 1994, of whom 238 (73.0%) were still alive and their informants were then followed up in 2008. The standardised tools (e.g., PANSS, GAF) were used in the follow-up study.

This study showed that there were no significant differences of marital status, mean scores of the PANSS positive symptoms, negative symptoms, general mental health, and total scores among the psychoeducational family intervention, medication, and control groups in 2008. The psychoeducational family intervention group had significantly higher rates of antipsychotics medication and higher levels of work ability than the other two groups. The control group had significantly higher rates of never treated (26.0%) than the psychoeducational family intervention group (6.5%).

This study indicated that psychoeducational family intervention might still be effective in the 14-year follow-up, especially in patients' treatment adherence and social functioning. The results of this highly original and complex study may foster further development of theory and practice related to psychosocial interventions, and new service models for improving the long-term treatment and prognosis of persons with schizophrenia in China and internationally. Hopefully, these discoveries can support mental health policy makers to develop programmes and to convince the stakeholders on investing in prevention and psychoeducational family intervention in the community during the early stages of the illness.

Dr Ran Maosheng (冉茂盛博士)

Associate Professor

Department of Social Work and Social Administration

Social Sciences Outstanding Research Output Award – Basic Research

Confucian Perfectionism: A Political Philosophy for Modern Times

Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014, 272pp.

Since my graduate days, I have tried to ascertain whether Confucianism can be revised and developed into a contemporary political philosophy for modern times. My view has been that Confucian ethical and political thought still has much to offer to modernity, but needs considerable revision and reconstruction before it can speak effectively to the new social and political environment. In this regard, I share the view of some leading Chinese scholars who in the 1980s proposed that Confucianism needs to undergo a “creative transformation” that integrates the best of Confucianism and Western liberal democratic thought. Yet in the subsequent three decades, no scholars have undertaken this important task in any systematic and comprehensive manner.

In the last two decades, I have therefore applied myself to this task and started to critically understand and evaluate Confucian political thought. In 2010, I felt that I was able to develop my earlier piecemeal, work-in-progress efforts into a comprehensive and original perspective, and began to write a book that systematically develops this perspective and applies it to fundamental issues in modern politics. The result is the book. It’s central idea is this: Contemporary Confucians must develop a viable method of governance that can retain the spirit of the Confucian ideal while tackling problems arising from nonideal modern situations. The best way to meet this challenge, I argue, is to adopt liberal democratic institutions that are shaped by the Confucian conception of the good rather than the liberal conception of the right. To do this, we must decouple liberal democratic institutions from their popular liberal philosophical foundations, and then ground them on Confucian principles and redefine their roles and functions. Liberal democratic institutions and their associated rights are therefore assessed in light of the Confucian conception of the good life and society, and meshed with Confucian values in a way that strengthens both.



Professor Joseph Chan Cho-wai (陳祖為教授)

Professor

Department of Politics and Public Administration

Rehabilitation Services for Pre-schoolers with Special Education Needs

The provision of professional support services to pre-schoolers with special education needs (SEN) is considered to be meagre in Hong Kong. In the academic year of 2014-15, more than 7,000 children were on the waitlist for government-subsidized preschool rehabilitation services. While waiting, most of the parents of these children had no choice but to enrol their children in regular kindergartens in which most teachers are unprepared for teaching children with SEN. There is a strong need to strengthen the provision of special education services in Hong Kong kindergartens. With the funding from Lee Hysan Foundation, Heep Hong Society has launched a two-year pioneering project that was initiated in August 2014 to support children with SEN in kindergartens. This pioneering project adopted a two-pronged approach that consisted of both school-based support services and centre-based therapeutic training services. To evaluate the effectiveness of these services, Heep Hong Society invited a research team from the University of Hong Kong to conduct an evaluation study.

The research team was headed by Dr Lam Shui Fong, the Director of the professional training programme for educational psychologists in the Department of Psychology. Dr Lam and her colleagues examined the development of sixty children with SEN in the ten kindergartens that received services from Heep Hong Society in the academic year of 2014-15. They adopted a quasi-experimental design and compared the development of these sixty children to another sixty children with SEN from other kindergartens that did not receive any services from the pioneering project. The two groups were not different in their abilities at the beginning but the children in the pioneering project made significant improvement after a year of intervention and performed better than their counterparts who had no services in cognitive skills, receptive language skills, expressive language skills, fine motor skills, gross-motor skills and self-directed skills. In addition, the teachers from the ten kindergartens in the pioneering project experienced improvement of self-efficacy after the intervention.

These encouraging results have significant impact on government policy on rehabilitation services for pre-schoolers with SEN. Shortly after the release of Dr Lam's report, the Chief Secretary, Ms Carrie Lam, announced the launching of a pilot scheme of \$422 million Hong Kong dollars for on-site preschool rehabilitation services in November 2015. The beneficiaries are 2,900 pre-schoolers with SEN in 450 kindergartens.

Dr Lam Shui Fong (林瑞芳博士)

Associate Professor
Department of Psychology



Community Impact

賽馬會安寧頌 JCECC Jockey Club End-of-Life Community Care Project

Hong Kong is facing a rapidly ageing population, and the number of elderly suffering from terminal illnesses has also escalated correspondingly. In view of the growing demand for end-of-life care services in the community, The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust approved a sum of HK\$131 million to launch the "Jockey Club End-of-Life Community Care Project" (JCECC) in 2015. The project is a three-year initiative aimed at improving the quality of end-of-life care, enhancing the capacity of service providers, as well as raising public awareness. The project partners include The Chinese University of Hong Kong Jockey Club Institute of Ageing, Hong Kong Association of Gerontology, Haven of Hope Christian Services, The Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation, St James' Settlement, and S.K.H. Holy Carpenter Church District Elderly Community Centre.



JCECC is a multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional and cross-sectoral collaboration to help enhance end-of-life care in Hong Kong with special emphasis on the interface between social and medical systems. Five service models are being developed and piloted in the community to provide holistic support to elderly people suffered from terminal illness. The goal is to enable the city's older people to have informed choices of care and enjoy an improved quality of life.

The Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Hong Kong was approved HK\$25.95 million for the project. As one of the project leaders in the project, we will focus on strengthening end-of-life care competence of professionals in the field by providing them different kinds of professional training on end-of-life care, as well as empowering different stakeholders in end-of-life care through a variety of public education activities, such as talks and seminars, radio and TV programmes, newspaper column, etc. Furthermore, community and professional surveillance will be performed to assess the effectiveness of different components and the overall sustainability of the project.

The Project Launch Ceremony was held on January 8, 2016 with more than 300 participants. A variety of professional training programmes and public education activities including symposia and workshops have been organised since December 2015.





From **DREAMER** to **ADVENTURER**

We have all heard Martin Luther King's well-known phrase - "**I have a dream**". How many of us would actually take actions to pursue our dreams? Can we "Talk the Talk and Walk the Walk"?

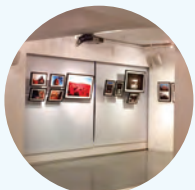
When I entered HKU, I was yet 20 years old. At that time, I set myself a goal – to leave my footprints in as many countries as possible in the following ten years, making the most out of my 20s. I was unable to travel as a child due to financial constraints. I therefore had a strong desire to explore the world as much as I could in my tertiary school years. As I look back on the past decade, I am grateful for setting such a goal. My travels shaped me into a more culturally sensitive, open-minded person with a much broader worldview. Along the way I developed an interest in photographing the world's beautiful scenery and people.

As a celebration of my experiences and insights gained from these travels, I decided to host a four-day personal photo exhibition in a gallery on Hollywood Road in December of 2015. The exhibition was titled "**30 by 30 – from Dreamer to Adventurer**". There I showcased photos taken in 30 countries on 6 continents, which I visited before turning 30. The exhibition was an entirely self-funded event that turned out to be quite a surprising significant investment. The exhibition was a rare opportunity for me to share my beliefs and message to the public.

Through the "30 by 30" exhibition, I aspire to encourage friends, contacts and the general public not to give up on their dreams or their passions. Instead believe in yourself and take actions to realise your dreams. I want to challenge the conventional thinking that should be settled by the age of 30. Along my travels, I interviewed 30 friends from respective countries to share their views on "what it means to turn 30 years old." It is never too late for any of us to pursue something we are passionate about.



Whether the exhibition was successful or not, I allowed the visitors to cast their votes. I felt satisfied while seeing the smiling faces and receiving messages of inspiration from the event from friends and acquaintances. During the fifteen months of preparation, I had various discussions with my exhibition curator as well as self-reflection about the past decade. I couldn't help but ask myself the question – "What is next?"



Through this, I realised I do not have a desire to climb the corporate ladder. Instead I would like to venture with my bare hands, my energy and my passion. I endeavour to create values and generate a direct impact for the community.



After the exhibition, I decided to give up stability in exchange for flexibility and autonomy. I left my job as corporate communications consultant and launched my start-up on Personal Branding.



Personal branding helps an individual shape how his/her target audience perceives him/her. A powerful personal brand helps individuals – business owners, entrepreneurs or corporate executives – be seen and heard by their clients, colleagues and peers in a concise, convincing and consistent manner. Under this business, I aspire to help business owners and executives to develop their personal strengths, create their brand narrative and portrait, and to coach them on storytelling and communications for business/career success.

This entrepreneurial journey has had ups and downs. Nonetheless, I learned how to be responsible for my own decisions and be true to myself. I feel happy that I am living a life with my passion and writing my own "career book". I look forward to sharing my experiences along my journey.



Finally, may I take this opportunity to share with you some of my thoughts in this self-discovery experience? After all, I trust we can all realise our DREAMs despite various challenges.

- **Dare** – Success, regardless of areas and industries, requires courage. Let's drop our excuses and make some bold decisions. You will be surprised to see the amazing results!
- **Reflection** – Self-awareness is an essential element for one to grow and develop. There is always something in the past that makes us feel regret or sadness. It is however a must for us to let go of the past, learn the lesson at present and prepare for the future. This will encourage strength.
- **Expedition** – Life is a journey, isn't it? No matter if we are starting a new job, a business or a family, nothing will ever happen if we do not take action. For sure, there will be headwinds. We can hide forever or start sailing the boat now to discover what is out there waiting. It's up to you!
- **Agility** – Rigidity is the enemy of growth. This applies at both the corporate and personal level. Remaining flexible and agile is key. While reactive responses are fine, proactive action is much better. Stay nimble and humble to go far.
- **Mentality** – I have already lost count of how much failure I have had in the past decades. I always remember something a mentor said to me years ago – "Treat life/success as learning to ride a bike: you will never learn how to ride and control your bike without falling." The key is to stand up on your own and learn from the mistakes. Such an analogy does help me develop a positive mind-set to do my best and prepare for the worst.

We can live our lives to the full extent and make our **Dreams Come True**. #NothingIsImpossible #YOLO (a.k.a. "You Only Live Once")

Fellow alumni, may you enjoy every moment of your life journey. Bon voyage!!!

Ms Tracy Ho Tsui-yee (何翠怡女士)
PDipJ (2008)

We would like to hear from all alumni, especially those who have not been in contact for some time. We wish to take this opportunity to invite you to share with the Faculty the contact details of local or overseas alumni with whom you are in touch. Please complete and return the following form to the Faculty so that we can keep them informed of the most up-to-date developments and activities of the Faculty and the University.



Fax: 2517 0806/ E-mail: socsc@hku.hk

Part I : Your Information

Name : _____
(Surname) (Given Name)
Chinese Name : _____
Sex : M/F
Contact Phone No. : _____
E-mail: _____
Year of Graduation: _____
Degree Awarded: _____

Part II: Other Alumni's Information

Name : _____
(Surname) (Given Name)
Chinese Name : _____
Sex : M/F
Contact Phone No. : _____
E-mail: _____
Correspondence Address: _____

Year of Graduation: _____
Degree Awarded: _____

EVENTS SPOTLIGHT

Reaching Out & Inspiring Lives - 2015 World Suicide Prevention Day Press Conference

September 9, 2015



Workshop in The State and Public Administration: Have Instruments of Governance Outrun Governments?

September 14 – 15, 2015

SC Fan Memorial Lecture 2015 China and the World: The New Cultural Landscape in International Relations

October 29, 2015

Professor Yuan Ming 袁明教授

Professor, School of International Studies

Director, Center of American Studies

Peking University



Palliative Social Work Satellite Symposium 2015 – “Harmony in Diversity: Special Foci in Palliative Social Work”

November 10, 2015



Exercise Coach Training Course for the GrandMove Project to Promote Elders' Robustness against Frailty

「耆力無窮」計劃 — 耆力教練培訓課程

November 10 to December 11, 2015 (1st Class)

December 29, 2015 to January 29, 2016 (2nd Class)

Public Lecture: 中國因素與太陽花學運: 非政府組織與支持群眾的看法 China Factor and Sunflower Movement: Perspective from Participating NGOs and Supporting Citizens

January 26, 2016



MC³@702 Creative Space

QUEERS OF HONG KONG PHOTO EXHIBITION

September 18 – October 2, 2015



HeHeSheShe OUT@U HKLGFF Campus Tour – HKU Station

September 21, 2015



The Symbol of Popular Culture – Anita Mui: Exhibition, Seminars, Drama Performance and Drama Workshops

October 10 – 28, 2015

Co-presented by Mui Nation and Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, HKU

Like.Follow.Comment.Repeat – A Mixed Media Exhibition Explores How We Present Ourselves on Social Media Today, Drawing on Visual Research Conducted Between 2012-2015

November 4 – 15, 2015



Making Space, An Artist Talk by Antony Gormley

November 16, 2015

EVENTS SPOTLIGHT

International Conference on the Governance of China

January 15 – 16, 2016



ExCEL3

Forum on Engagement-based Corporate Giving in Hong Kong

October 7, 2015



Seminar on The Landscape of China Civil Society

October 8, 2015

Professor Zhang Xiulan

Professor, School of Social Development and Public Policy

Beijing Normal University



Workshop on How to Raise a Million Dollars: Fundraising Ideas for Arts and Cultural Organisations

October 22, 2015

Mr Bob Burdenski

Principal, Robert Burdenski Annual Giving



Forum on Grant-Making from Hong Kong and Mainland Perspectives

November 4, 2015

Symposium on Mental Health and Psychosocial Wellbeing of Conflict-Induced Displaced Persons in Hong Kong

December 4, 2015

Public Policy Forum / Public Lecture

Why Public Policy Matters and How It Works in the Fast-Changing World – Views from Leaders of Different Sectors and Policy Scholars

September 15, 2015

AVA-HK Regional Academy Symposium Health and Resilience: The Nexus between East and West

October 26 – 27, 2015

Symposium on Disaster and Community Mental Health

October 28 – 29, 2015

Science and Policy for Sustainable Urban Greening

November 16, 2015

Kidney Shortages: Conventional and Unconventional Responses

November 24, 2015

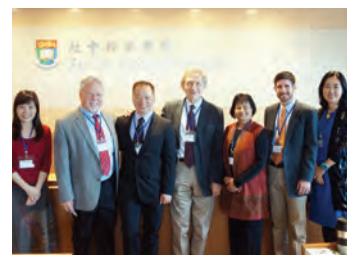
Professor David Weimer

Edwin E Witte Professor of Political Economy

Robert M La Follette School of Public Affairs and Department of Political Science
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Family Caregiving in Chinese Societies – A Life Span Perspective

March 14, 2016



Contemporary China Studies Public Lecture

Regime Support in China

October 19, 2015

Professor Bruce Dickson

Director, Sigur Center for Asian Studies

Professor of Political Science and International Affairs

George Washington University

Democracy, Meritocracy, or Both? The Case of China

November 10, 2015

Professor Daniel Bell

Chair Professor, Schwarzman Scholars Program, Tsinghua University

Authoritarian Parochialism: Representation in Chinese Local Congresses

November 12, 2015

Professor Melanie Manion

Professor of Political Science, Duke University

Assessing China's Future

February 1, 2016

Professor David Shambaugh

Professor of Political Science & International Affairs

Director of the China Policy Program, George Washington University



Greetings from the Executive Committee of the Social Sciences Society, HKUSU! In the year ahead, we will provide members with a great variety of activities and welfare as well as heighten their interests in social and political issues.

We have extended our welfare-distributing activities into three events this year. Celebrate with us in a joyful atmosphere; come to our booth to take welfare packs during the welfare weeks and festivals. February marked our first Valentine's welfare week – Amor at Haking Wong Podium. Welfare packs were distributed and a snap corner was set up for members to spend valuable time with their beloved ones. HKUSU, along with four other Faculty Societies organised a Joint-society Ball on the day of White Valentine on March 23, 2016. Members met members from different Societies and celebrated the love season. We further supported members in April before the examination during the Superpass Festival. We look forward to the "Power Up" welfare week in November to encourage members during their revision period midterms. In September, a high table dinner will be held for members to experience the prestigious and traditionally unique culture of HKU, providing insights to our members at the beginning of a school year via our guest speaker.

It is just the start of 2016, however, Hong Kong has already faced numerous challenges and people in the city are seeking a way out. To deepen the discussion on the future of Hong Kong, the Social Sciences Festival that was held in April aimed at providing members to excavate the potential pathways of self-determination for Hong Kong. Interactive exhibitions and forums were held to provoke the thoughts of members on the potential pathways that have emerged from society in the previous years. Please feel free to visit our exhibition and forum at Haking Wong Podium. A flash mob will be held in September to raise the awareness of members towards the global issue of global warming. We will be publishing "NOISE" to discuss current affairs and university affairs bi-monthly. Meanwhile, special editions of "NOISE" will also be published in times of ad-hoc issues to enrich the discussion on controversial topics.

In the year of 2016, the Executive Committee of Social Sciences Society, HKUSU is going to strive for the best for our members. Please support us!

Miss Maisie Wong Tuen-yin (王端妍小姐)

Chairman

Social Sciences Society, HKUSU

Session 2016



DONATIONS

Donations (From August to December 2015)

Donor	Recipient	Nature	Amount (HK\$)
Li Ka Shing Foundation	Centre on Behavioral Health	Project on "Love Hong Kong Your Way - Hospicehome"	750,000
Ms Sarah Wu Po-chu		Lillian Poon Psychosocial Oncology Fund	50,000
David S K Au & Associates Limited	Department of Geography	Supporting Research Activities in Green Roof, Green Wall and Microclimate in Hong Kong	620,000
Hong Kong Golf Club		Supporting Research Activities in Microclimate Profiles of Green Spaces and their Contributions to the Cool Island Effect in Hong Kong	1,670,000
Fu Tak lam Foundation Limited	Department of Psychology	Supporting Service Model for Promoting Healthy Aging of Sandwich - Class Old People	402,833
		Program on "Taking Care of the Caretaker: Providing Psychological Training to Teachers and Staff of Christian Zheng Sheng College and their Family Members"	110,856
IS People Development		Supporting Research on Infant Learning Programme Development	30,000
Partners HealthCare		NIH - Genetic Determinants of Schizophrenia Intermediate Phenotypes	125,571
Dr Serena Yang Hsueh-chi		Supporting on the HKU-Oxford Exchange Programme	200,000
Dr Zhou Ying	Sau Po Centre on Ageing	Activities of the Centre	28,613
Mr Shiu Ho Tung	Faculty of Social Sciences	Activities of the Faculty	20,000
The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust	The HKJC Centre for Suicide Research & Prevention	Study on Determinants of Poverty and Potential Interventions to Alleviate Poverty in Hong Kong	669,753
		Project on Study on Determinants of Poverty and Potential Interventions to Alleviate Poverty in Hong Kong	1,271,636
		Project on Study on the Demographics of Older Adults in Hong Kong	198,655

SELECTION OF RECENT PUBLICATIONS (From August to December 2015)

Different Outcomes of Never-Treated and Treated Patients with Schizophrenia: 14-year Follow-up Study in Rural China

Authors: Ran, M S, Weng, X, Chan, C L W, Chen, E Y H, Tang, C P, Lin, F R, Mao, W J, Hu, S H, Huang, Y Q, Xiang, M Z
Journal: British Journal of Psychiatry

The long-term outcome of never-treated patients with schizophrenia is unclear. This study was to compare the 14-year outcomes of never-treated and treated patients with schizophrenia and to establish predictors for never being treated. All participants with schizophrenia ($n = 510$) in Xinjin, Chengdu, China were identified in an epidemiological investigation of 123,572 people and were followed up from 1994 to 2008. The results showed that there were 30.6%, 25.0% and 20.4% of patients who received no antipsychotic medication in 1994, 2004 and 2008 respectively. Compared with treated patients, those who were never treated in 2008 were significantly older, had significantly fewer family members, had higher rates of homelessness, death from other causes, were unmarried, living alone, being without a caregiver and had poor family attitudes. Partial and complete remission in treated patients (57.3%) was significantly higher than that in the never-treated group (29.8%). Predictors of being in the never-treated group in 2008 encompassed baseline never-treated status, being without a caregiver and poor mental health status in 1994. This study shows that many patients with schizophrenia still do not receive antipsychotic medication in rural areas of China. The 14-year follow-up showed that outcomes for the untreated group were worse. Community-based mental healthcare, health insurance and family intervention are crucial for earlier diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation in the community.

Dr Ran Maosheng (冉茂盛博士)

Department of Social Work and Social Administration



Regulatory Compliance when the Rule of Law is Weak: Evidence from China's Environmental Reform

Authors: Yee, H W H, Tang, S Y & Lo C W H
Journal: Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory

What drives regulatees' behaviours when the institution of law is weak? This study seeks to answer the question by examining environmental regulation enforcement in China. Based on survey and interview data on Hong Kong-owned manufacturing enterprises in the Pearl River Delta Region, Guangdong Province, we found that their decisions to adopt basic and proactive environmental management practices were less driven by concerns for legality than by their perceptions of the regulators' actions and gestures. Enterprises adopted basic environmental practices to avoid potential punishment and more proactive practices to avoid potentially arbitrary impositions from regulatory officials. Regulated enterprises were more likely to adopt both basic and proactive environmental practices if they had fewer difficulties in understanding the enforced regulations. These findings suggest important ways in which regulatory compliance behaviours in a developmental context may differ from those in Western countries.

Dr Yee Wai Hang (余偉鏗博士)

Department of Politics and Public Administration



The Pontine Region is a Neural Correlate of the Human Affective Processing Network

Authors: Lee, T M C, Sun D, Wong N M L, Shao R, Men W, Ge J, So K F, Gao J H, Chan C C H
Journal: EBioMedicine

The *in vivo* neural activity of the pons during the perception of affective stimuli has not been studied despite the strong implications of its role in affective processing. To examine the activity of the pons during the viewing of affective stimuli, and to verify its functional and structural connectivity with other affective neural correlates, a multimodal magnetic resonance imaging methodology was employed in this study. We observed the *in vivo* activity of the pons when viewing affective stimuli. Furthermore, small-world connectivity indicated that the functional connectivity (FC) between the pons and the cortico-limbic affective regions was meaningful, with the coefficient λ being positively associated with self-reported emotional reactivity. The FC between the pons and the cortico-limbic-striatal areas was related to self-reported negative affect. Corroborating this finding was the observation that the tract passing through the pons and the left hippocampus was negatively related to self-reported positive affect and positively correlated with emotional reactivity. Our findings support the framework that the pons works conjunctively with the distributed cortico-limbic-striatal systems in shaping individuals' affective states and reactivity. Our work paves the path for future research on the contribution of the pons to the precipitation and maintenance of affective disorders.

Professor Tatia Lee Mei-chun (李涓珍教授)

Department of Psychology



Information Accessibility of the Charcoal Burning Suicide Method in Mainland China

Authors: Cheng, Q, Chang S S, Guo, Y, Yip P S
Journal: PLoS one

There has been a marked rise in suicide by charcoal burning (CB) in some East Asian countries but little is known about its incidence in mainland China. We examined media-reported CB suicides and the availability of online information about the method in mainland China. We extracted and analysed data for i) the characteristics and trends of fatal and nonfatal CB suicides reported by mainland Chinese newspapers (1998–2014); ii) trends and geographic variations in online searches using keywords relating to CB suicide (2011–2014); and iii) the content of Internet search results. 109 CB suicide attempts (89 fatal and 20 nonfatal) were reported by newspapers in 13 out of the 31 provinces or provincial-level-municipalities in mainland China. There were increasing trends in the incidence of reported CB suicides and in online searches using CB-related keywords. The province-level search intensities were correlated with CB suicide rates (Spearman's correlation coefficient = 0.43 [95% confidence interval: 0.08–0.68]). Two-thirds of the web links retrieved using the search engine contained detailed information about the CB suicide method, of which 15% showed pro-suicide attitudes, and the majority (86%) did not encourage people to seek help. The incidence of CB suicide was based on newspaper reports and is likely to be underestimated. Mental health and suicide prevention professionals in mainland China should be alert to the increased use of this highly lethal suicide method. Better surveillance and intervention strategies need to be developed and implemented.

Professor Paul Yip Siu-fai (葉兆輝教授)
The Hong Kong Jockey Club Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention



Cross-Border Itinerant Poaching of Agarwood in Hong Kong's Peri-Urban Forests

Author: Jim, C Y
Journal: Urban Forestry and Urban Greening

In Asia, the rising demands for agarwood concurrent with reduced supply due to over-exploitation, habitat loss and tightened control on harvest have significantly raised its price. *Aquilaria sinensis* (Incense Tree or Chenxiang), native to south China, yields commercially highly valuable agarwood. In mainland China, it has been excessively plundered over many decades, and has been designated an endangered species at the national level to reinforce legal protection. Successful nature conservation and absence of tapping by local residents in Hong Kong have maintained a healthy tree stock, offering the last haven in China for the remnant trees. This spatial disparity in the abundance and protection status of the two tree subpopulations has driven cross-border itinerant poachers to harvest the local trees illegally. The porous border between Hong Kong and Mainland China under the one-country two-systems political regime and the huge influx of visitors has facilitated the cross-border crime. In the frenetic search for the prized agarwood usually hidden in the core of trunks and large branches, many old trees have been gravely damaged or felled. The excessive and destructive wildlife biopiracy could not be contained by local law enforcement and CITES international trade regulation. The preferential loss of large meritorious trees signifies erosion of superior seed sources and genetic quality. Proceeding at an alarming rate with limited arrests and prosecutions, the continued depletion could render the species endangered. From an analysis of underlying factors and processes, a package of 26 statutory, administrative and scientific actions is proposed to curb the illicit theft and smuggling.

Professor Jim Chi Yung (詹志勇教授)
Department of Geography



SELECTION OF RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Predicting Adverse Health Outcomes in Nursing Homes: A 9-Year Longitudinal Study and Development of The FRAIL-Minimum Data Set (MDS) Quick Screening Tool

Authors: Luo, H, Lum, T Y S, Wong, G H Y, Kwan, J S K, Tang, J Y M, Chi, I
Journal: AMDA / Journal of the American Medical Directors Association

This study aims to examine the predictive validity of a quick frailty screening tool, the FRAIL-NH, for adverse health outcomes in nursing home residents, using variables from the Minimum Data Set (MDS). The screening items were compiled from the MDS for potential direct application in long-term care facilities using this health information system. We analysed data from a longitudinal follow-up study of nursing home residents with annual clinical assessment using the MDS and mortality data between 2005 and 2013. Participants included 2380 nursing home residents aged 65 years or older at study baseline. Using a cut-off score of 5 on the FRAIL-NH, the prevalence of frailty was 58.5% in this nursing home sample. Frailty as identified using the FRAIL-NH predicts incident falls, worsening ADL function, hospitalisation, and death (hazard ratios [HR] 2.00–3.73). This remained significant after adjusting for sociodemographic and other clinical characteristics. Each level of increase on the FRAIL-NH has strong distinguishing power on the incidence of adverse outcomes. Intermediate frailty status (score 1–4) also significantly predicts adverse health outcomes (HR 1.57–2.06). We concluded that the FRAIL-NH is a quick screening tool that can be used to identify frail and pre-frail nursing home residents at risk of adverse health outcomes. It can be applied using variables from the MDS, allowing direct adoption in long-term care facilities already using this health information system.

Dr Gloria Wong Hoi-yan (黃凱茵博士)
Department of Social Work and Social Administration

Health Expectancies in Adults Aged 50 Years or Older in China

Authors: Lum T Y S, Luo, H, Wong G H Y, Luo M, Gong C H, Kendig H
Journal: Journal of Aging and Health

The purpose of this study is to understand the functional health of older adults in China and to assess the potential for advancing healthy and active aging. Data of 13,739 older adults aged 50 years and older from the China Health and Retirement Longitudinal Study in 2011 were analyzed. Life expectancy in good perceived health, chronic-disease-free life expectancy, active life expectancy, and severe impairment-free life expectancy were calculated using Sullivan's method. At age 50 years, older adults had a life expectancy in good perceived health of 7.0 and 6.7 years in men and women, respectively. They would remain chronic-disease-free for 8.4 and 8.6 years, without activity limitation for 23.6 and 26.0 years, and severe impairment-free for 21.4 and 24.2 years. The world's largest aging population was spending a substantial proportion of remaining life years in suboptimal health and well-being, while remaining largely independent in basic self-care without severe impairments.

Professor Terry Lum Yat-sang (林一星教授)
Department of Social Work and Social Administration



Journal of Occupational Health



Journal of Occupational Health



Journal of Contemporary Ethnography

Authors: Tian, X & Deng, Y

Journal: Journal of Contemporary Ethnography

Based on an interactionist approach, this article examines how male workers negotiate the duties of factory jobs conventionally considered as those suited for young females while defending their masculinity in harsh and contested organisational environments. Data collected during a 15-month ethnography of a large global factory in South China revealed that in an oppressive institutional setting that involves coercive management, devaluation of male labour, and the lack of a family wage, male workers defend their masculinity through offensive language, flirting and sexual harassment, as well as physical violence. In doing so, they develop a rebellious identity, diaomao, both to address themselves and to curse others, as a way to resist their low status, reconstruct their own understanding of the power hierarchy, and consequently, defend their deprived masculinities. This article asserts the critical role of daily interpersonal interaction in gender practices as well as in labour processes.

Dr Tian Xiaoli (田曉麗博士)
Department of Sociology



A 3-arm Randomized Controlled Trial on the Effects of Dance Movement Intervention and Exercises on Elderly with Early Dementia

Authors: Ho, R T H, Cheung J K K, Chan, W C, Cheung, I K M & Lam, L C W

Journal: BMC Geriatrics

A 3-arm randomized controlled trial (RCT) with waitlist control design will be used to investigate the positive effects of a dance movement intervention, compared with mild physical exercise, on the physical and psychological well-being of elderly Chinese individuals with early dementia.

Two hundred and one elderly participants with very mild to mild dementia will be screened and randomised into the following groups: (i) dance movement based intervention, (ii) stretching and exercise intervention and (iii) no intervention waitlist-control group. The two intervention groups will receive a one-hour intervention, twice a week, for 12 weeks. The participants will be assessed four times over the course of 12 months: baseline is before randomisation, post-intervention (3 months), 6 months from baseline and 12 months from baseline. The primary outcomes will be compared between assessment points and between groups on neuropsychiatric symptoms, psychosocial well-being and cognitive and daily functioning. Secondary outcomes will assess the changes in salivary cortisol levels and their relationships with the primary outcome measures.

This study will provide substantial evidence of the efficacy of a dance-movement-based intervention in slowing down dementia progression, due to its ability to act as a buffer against decline and improve areas affected by dementia. We also anticipate an association between cortisol levels and the outcome measures. The further development of this intervention into a structural program may be warranted for early psychosocial support among elderly populations.

Dr Rainbow Ho Tin-hung (何天虹博士)
Department of Social Work and Social Administration



CONGRATULATIONS

Students

Awards



Hong Kong Society of Behavioural Health (HKSBBH) Excellent Doctoral Dissertation in Behavioural Health Award

It was my great honour and pleasure to be awarded at the International Behavioural Health Conference. Through my PhD study, I have fallen in love with and benefitted from the ancient, simple and fascinating Chinese self-healing practice, Qigong. My hope is that Qigong exercise can be recognised and practiced by more people daily to improve their holistic body-mind-spirit wellbeing. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to both of my supervisors: Professor Cecilia Chan and Dr Rainbow Ho for their invaluable academic guidance and tremendous support in my PhD study. I am also very grateful to Professor Jonathan Sham, Dr Yuen L P, Dr Ng Siu-man and Professor So Kwok Fai, as well as all staff at the Centre on Behavioural Health and the Department of Social Work and Social Administration, all volunteers and all research participants. I warmly acknowledge Dr Vivien Wong and Dr Eric Ziea at the Chinese Medicine Department of Hong Kong Authority for their invaluable suggestions and the Hong Kong Hospital Authority (HA105/48PT5) for partial funding support of my PhD study. Lastly, I appreciate my family members for their unconditional support and understanding during my PhD study.

Dr Jessie Chan Suet Mui (陳雪梅博士)
PhD Candidate (Social Work and Social Administration)

Dr Nelson Yu & Mrs Gaily Yu Postgraduate Scholarship

I am very pleased to be selected as the recipient of the Hong Kong Association of University Women (HKAUW) - Dr Nelson Yu & Mrs Gaily Yu Postgraduate Scholarship. It was a wonderful milestone of personal growth in my PhD study.

This scholarship emphasizes the applicants' social services and global vision, instead of focusing on research achievement. This unique opportunity has afforded me a better understanding of the work of HKAUW and Graduate Women International (GWI) local and global organizations to empower women and girls through lifelong education. Scholarship applicants were encouraged to discuss views and contributions on various social issues during different meetings and social gatherings. It was pleasant meeting and making friends who share similar interests and insights at HKAUW. The inspirational conversation that I had with judges and other peers made the whole selection process memorable.

As promised, I will always be thankful and humble to pursue academic excellence in psychological research and express love and care in the community through different social projects!

Miss Li Tze Kwan (李芷君小姐)
PhD Candidate (Psychology)



Sir Edward Youde Memorial Fellowships 2015/2016

I was delighted and thrilled when I was first notified that I was awarded the Fellowship. The monthly expenditure to cover travel and research expenses is quite high as a research student and as an educational psychologist trainee; receiving this award greatly relieved my financial burden. Another major achievement that I have gained in receiving this Fellowship is becoming a Youde Scholar. As a reminder, the Sir Edward Youde Scholars Association in the Award Gala Dinner gave me a warm welcome this year. I was inspired by all the ambitions and major achievements that each Youde Scholar had. Moreover, my casual chat with Lady Pamela Youde, an elegant lady with strong wisdom, has also given me a lot of inspiration in life. I show my sincere gratitude, and it is my honour to join the family of Youde Scholars.

Mr Ricky Tso Van-yip (曹宏業先生)
PhD Candidate (Psychology)

Academic Staff

New Appointments



Dr Chan Chee Hon
(陳之翰博士)

Post-doctoral Fellow
The Hong Kong Jockey Club Centre
for Suicide Research and Prevention



Dr Chan Kwan Nok
(陳君諾博士)

Assistant Professor
Department of Politics and
Public Administration



Dr Christine Kwan Manlai
(關文麗博士)

Research Assistant Professor
Sau Po Centre on Ageing



Dr Shirley Li Xin
(李馨博士)

Assistant Professor
Department of Psychology



Dr Kathy Shum Kar-man
(沈嘉敏博士)

Assistant Professor
Department of Psychology



Professor Daniel Wong Fu-keung
(黃富強教授)

Professor
Department of Social Work and
Social Administration



Dr Matthew Wong Yee-hang
(黃以恆博士)

Assistant Professor
Faculty of Social Sciences



Dr Yee Wai Hang
(余偉鏗博士)

Assistant Professor
Department of Politics and
Public Administration

Alumni Groups

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HKU MPA (Master of Public Administration) Alumni Association | <http://www.alumni.hku.hk/mpaaa>

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We are eager to hear from social sciences alumni from any of our programmes (BSocSc, BSocSc (G&L), and BSW).
Please do keep in touch at: editor.socientist@hku.hk

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

June



16th Annual Research Postgraduate Conference

Date: June 4, 2016

Venue: 11/F, The Jockey Club Tower, Centennial Campus, HKU

Contact: Miss Sandy Chuang
(Tel: 3917 1219; Email: rpgc@hku.hk;
Website: www.socsc.hku.hk/rpc/2016)



HKU-USC International Conference on Public Policy - Hong Kong

Date: June 10 - 11, 2016

Venue: Centennial Campus, HKU

Contact: Miss Pak Yan
(Tel: 3917 1248; Email: piky@hku.hk)

International Conference on Geographies of Health and Living in Cities: Making Cities Healthy for All

Date: June 21 - 24, 2016

Venue: The University of Hong Kong
Contact: H-City Conference Secretariat
(Tel: 3917 7028; Email: hcity@hku.hk;
Website: geog.hku.hk/h-city)



HKU Summer Institute: Asia as the Global Future

Date: June 19 - July 17, 2016

Venue: Hong Kong, Beijing and Seoul
(Email: sumins@hku.hk;
Website: www.socsc.hku.hk/si/2016/)

July

Event: JC A-Connect - Hong Kong ASD Conference 2016: Supporting Learning and Development

Date: July 8 - 9, 2016

Venue: Hall II, Lee Shau Kee Lecture Centre, Centennial Campus, HKU

Contact: Miss Karen Chan
(Tel: 3917 1224; Email: kachan@hku.hk;
Website: www.jca-connect.hk)



HKU Social Sciences Summer Programme 2016

Date: July 18 - 22, 2016

Venue: Centennial Campus, HKU

Contact: Miss Mary Tsang
(Tel: 3917 1226; Email: sssp@hku.hk;
Website: www.socsc.hku.hk/sssp/2016)

ExCEL3 Fellowship Programme 2016

Date: July 4, 7 and 8, 2016

Venue: Centennial Campus, HKU

Contact: Mr Alan Tang
(Tel: 3917 1261; Email: alantsl@hku.hk;
Website: www.socsc.hku.hk/ExCEL3)



Social Science Research Methods HKU Postgraduate Summer School

Date: July 18 - August 5, 2016

Venue: 11/F, The Jockey Club Tower, Centennial Campus, HKU

Contact: Miss Ellis Fong
(Tel: 3917 1220; Email: ssrm@hku.hk;
Website: www.socsc.hku.hk/ssrm/2016)

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The Faculty welcomes any form of contribution to *Sociologist*.

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