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## Editorial Team

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### Advisor

Assoc Prof Sim Wai Chew

### Contributors

Chen En Jiao, Class of 2014

Zheng Kai Xi, Class of 2016

### Editor

Mr Terence Koh

### Members

Ms Janice Goh

Ms Phoebe Cheong

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Email: hsscomms@ntu.edu.sg

School of Humanities and Social Sciences  
Nanyang Technological University  
14 Nanyang Drive  
Singapore 637332

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## Chair's MESSAGE

Dear colleagues, students, alumni, and friends,

This year marks the 10th Anniversary of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS). To celebrate our decade of achievements, HSS is happy to share with you this special issue of *Horizon*, which includes a bumper feature on the development of HSS and the exciting events and conferences that HSS has specially organised to celebrate our founding.

HSS is proud to announce the launch of a new Philosophy degree programme in August 2014, coinciding with the start of the new academic year. Philosophy was first introduced as a minor in 2011, and now HSS students can graduate with a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Philosophy by taking a distinctive interdisciplinary curriculum that features courses on innovation and the philosophy and history of Great Ideas. Besides enabling students to master critical thinking and writing, HSS's ninth and newest degree programme will prepare students for today's competitive workplace by offering subjects such as philosophy of science and the philosophy of technology.

With its nine disciplines, HSS celebrates its diversity and engages the global community through many important conferences, seminars, and talks. In the past few months, for instance, we welcomed the distinguished economist Prof Andrew Oswald (Warwick University, UK), a member of the editorial board of *Science* — one of the world's top scientific journals — to our School to share his paper on high home-ownership potentially impairing the labour market. Our Master of Arts in Contemporary China Programme also hosted some of the top minds in the study of contemporary China in a conference on "Shifting Identities: Individuals, Society and the State in Contemporary China".

To engage the public regarding the intricacies of a person's creativity, our Psychology Division organised a Creativity week involving, among other things, a student poster exhibition, a symposium on creativity featuring well-known scholars such as Prof James C. Kaufman of the University of Connecticut, and a public lecture on creativity by Prof Kaufman.

To improve on and explore the theme of sustainability in education, our Environment and Sustainability Research Cluster invited top minds from 17 countries to HSS for a workshop on "Sustainability in Education: Pedagogical Themes and Practices in Asian Countries".

Our focus on such diverse issues increases our visibility, for the activities they engender attract prominent scholars to visit

our campus. These include Prof Wiebe E Bijker, Chair of the Department of Social Science and Technology, Maastricht University. A renowned authority on the history of Science and Technology, Prof Bijker was the keynote speaker in the "Global Science, Technology and Society" conference organised by HSS. Our collaboration with academics such as Prof Michael Szonyi of Harvard University and Prof Jing Tsu of Yale University in the HSS-organised conference on "New Horizons of Diasporic Chinese Studies" further illustrates the intellectual vibrancy that HSS will continue to promote in the years to come.

Ten years mark the School's coming of age, and we are indeed very proud of the achievements, a result of collective efforts by all faculty, staff, students, alumni and other stakeholders. As the University embarks on the development of the NTU 2020 strategic planning, I am confident that HSS can continue to play a meaningful role in the University's next phase of exciting growth in both education and research.



### Professor Liu Hong

TAN KAH KEE ENDOWED PROFESSOR AND CHAIR  
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

# WELCOME TO HSS!

The School of Humanities and Social Sciences would like to welcome the following new faculty members to the HSS family.

## Chinese

Name	Appointment	Date Joined
Mr Chia Joo Ming	Writer-in-Residence	15 Jan 2014
Dr Park So Jeong	Lecturer	3 March 2014

## Economics

Name	Appointment	Date Joined
Prof Volker Herbert Boehm	Visiting Professor	7 Feb 2014

## English

Name	Appointment	Date Joined
Prof David Richards	Visiting Professor	7 Jan 2014
Miss Balvinder Kaur	Writer-in-Residence	9 Jan 2014

# The War over Archives

By Zheng Kai Xi



Over 25 prominent history scholars participated in the “Cold War in Southeast Asia: Local Sources and Perspectives” workshop held at the HSS Conference Room on 7 – 8 April 2014. Jointly organized by the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars in Washington D.C. and the History Programme of HSS, the workshop saw participants showcasing archives from China, Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines, Burma, Cambodia, Malaysia, and Singapore as they pondered the role of China and Southeast Asian countries in the origins and development of the Cold War in Asia.

“This is a great opportunity for our School to engage in a very important topic our School is interested in, namely, the research on Global Asia,” Prof Liu Hong, Chair of HSS, said in his

welcoming remarks. “The workshop aims to enrich our understanding of the Cold War through transnational, global and historical perspectives. It also marks the beginning of our collaboration with the Woodrow Wilson Center.”

“The Woodrow Wilson Center has amassed a tremendous collection of archival documents on the Cold War era from once secret archives”, revealed its director Prof Christian Ostermann.

Prof Shen Zhi Hua from East China Normal University — widely admired in China as the pioneer of archival research on the Cold War — talked about his personal acquisition of de-classified historical archives from Russia in 1995 for the price of 1.4 million Yuan.

“It was an exhilarating journey as I had to bypass a bureaucracy that levied high fees and imposed tough restrictions on foreign access to archival materials”, recalled Prof Shen. The archives inspired the writing of *Selected Historical Documents of the Soviet Union*, a 34-volume anthology that has greatly influenced PRC scholarship on the Cold War.

Assoc Prof Ang Cheng Guan, Head of Graduate Studies at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, NTU, also revealed how his access to the Singapore Foreign Ministry archive enabled him to examine in his paper — *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodia Conflict 1978-1991: Origins of the Third Force* — the role Singapore and China played in getting Prince Norodom Sihanouk to lead a “Third Force” coalition to assume the leadership of the Democratic Kampuchea government.

Assoc Prof Joey Long Shi Ruey, Head of the History Programme at HSS, thanked the scholars for sharing their expertise and knowledge of the archives in their countries, “This information is much needed in our ongoing research on the place of Southeast Asia in the Cold war and will complement sources released by Australia, Britain, France, and the United States to plug the gaps in the extant historiography. Together, they’ll enable scholars to write a much more multifaceted history of Asia in the global Cold War.”

## Professor Andrew Oswald examines HIGH HOMEOWNERSHIP & UNEMPLOYMENT

By Chen En Jiao



Prof Oswald explaining his argument on homeownership and the labour market

As a nation that has prided itself on having one of the highest homeownership rates and a flexible labour market with historically low unemployment rates, Singapore might seem like an unconventional setting to present a talk on high home ownership impairing the labour market. Yet the unlikely connection between the two is precisely what Prof Andrew Oswald — Professor of Economics at the University of Warwick, UK, and a member of the board of editors of *Science*, one of the world's top scientific journals — came to reveal to an audience of economics professors and students on 14 November 2013 at a seminar that is part of the One Asia Foundation Lecture Series organised by the Division of Economics and the Economic Growth Centre of HSS at the HSS Conference Room.

Juxtaposing the 10-12% jobless rate among youths today in OECD countries (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) with the

3% unemployment rate after the Second World War, Prof Oswald's central premise was that much of the Western world's unemployment woes may be deep-seated and self-inflicted, harkening back to the decades of growth in homeownership in the intervening time.

Such a claim is unheard of as homeownership is associated with positive prosperity and unemployment with negative prosperity — no one would necessarily establish links between the two. According to Prof Oswald, however, such a bias is most obvious if one considers the fact that "labour economists have just worked on the assumption that the housing market is not important".

Prof Oswald and Prof David Graham Blanchflower of Dartmouth College — who co-authored the paper — believe that such a counterintuitive trend could possibly be explained by high homeownership in an area

restricting labour mobility, undercutting the dynamism of the economy. Other possible mechanisms include high homeownership leading people to stay put and commuting further out to jobs, generating congestion costs. The NIMY (Not In My Backyard) effect is also a plausible mechanism where home owners block new businesses. In essence, the argument is not that home owners are disproportionately unemployed, but that the housing market may impose negative externalities on the labour market.

The lecture was followed by a rigorous question and answer session moderated by Prof David Reisman. The paper had done much to invite discussions and debate as its authors had intended, so that we might move closer towards a better understanding of the deeper processes that influence unemployment.

"We are not proposing that if you become a homeowner, NTU is more likely to sack you and you'll be unemployed. We are not proposing anything like that," said Prof Oswald. "Rather, there is some sort of externality effect which we have an awful lot to learn about. It is as though if you are surrounded by homeowners, it greatly reduces your chances of having a job."

For the policy-makers, the amount of evidence in Andrew's paper seems to suggest that they take heed. Once the findings in this paper become common knowledge and the mechanisms behind how high homeownership is a driver of unemployment are better understood, the ramifications for policy are enormous.

## HSS hosts CONFERENCE ON CONTEMPORARY CHINA



The Master of Arts in Contemporary China (MACC) Programme of School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS), NTU, played host to some of the world's top minds in the study of contemporary China as the "Shifting Identities: Individuals, Society, and the State in Contemporary China" conference was held at the HSS Conference Room from 4 – 5 December 2013.

Jointly organized by MACC, HSS, the Centre for Contemporary Chinese Studies, University of Melbourne and the School of Sociology, Nanjing University, the two-day conference featured Prof Sam Zhao Sui Sheng, Director, Center for China-US Cooperation at Josef Korbel School of International Studies, University of Denver and Prof Christine Wong, Director, Centre for Contemporary Chinese Studies at University of Melbourne as keynote speakers on the first day. This was followed by five sessions of thesis presentations structured around five broad areas of concerns on contemporary China – ethnicity, regional identity and global governance; identity, solidarity and values;

health, morality and ideology; the search for national and international identity and narrations and charitable giving.

The first of a joint workshop series between Melbourne University, Nanjing University and NTU, Prof Liu explained how the idea for the conference came about in his opening address.

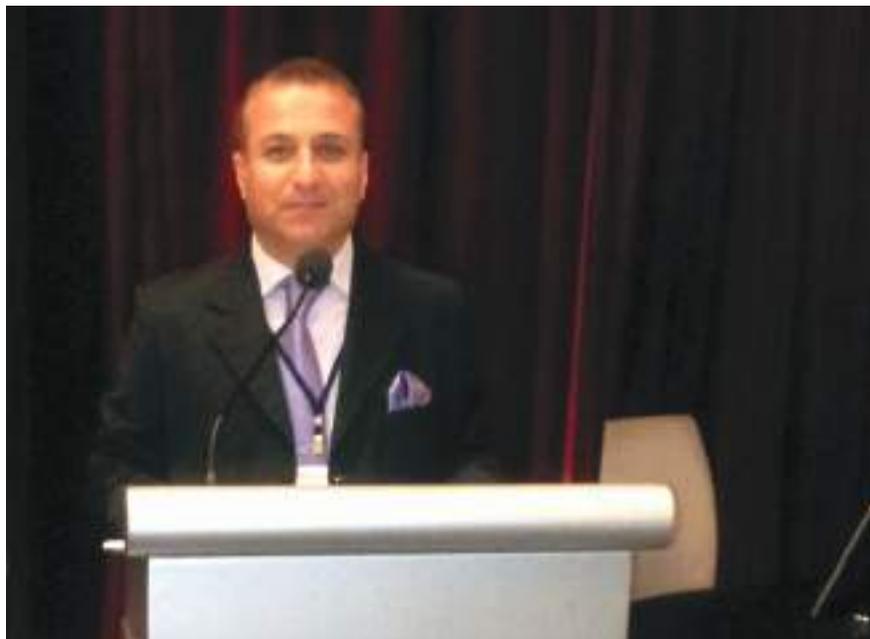
"The idea of multi-institutional collaboration originated about a year and half ago when Prof Mark Considine, Dean of the Faculty of Arts at Melbourne University visited us with his colleagues. We discussed institutional collaboration and Mark came up with the idea of starting this collaboration with a focus on specific themes such as multiculturalism and contemporary China. Mark, Prof Kee Poo Kong, Director of the Asia Institute, Melbourne University and I then decided the first workshop would be on contemporary China because Melbourne had been working closely with Nanjing University, so we thought a collaboration between our three institutions would be a good partnership in presenting the topic from different geographic perspectives."

In the first session on ethnicity, regional identity and global governance, Prof Thomas Simon, Professor of International and Comparative Law at the Hopkins-Nanjing Center presented his paper examining the different ethnicities in China like the Muslims; comparing the status of Chinese Muslims in different regions like Fujian, Ningxia and Xinjiang, investigating a seemingly inverse correlation between the disadvantaged status of these Muslims and the entitlements granted to them.

Prof Simon shared with us his thoughts on the conference: "I was pleasantly surprised and pleased with the quality of the presentations at the conference," said Prof Simon. "Many similar conferences that I've attended outside China tend to engage in China bashing. The presenters at this venue were sincerely focused on trying to understand China. The discussions were polite without being unduly deferential. We scholars have a long way to go before we begin to have an adequate understanding of the complexities of China," he added.

## HSS hosts first EBES CONFERENCE HELD OUTSIDE EUROPE

By Chen En Jiao



*Prof Mehmet Huseyin Bilgin, Vice President of the EBES*

The “Eurasia Business and Economics Society (EBES)” conference was held outside of Europe for the first time with HSS hosting its 12th installment from 9 to 11 January 2014.

Organised by the Istanbul Economic Research Association in conjunction with HSS’s Division of Economics, a staggering 221 papers were presented by 400 academics from 53 countries over the three days. Among other topics, participants discussed global trends and the latest groundbreaking research.

Speaking to a capacity crowd at the HSS Auditorium in his opening address, Prof Euston Quah, Head, Division of Economics, and former acting chair of HSS, remarked that the confluence of dramatic changes following the economic crisis of 2009 may mark the beginning of “a paradigm shift in the way we understand and teach the social sciences, economics, and business”.

The Guest-of-Honour for the conference, Ms Grace Fu, Minister, Prime Minister’s Office, Second Minister for the Environment and Water Resources and Second Minister for Foreign Affairs, reflected on German Chancellor Merkel’s observation that Europe today “accounts for just over 7 per cent of the world’s population, produces around 25 per cent of global GDP and has to finance 50 per cent of global social spending”, adding that balancing the budget will be one of the key challenges facing a number of governments saddled with huge debt.

She pointed out that as different technologies proliferate, economies will be able to do more with less. These include technologies used in the extraction of shale gas, robotics, artificial intelligence and 3D printing.

“However the benefits of technology are not evenly distributed and could

further widen income inequality,” the minister warned.

In this light, Singapore’s efforts to help workers capitalize on such developments through significant investments in formal and adult education may offer other concerned governments some food for thought.

The speakers at the conference seemed to agree that tomorrow’s economies will be marked by scarcities amidst increasing urbanisation, calling for trade-offs and the appropriate political responses to tackle a complex set of challenges.

In a special forum session chaired by Prof Naoyuki Yoshino from the Department of Economics, Keio University, Japan, speakers from Japan, Turkey and Denmark took turns to shed light on “Global Economic and Financial Challenges”. The perspectives shared ranged from the in-depth examination of the Bank of Japan’s (BOJ) response to changing market conditions articulated by Dr Sayuri Shirai from BOJ, to Joergen Oerstroem Moeller’s vision for the future.

Prof Vedat Akgiray, Professor of Finance from Bogazici University, Turkey, who has extensive experience in regulating financial markets, also asserted that economic growth based on credit alone is not sustainable. He proposed greater development of market-based financing to fuel more sustainable economic prospects in the future.

With greater levels of interconnectedness and interdependence between Eastern and Western economies, it seems fitting that the EBES conference’s first run outside of its home continent was held in Singapore— with HSS playing a key part in fostering intercontinental and cross-cultural communication.



*Prof Kaufman giving his lecture on creativity*

## *HSS celebrates* **BEAUTY OF CREATIVITY**

*By Chen En Jiao*

Members of the public visited HSS for “The Beauty of Creativity” week from 22 to 28 January 2014 as they were treated to events showcasing the different facets of creativity. Held in conjunction by HSS as part of its 10th anniversary celebrations, the event was jointly organised by the Division of Psychology, Division of Linguistics and Multilingual Studies, New Frontiers in Neuroscience (a Research Cluster of HSS), the Centre for Liberal Arts and Social Science, and the College of Humanities, Arts, & Social Science.

The event started off with a week-long exhibition of student-created posters on creativity along the Psychology division hallway, followed by an international symposium on creativity on 24 January 2014 that included a series of talks and discussion on the challenges and solutions during the academic investigation and practical enhancement of creativity in Asia with renowned scholars in the field like Prof James Kaufman, Professor of University of Connecticut, Prof Chiu-Yue Chiu, Professor of Nanyang Technological University, and Prof Hu Weiping, Professor of Shaanxi Normal University sharing their psychological theories and research methodology on creativity. The

Creativity week was capped off with a public lecture on psychological theories and research methodology on creativity on 27 January by Prof Kaufman, President of the American Psychological Association division that oversees aesthetics, creativity and the arts.

Prof Kaufman kicked off his talk with a whimsical question: “Suppose you were to pave the drive in front of your house with salami, would that make you creative?”

For him, the answer is “no”.

“It’s certainly new,” said Prof Kaufman. “Your drive will look different than every other drive on the block. However, most creative researchers would argue ‘no, this is not creative’. Because the second component is that it must be appropriate to the task in some way.”

Prof Kaufman also explained the 4Cs model of creativity: Eminent creativity (or “Big-C”) as in Einstein-style revelations, everyday creativity (“Little-C”) that even Kaufman’s young son can get up to, “Mini-C” which describes the creativity of a beginner, child or student and “Pro-C” which is the realm of experts and professionals.

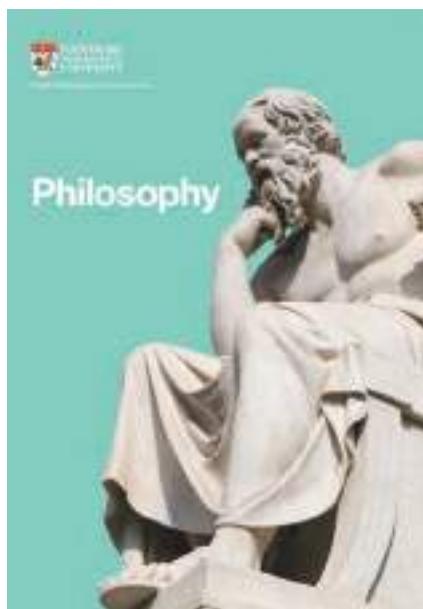
Prof Kaufman revealed that contrary to the morbid impressions we attach to creative giants such as Van Gogh and Virginia Woolf, creative people tend to be happier and enjoy better moods. The stereotype of creativity and mental illnesses applies more at the genius, superstar level. At the everyday level, creative individuals are actually better-off in terms of well-being. They also tend to be in better physical shape and are more likely to get promoted or have higher salaries.

Prof Kaufman also provided some pointers on how to become better at being creative.

“If you want to be creative at something, you have to learn about it. There are reasons why it takes about 10 years to get to a Pro-C level. Part of it is in learning all of that basic domain knowledge.”

According to Prof Kaufman, the simplest thing we can do to be more creative is to stay open to new experiences. Indeed, he walked the talk by trying the local delight durian, much to the audience’s amusement.

## HSS launches new UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE IN PHILOSOPHY



HSS will launch a new Philosophy degree programme when the new academic year kicks off in August 2014. In a joint announcement by NTU President Prof Bertil Andersson, Provost Prof Freddy Boey, and HSS Chair Prof Liu Hong, NTU said that the new BA (Honours) programme will prepare students for today's competitive workplace by offering subjects such as philosophy of science, and philosophy of technology.

In addition to emphasising critical thinking and writing, the programme has a distinctive interdisciplinary curriculum featuring courses on innovation as well as the philosophy and history of Great Ideas.

Prof Bertil Andersson said that the programme addresses an ever changing economic landscape.

"The world is changing and it's important for NTU to keep up with those changes and prepare our young people for the future.

"The new programmes at NTU will offer students more options and flexibility to pursue diverse career goals, more interfaces and opportunities for interdisciplinary learning and knowledge, which will be important in the working world. I'm a strong believer that new knowledge springs from the interfaces of disciplines, and this will give Singapore a strong competitive edge in the long run," Prof Andersson said.

The pioneer class of philosophy students will be exposed to innovative thinking beyond particular areas such as technology, business, or public policy, addressing it as a process that takes place in all sectors of society. The programme will imbue students with a deeper understanding of the cultural background of Singapore by offering modules on Asian philosophy. Philosophy students have the option of taking up a second major or a minor

in Communication Studies, Art History, or any of the other eight disciplines in HSS. This is expected to help increase their work placement options when they graduate.

Unlike a conventional philosophy programme, NTU students are also expected to complete an interdisciplinary Final Year Project that centres on innovative thinking. Students can integrate their project work and internship by exploring and proposing improvements to existing company processes and practices.

Philosophy is the newest addition to the slate of majors offered by HSS. First introduced in 2011, almost 2,000 NTU students have taken philosophy electives, with the number expected to grow as more courses are made available.

Prof Li Chen Yang, Head of the Philosophy Programme, provided more insight about HSS's ninth and newest degree programme: "Our philosophy faculty are really excited in launching this new programme. We are so ready and looking forward to embracing the first class of students. My philosophy colleagues are first-rate teachers with tremendous passion for teaching. NTU philosophy students will surely have the best educational experience that they deserve."

"Philosophy at HSS aims to promote the meeting of Asian and Western intellectual traditions, not only to broaden our students' intellectual horizon but also to contribute to a global dialogue," added Prof Alan Chan, Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, NTU, and a renowned Philosophy scholar specialising in early Chinese philosophy and religion. "HSS Philosophy is not interested in narrow disciplinary pursuits but rather in generating new insight and ideas that would contribute to human flourishing in the 21st century."



## HSS GP DAY *a Big Hit with A Level Students*

HSS played host to some of the brightest young minds in Singapore on 15 Feb 2014 as more than 730 A level students from top institutions like Dunman High School, Hwa Chong Institution, Nanyang Girls High School, River Valley High School, Temasek Junior College, and Anglo Chinese Junior College visited HSS for the inaugural HSS General Paper (GP) Day.

Organised by HSS as part of its 10th Anniversary celebrations this year, the HSS GP Day was conceived as a series of talks to help A Level students develop more insight into tackling complex and advanced topics for their General Paper exams. Held at LT 23 and LT 27 from 10am to 3.30pm, HSS faculty members from Divisions of Economics, English, History, Linguistics & Multilingual Studies, Philosophy, Public Policy & Global Affairs, Psychology and Sociology each shared a topic from their areas of expertise in eight dedicated hour-long lectures.

The day was broken up into four sessions of talks with each session featuring two talks conducted concurrently in two LTs. *Horizon* talked to some of the students on their thoughts about the event as they tucked into their



catered lunch and snacks at the end of each session.

“The Economics lecture drew parallels between inequality and fairness and provided a Singaporean perspective on these issues, which will be extremely useful in the Application Question section of the General Paper examination,” said Crystal Chang, a Year 6 student from Class 32 of Dunman High. “As Singaporeans, we believe and advocate meritocracy more than others and strongly believe in equal opportunities. Yet, being pragmatic, we also find that a disparity is necessary for economic growth.”

The talks also made a strong impact on the teaching faculty accompanying their students. “The NTU-HSS GP Day is highly

beneficial to students at the Junior College level as it not only provided students a glimpse into University courses but also showed them how the humanities and social sciences directly impact their lives and personal growth,” said Mr Wong Zhan Zhi, a General Paper tutor from Dunman High. “Students were shown how skills picked up in General Paper can help bring them further, and at the same time, were also given nuggets of information which they can use in their analysis of General Paper topics,” he added.

*All of the talks conducted by our faculty during the HSS GP Day can be accessed online on high definition video at our HSS YouTube page at [http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLheLK-mP\\_gQPi-A8DcZCBtSQ3tRELB869&feature=mh\\_loolz](http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLheLK-mP_gQPi-A8DcZCBtSQ3tRELB869&feature=mh_loolz) or in the videos section of our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/HSS.NTU>*



## HSS hosts CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABILITY IN EDUCATION

By Chen En Jiao

In a drive to nurture leaders able to meet future challenges, the Environment and Sustainability Research Cluster of NTU brought presenters from 17 different countries and representatives from eight ASEAN nations, plus China, Japan, India, South Korea and Hong Kong (via Skype) together to the Nanyang Executive Centre from 27-28 February 2014 to explore pedagogical themes, sustainability practices and cross-disciplinary conceptualisations of sustainability.

Funded and held in conjunction with the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS), NTU, to mark the 10th anniversary of HSS, the “Sustainability in Education: Pedagogical Themes and Practices in Asian Countries” workshop featured Prof Sing C. Chew, Humboldt State University, California, USA, Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research — UFZ, Leipzig, Germany, and editor of *Nature and Culture* as the keynote speaker.

Prof Chew opened his lecture with a provocative question: “In this postmodern world with increasing scarcity of natural resources, ecological degradation, biodiversity crisis, and global warming pervading our environment, what is higher education for?”

According to him, higher education exists to generate and disseminate knowledge, which can help provide solutions to problems we face as a global society. However, the character of our knowledge and the uses we put it to also have implications for sustainability.

“Higher education in the *Naturwissenschaften* (natural sciences) and *Sozialwissenschaften* (social sciences) has largely been shaped by the drive to extend our domination of the planet to the fullest so that ‘all can benefit’ from this modern/postmodern era that we have attained



in socioeconomic and political development,” said Prof Chew.

However, he is hopeful that the increasing momentum of the “weightless economy”, in which Google and Facebook are prime movers, can offer possibilities for a future where prosperity is maintained while material consumption is diminished.

In the question-and-answer session that followed, the predominant concern raised was our human ability to save ourselves, to offer an alternative narrative on sustainability. Prof Chew felt that at the end of the day, “people will have to go through levels of sustainable practice from awareness to consciousness to mobilisation, but these are personal choices to be made”.

In panel sessions over the two days of the workshop, alternative approaches of teaching sustainability were continually explored. Ideas and capacities around education for sustainability were also actively discussed. Talks ranged from strategies promoting engaged student learning in Thailand and Indonesia,

the need to consider and preserve the Rohingya ethnic minority experiencing oppression in Burma (Myanmar) to prevent further environmental and social disruption, origins of environmental NGOs in the Philippines, concepts of anthropocentrism, ecocentrism and their relation to “weak” and “strong” sustainability models in economics to the constraints of exam-centered educational cultures in Korea and Singapore. A volume consisting of a review of the current situations, conceptual foundations and best practices in education for sustainability in Asia will also be published for those keen to learn more.

## HSS hosts GLOBAL STS CONFERENCE

By Chen En Jiao

Sixty academics from 19 countries gathered in the HSS Auditorium for an international conference on “Global STS: Exploring Transnational Dimensions of Science, Technology, and Society” on 14 and 15 March 2014. Organised by Asst Prof Sulfikar Amir (Division of Sociology) and the Humanities, Science and Society Research Cluster (HSS@HSS) in celebration of the 10th anniversary of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) at NTU, the conference explored the field of Science, Technology and Society (STS) across new frontiers and critically examined how science and technology can shape society.

Despite the proliferation in understanding of how science and technology interact with society, little attention has been paid to the transnational dimensions of such processes. Prof Wiebe E. Bijker, Chair of the Department of Social Science and Technology, Maastricht University, Netherlands, explained in his keynote address that “global is not the same as universal”, providing various illuminating examples — drawing on his own work and the work of others under his supervision — of the differing approaches to science across different cultures.

“Countries can have their own agenda, and own ways of doing science. There may be national and cultural value of doing science in a particular way.”

Take for example the Indian way of doing science known as *jugaad*.

Seven years after the development of the Scanning Tunneling Microscope (STM), which won its inventors a Nobel Prize in Physics, an Indian scientist and his group of students built their own indigenous “homemade” STM through *jugaad*. *Jugaad* means to work around or to improvise, and to some, this can carry suspicious connotations to “junk”. In this case, the phenomenal results of such a “Do-It-Yourself” approach was that many of these students went on to become



Prof Wiebe E. Bijker giving his keynote speech

Post Docs in leading laboratories around the world and the group was able to publish in leading peer-reviewed scientific journals. All “because they were not afraid to take apart a two hundred thousand IBM STM and put it back to work again”.

Among the many HSS faculty presenting at the conference was Dr Yu Meng, Post-Doctoral Fellow from the Public Policy and Global Affairs Programme. In her paper *Exploring the Relationship between City Governments’ Performance in Public Service Provision and Local Business Innovation in China*, she examined the relationship between the services provided by the government and innovative activities in the private sector using empirical data.

Asst Prof Park Hyung Wook and Asst Prof Harry Wu Yi Jui from HSS’s History Programme also presented their findings. Asst Prof Park discussed how scientists delineated the category of failure in their experiments by examining the historical case of tissue culture in his paper entitled *From Surgery to Biomedicine: Alexis Carrel, Leonard Hayflick, and Their Efforts to Tame Failure in Tissue Culture*. Asst Prof Wu examined the relationship between history and current debates on psychiatric classification by analysing the early works of the World Health Organisation on mental health like Chapter Five of the *International Classification of Diseases, 9th Edition* (ICD-9) and the *International Pilot Study of Schizophrenia* (IPSS).



## HSS International Conference on NEW HORIZONS OF DIASPORIC CHINESE STUDIES

By Zheng Kai Xi

Scholars from over 13 countries descended on the Nanyang Executive Centre from 21 to 22 March 2014 for the HSS co-organized event: “International Conference on the New Horizons of Diasporic Chinese Studies: Evolving Themes, Changing Frameworks, Future Directions”.

Organized in tandem with the Center for Chinese Language and Culture (CCLC), the conference heard stirring first-day keynote speeches from Prof Michael Szonyi, Chinese History Professor at Harvard University Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, and Prof Jing Tsu, Professor of Modern Chinese Literature and Culture at Yale University Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures. The conference forms part of HSS’s 10th anniversary celebrations as well as the CCLC’s 20th anniversary celebrations.

Addressing a broad range of subjects ranging from history, sociology, anthropology, and literature to cultural studies in both English and Chinese, participants gathered with the aim of representing the Chinese diaspora in all its multiple facets and contexts.

“More than 50 million ethnic Chinese reside outside of Greater China. This makes them a sizeable group for any academic study, partly because they have played an increasingly important role in the host societies and in their interactions with a rising China,” Prof Liu Hong said in his opening address. Chair of HSS, he is also Director of the Nanyang Centre for Public Administration.

Besides providing an opportunity for scholars to study and discuss Chinese diaspora from various analytical frameworks, the conference included the study of Chinese identity and reality in a changing historical context. There were thorough discussions of the tracing of the source of origins of overseas Chinese and the circumstances of their arrivals in a foreign land. Discussions also included the ontological approach of diaspora and migration, for instance, by focusing on the structure of diaspora network patterns, and long-distance ties between overseas Chinese and those back in the mainland and between Chinese in various foreign countries and regions.

Prof Szonyi also tried to answer the question of why overseas Chinese did well in business and commerce.

Basing his theory on Prof Philip Kuhn’s recent proposal that “Chinese emigration overseas cannot be understood without considering earlier patterns of mobility within China”, Prof Szonyi traced their abilities to the strategies Ming subjects used to beat the hereditary military conscription system.

“Military households developed such complex strategies that they rival the market strategy we use nowadays to mitigate risk and enhance predictability. Such forms of calculation would later be very useful in economic undertakings at home, and perhaps, abroad as well.”

The conference also discussed complex questions such as nationhood and citizenship: who is targeted and who is excluded from policies? How was “Chineseness” negotiated and re-negotiated? There were also panel discussions on captivating cultural issues including the rise of Chinese food in America and how Chinese artists enhanced their personal profile by conjugating Italian art with Chinese flavour.

## Examining THE FUTURE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES IN ASIA

By Dr Charlotte Setijadi



*Prof Liu Hong (seated, second from right), Dr Charlotte Setijadi and Asst Prof Chang Young Ho (second row, ninth and 10th from right), Asst Prof Md Saidul Islam, Asst Prof Els Van Dongen and Prof Gregor Benton (third row, ninth, 10th and 11th from right) at the conference.*

A team of scholars from HSS represented NTU at “Southeast Asian Studies in Asia from Multidisciplinary Perspectives” — an international conference on the future of Southeast Asian Studies in Asia held in Kunming, China on 6 - 8 March 2014.

The latest in a series of conferences organised under the auspices of the “Plural Coexistence and Sustainability in Asia” research collaboration between NTU and Kyoto University, the conference was co-hosted by the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences and the Dehong Prefectural Association of Social Sciences.

While the last two conferences in the series were held at NTU in March 2013 and at Kyoto University’s Centre for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS) in December 2011, Yunnan Academy of Social Science was chosen as NTU’s strategic partner in the organisation of the 2014 conference due to its long tradition of Southeast Asia research and its location in Yunnan as China’s gateway to Southeast Asia.

Led by Asian studies specialist and Chair of HSS Prof Liu Hong, the HSS team included environmental economist Asst Prof Chang Young Ho, environmental sociologist Asst Prof Md Saidul Islam, Asian historians Prof Gregor Benton and Asst Prof Els Van Dongen, and HSS postdoctoral fellow Dr Charlotte Setijadi, an anthropologist working on Indonesia.

True to its purpose of being a multidisciplinary conference, participants came from fields as wide-ranging as economics, politics, history, Asian studies, anthropology, geography, agriculture and forestry. Participants presented exciting new research on topics such as the rise of China and its implications in Southeast Asia, ethnic minority studies, regional security, food sustainability, environmental protection, and diasporic transnationalism. The presentations generated lively discussions that could potentially lead to research collaborations between scholars of Southeast Asia who are based in Asian institutions.

The conference also included a fieldtrip to the county-level cities in the

Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture of Yunnan province, where conference participants got to see the ethnic diversity of the Dai and Jing Po people and interact extensively with local scholars and government officials. Conference participants also travelled to the China-Myanmar border crossing in the thriving border town of Ruili to witness first-hand the economic and cultural exchanges between China and Myanmar that have fuelled the impressive infrastructure building around the Sino-Myanmar border.

NTU is committed to supporting the advancement of Southeast Asian Studies in Asia from an interdisciplinary perspective with HSS signing a charter to establish an international Consortium for Southeast Asian Studies in Asia (SEASIA) in October 2013. The first biennial SEASIA conference will be held at Kyoto University in December 2015. HSS is in the process of planning a number of panels, including mobilities and connectivities, governance, science and society, and intra-Asian dynamics.

# HSS celebrates 10 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

By Zheng Kai Xi

When Nanyang Technological University (NTU) was inaugurated in 1991, it quickly established itself with its strong engineering and business programmes. However, like the late Steve Jobs, who attributed the success of Apple to the belief that “technology alone is not enough,” it felt that more was needed. Jobs believed that “it’s technology married with liberal arts, married with the humanities, that yields the results that make our hearts sing”. And likewise, the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the NTU Council knew that, for NTU to develop into a world-beating university, it needed to move from a technological focus to a comprehensive one, with a well-respected humanities and social sciences programme. It was with this aim in mind that NTU established the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) in 2004.

## The Founding Wisdom

To kick-start HSS, the NTU Council leaned on NTU’s main social science assets — its communications programme and its business school.

“Back then, [the] only social sciences-related school was the School of Communication Studies [now renamed Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information],” recounted Emeritus Professor Eddie Kuo, who was part of the University Council from 2003 to 2006. “I was Founding Dean of this school [Communication Studies] for 11 years. From early 2003 to the end of 2005, I was appointed the Interim Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, and started recruiting to search for the new dean.”

Prof Kuo remembers very clearly the firm focus that HSS had from the start. “First of all, the School of Humanities and Social Sciences is there to serve the whole university. Part of the mission of the school is to set up programmes so that all university students can take some



Prof Eddie Kuo

core courses in HSS. This was one of the two major tasks.”

The second mission of HSS was to confer degree programmes so that students could take modules and do majors in the School. HSS also had to make sure its degree programmes were marketable enough for students to secure jobs upon graduation.

“At the beginning, we had to be very pragmatic,” added Prof Kuo. “Initially, there was some discussion on what programmes we needed to set up. In the end, we decided on five divisions.

In humanities, we have Chinese and English. In social sciences, we have Economics, Sociology and Psychology.”

“Chinese and English are both teaching subjects. And the rest are all popular courses,” explained Prof Kuo. Although the Council’s vision and practical insight positioned HSS well in Singapore’s educational landscape, it was keenly aware of the strength of the competition. “Our key challenge was how to set up programmes that could compete with those in an established school like NUS,” Prof Kuo explained.



*Prof Lim Chong Yah*

“The strategy was to launch something other universities were not doing, so that we could take the leadership position. That is why HSS initially focused on niche areas such as the Master of Arts in Contemporary China (MACC), the first of its kind in Singapore.”

Looking to carve a niche for themselves, the School’s founders studied other universities and identified the admissions system as a key area of differentiation. “In the NUS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, only in Year 2 do students start applying for specialisations. You may or may not get it. So we changed our system. We promised that you will get your place upon admission.” To their surprise, “quite a few took us as the first choice,” Prof Kuo said with a clear sense of pride.

Another crucial selling point was the option of minors and double majors. “This was the first time for Singapore universities. At that time, Communication Studies was just about the most popular subject. Many students wanted to come in, but we had to turn down even good students. With the additional option, HSS students could now take Communications as a minor. And the reverse is also true.”

### **The Continuing Fortune**

The NTU Council also leveraged on Economics faculty members from the Nanyang Business School (NBS) to help launch HSS. It roped in Emeritus Professor Lim Chong Yah, who had joined NBS in 1992, to spearhead the

formation of HSS. One of Singapore’s most eminent economists and Chairman of the National Wages Council from 1972 to 2001, Prof Lim was appointed to chair the Dean Search Committee and participated in the recruitment of the School’s Founding Dean from the global academic community. He also took on the mantle of hunting for a Head for the Division of Economics and the new Division of Psychology. Up till his retirement, Prof Lim continued to serve on various committees for the promotion and tenure appointments of younger HSS academic staff.

“HSS then had only one established discipline — Economics. The challenge was to start every other discipline from scratch. Even before that, whether the staff from Nanyang Business School Division of Economics should be transferred to or had to re-apply to join the new division in the new HSS became a serious problem. The University Administration initially wanted re-application. We disagreed. We maintained that we were working in the same university and should thus be directly transferred to HSS. We asked for the support of the new NTU President, Prof Su Guaning. He gave us his support. The problem was finally resolved after quite a lot of discussion and disagreement. We were then transferred and became the founding division of HSS.”

HSS also had the fortune of great support from the government. As Prof Lim explained, “the amount of support NTU receives and is still receiving from the government is enormous and very impressive. This has enabled the very dedicated and very capable University Administration to recruit the ablest staff from the global academic community.”

The timing of the establishment of HSS was also fortuitous. “Our economy has been expanding over the years and decades. Job opportunities for our graduates are plentiful. The demand for places by our A-level students has far exceeded the supply of university places, ensuring not just the viability of HSS but its glittering success.”



Former Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew at the International Conference on National Boundaries & Cultural Configurations organised by CCLC.

### Centre for Chinese Language and Culture

Celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, the Centre for Chinese Language and Culture (CCLC) was set up in 1994 to facilitate, coordinate and encourage inter-disciplinary and discipline-specific research in Chinese language and culture while providing a platform for interaction among international and local scholars from various disciplines. It also established excellence in teaching and research by providing courses related to Chinese language and culture. Between 1994 and 2003, CCLC courses grew from an initial 20 in 1995 to 50 courses eventually, including graduate programmes in Chinese studies (launched in 1997) and the Minor in Chinese programme for undergraduates (launched in 2000)

In September 2003, with the establishment of HSS, CCLC transferred its teaching responsibilities to the Division of Chinese, HSS, to concentrate on research projects in Chinese language and cultural issues that were of interest to the Chinese community.

Since its founding, CCLC has successfully launched numerous research projects, international conferences and the Tan Lark Sye Professorship in Chinese Language and Culture. The Professorship was created in 1998 to make NTU the research hub for Chinese language and culture in Southeast Asia. Funded by the Association of Nanyang University Graduates and the Singapore Government, the Professorship invites internationally renowned scholars to deliver public lectures and academic seminars to benefit the public.

In 2004, in conjunction with its 10th anniversary and the founding of HSS, CCLC hosted the International Conference on National Boundaries & Cultural Configurations. Officiated by Former Minister Mentor Mr Lee Kuan Yew, the conference attracted 130 scholars from around the world, with 119 papers presented during its panel sessions. The conference papers were published by CCLC from 2006 to 2008 as five monographs under the “National Boundaries and Cultural Configurations” sub-series of *The Nanyang Series*.

CCLC’s dedication to research collaboration has enabled NTU to enhance academic exchange between visiting researchers, research fellows, professors, and students. CCLC has also published a substantial number of monographs and journals.

### The Great Leap Forward

Under the able stewardship of Prof Kuo, Prof Lim and the NTU Council, HSS appointed Prof Lawrence Wong Wang Chi as the Founding Dean and Chair of HSS in 2006. A renowned authority in Translation Studies, modern Chinese literature and politics, HSS grew in stature and size under the leadership of Prof Wong. From a small initial group of 44 faculty members in 2004, HSS saw its teaching ranks grow from 105 faculty members at the start of his appointment to more than 140 by the end of his tenure in 2009.

From a humble intake of 56 students in a single Economics Division in 2004, HSS grew almost five-fold in the next academic year. It launched four new majors and divisions — English, Chinese, Psychology and Sociology, — which saw undergraduate student enrolment jump to 376 students. HSS also increased its postgraduate programmes exponentially in its second year of founding, adding Master Programmes in English, Psychology and Public Administration to its MACC programme as well as two new Ph.D. programmes — Economics and Chinese — all of which helped to increase the postgraduate enrolment from a solitary student in 2004 to 55 graduate students just a year later.

The research output of HSS also grew tremendously in just its second year with the number of publications increasing from 130 in 2004 to 239 in 2005. In addition, an average of 318 publications a year was maintained during Prof Wong’s tenure. Prof Wong also oversaw the addition of Linguistics and Multilingual Studies as a new division in 2008. The School further developed under Prof Euston Quah, Acting Chair of HSS (2009-2011), who oversaw the launch of two new Ph.D programmes — Politics and Public Administration in 2009 and Linguistics and Multilingual Studies in 2010.

The appointment of current HSS Chair Prof Liu Hong in 2011 heralded yet another rapid and massive rise in the School’s development. Working closely with NTU senior management and HSS colleagues, and drawing upon his previous administrative leadership

experiences at the National University of Singapore and Manchester University, Prof Liu brought renewed focus on global academic excellence as HSS started recruiting some of the best and most promising minds in their respective fields. Over the last three years, HSS launched three new direct honours degree programmes in successive years as History, Public Policy and Global Affairs, and Philosophy debuted in, respectively, 2012, 2013 and 2014. The number of faculty members increased by a whopping 34% from 2010 to 2014 — rising from 164 to 219 faculty members in 2014. This focus on excellence was accompanied by active collaboration with top academicians around the world as HSS more than doubled its major research grants from two in 2009 to five in 2010, eight in 2011, and nine in 2013.

Within the short span of a decade, HSS has fueled NTU's ambition to become a top comprehensive university. Amazingly, it has expanded from a single division to today's nine degree programmes and four centers. HSS has also partnered the National Arts Council to develop Creative Writing Programmes in both English and Chinese, with famous writers serving as mentors to HSS students.

### The Future Bliss

With HSS celebrating 10 years of growth and excellence, Prof Liu reflected upon the School's remarkable journey: "Ten years marks the coming of age of the School. From just one department with 56 students, we now have all the major disciplines in the humanities and social sciences and can provide our students with a comprehensive education. But more importantly, it's the quality we now possess. If you look at our faculty members, many of them are top researchers globally in their respective disciplines. Although we're just 10 years old, we're getting international recognition. From these two perspectives, this is certainly something that everyone at the School and University can be proud of and it's certainly something worth celebrating. After all, our success is the result of collective efforts of all stakeholders, from the government, NTU senior



*Prof Liu Hong*

management to faculty, administrative staff, students, alumni, and donors."

"We are also mindful of our mission and obligation to produce knowledgeable, responsible global citizens who can make good contributions to society with their knowledge of the humanities and social sciences, critical thinking, and analytical skills. So I'm quite confident we will be able to do even better based on our existing strengths and the development of these core strengths in the next 10 years."

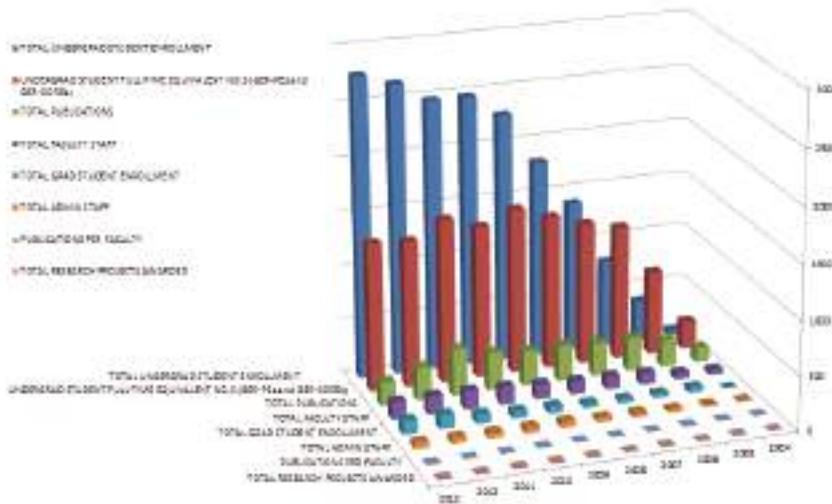
One administrative staff who has played an instrumental part in the growth of HSS is Mrs Christina Lee-Seet Mei Lin, who received The Long Service Medal during the National Day Awards 2013 for displaying irreproachable character and completing at least 25 years of service, the last 10 of which were at HSS. "I'm honoured to be one of the non-academic staff members who belong to the pioneer team of HSS. Before, the various divisions were housed in different locations within NTU. Now, we have our very own HSS building with everyone under one roof. Since 2004/05, we've put in tremendous effort in providing a comprehensive and sustainable educational experience for

our own students. By various measures, we have succeeded!"

Throughout the past decade, HSS has exemplified NTU's larger vision of a knowledge enterprise without disciplinary borders by leveraging cross-disciplinary learning and research to solve complex challenges confronting Singapore and the world.

"Though only 10 years old, HSS is already well established as an integral part of the NTU ecosystem. In education, it not only serves its own degree students but also seeks to make a qualitative difference to the education of science and engineering students," said Prof Alan Chan, Dean of the College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences. "In research, HSS has built a strong reputation especially in interdisciplinary Asia research. Above all, HSS has distinguished itself as a caring community, in which students, faculty and staff can pursue their interests and aspirations, and realize their full potential."

"Today, HSS can be proud that four of its disciplines – Public Policy/ Politics, Linguistics, Psychology and English Language & Literature – are ranked among the world's top 50 in their respective subject fields," said



NTU Provost, Prof Freddy Boey. “The School may be young in years, but it’s incredibly mature in its experience and swift in its growth.”

“Such dynamism and achievements are truly remarkable for such a young school. It also reflects the highly driven culture at HSS that strives to develop strong and competitive programmes so that our graduates will excel in their desired career path,” Prof Boey added.

Stemming from its notable academic excellence, HSS graduates are indeed highly valued by different industries and sectors in Singapore. Mr Daniel Lee, Recruitment Marketing Executive of MOE’s HR Solutions & Capabilities Division, was full of praise for the HSS graduates who have contributed to MOE over the years.

“HSS graduates possess good communication skills and are inquisitive and analytical. The academic training in NTU, HSS, exposes graduates to the rigour and depth of different academic modules and provides a great platform for undergraduates to learn and network, while building up their resilience. HSS continues to be an influential institution in ensuring the quality of Humanities and Social Sciences graduates.”

“HSS has played an important part in expanding opportunities for students in Singapore to receive training and exposure to the humanities, social sciences, and the arts,” said Asst Prof Teo You Yenn of the Division of Sociology

at HSS. “I have had the privilege of teaching wonderful students — many of whom have gone on to contribute to society in multiple ways.”

Ms Tan Pin Ru, one of the first HSS graduates from the Division of Economics and who is now the Associate Director of Asia-Pacific Rates Strategy at The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, is proof that HSS graduates stand out in the global economic landscape. “I still have very fond memories of the four years spent at HSS, from attending lectures, to organising orientation camps with fellow HSS peers and signing up for overseas summer programmes. The knowledge learnt and soft skills picked up over the four years remain very useful to this day. I sincerely wish the school success as it continues on the noble mission of nurturing more generations of graduates who will make a difference to society.”

For Prof C. J. Wee Wan-ling of the Division of English at HSS, the School’s coming of age holds a higher national significance: “The 10th anniversary of HSS marks an important moment in our national life, for it signifies the maturing of cultural life in Singapore, complementing the vital energies in industry and finance that have contributed towards Singapore’s post-independence success story. The rapid build-up of HSS over just a decade is also a marker of NTU’s commitment to being part of a vibrant, creative culture in which human achievement in the arts and in culture all work towards increasing

the scope of human development in Singapore. It’s significant for me that we are celebrating HSS’s 10th anniversary a year before we proceed to celebrate Singapore’s 50th birthday.”

The promise of HSS is perhaps best viewed through the School’s most valuable resource — its students. A second year Sociology student, Lee Hong Sheng is also President of the HSS Club, the School’s main student club. “It is both heartwarming and proud for me to be able to be part of this HSS family and reaching this wonderful milestone together. Congratulations on achieving so much within this decade and I am sure more will follow as we strive towards an international acclaimed institution in the immediate future.”

And, finally, there can be no better endorsement for the future than the well-wishes extended by Prof Bertil Andersson, the President of NTU.

“I’m very impressed by the School’s recruitment of academic superstars in recent years and its expanding ties with the world’s top institutions, including Yale and Harvard. These benefit not just HSS students but also engineering and science students who take humanities and social sciences courses as part of their holistic education at NTU,” said Prof Andersson. “Being a humanities school in a technological university gives you a distinctive advantage as there are many opportunities for interesting interdisciplinary work. Many of the world’s problems can only be solved using an interdisciplinary approach. Humanities and social sciences will always be part of these solutions, so use the opportunities that come your way well. I look forward to seeing HSS thrive as an integral part of NTU’s education and research landscape.”

# THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED

By Zheng Kai Xi

George Eliot once quipped in his novel, *Adam Bede*, that “the secret of our emotions never lies in the bare object, but in its subtle relations to our own past”. For Asst Prof Ong Soon Keong, his interest in overseas Chinese research reaches back to his Xiamen, China background. His grandfather was one of more than a million people who emigrated from Xiamen in the century following the Opium War (1840).

A Singaporean by birth, Asst Prof Ong graduated with a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Chinese Studies from the National University of Singapore in 1995. After getting a Masters in Modern Chinese History from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, he moved on to Cornell University, earning a second Masters in the same field in 2005 and his Ph.D in 2008.

A specialist in the history of modern China and Southeast Asia, particularly Chinese migration, overseas Chinese communities, and trading ports, Asst Prof Ong taught at the University of North Florida in the United States from 2008 to 2009 and the University of Missouri-Columbia from 2009 to 2013 before joining the Division of Chinese at HSS in November 2013.

“My goal was never to settle abroad. Somehow it doesn’t matter whether it is the U.S. or the moon, Singapore is always home, right?” he explained mischievously.

One reason for his return is the wealth of talent here at HSS. “Many of my colleagues are conducting similar research. You need this kind of dialogues to bounce ideas back and forth.” “So I’m here to work with some of the leading experts in the field,” he said with a grin.

## The untold history

In his upcoming book, *Coming Home to a Foreign Country: Xiamen, Overseas Chinese, and the Politics of Identity, 1843-1939*, Asst Prof Ong explores the thought-provoking question of how “insignificant” overseas Chinese can contribute to the untold history of China. Despite having more than 12 million Chinese residing overseas by the end of World War II, overseas Chinese are seldom included in Chinese history.

“You have to take a transnational perspective,” he explained. “A lot of developments were actually funded by overseas investors, not the government. If you walk down Si Ming Road in Xiamen, the shop houses closely resemble those along Chinatown in Singapore.” In a way, overseas Chinese don’t just donate money to revolutions; they also inject ideas that shape the material culture of modern China.

“It doesn’t matter whether it is the U.S. or the moon, Singapore is always home.”



# A PASSAGE TO INDIA

By Chen En Jiao

According to Asst Prof Jessica Bridgette Hinchy, who studies personal narratives of marginalized groups in Colonial North India, there are three possible ways for a western scholar to become interested in India — through watching Bollywood movies, backpacking through India or reading novels. For Asst Prof Hinchy, her interest in the continent was inspired by the fascinating tales of family and private lives fleshed out in Indian novelist Vikram Seth's book, *A Suitable Boy*.

After graduating with a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in History from the University of Queensland in 2008, that “really thick but really good book” eventually led her to pursue and attain her PhD in South Asian History from the Australian National University in 2013. She travelled to India for her PhD research, going from the National Archives of Delhi to a run-down colonial bungalow in Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh prowling through historical documents.

Hailing from a small family, she had always been fascinated by stories about big families.

“I tend to like reading family dramas,” said Asst Prof Hinchy. “You know, that big extended family and everything and that’s the main subject area of the Indian novelists. And I was also interested in stories about Indian women’s lives as well, so I think they are some of the novels that I most enjoy.”

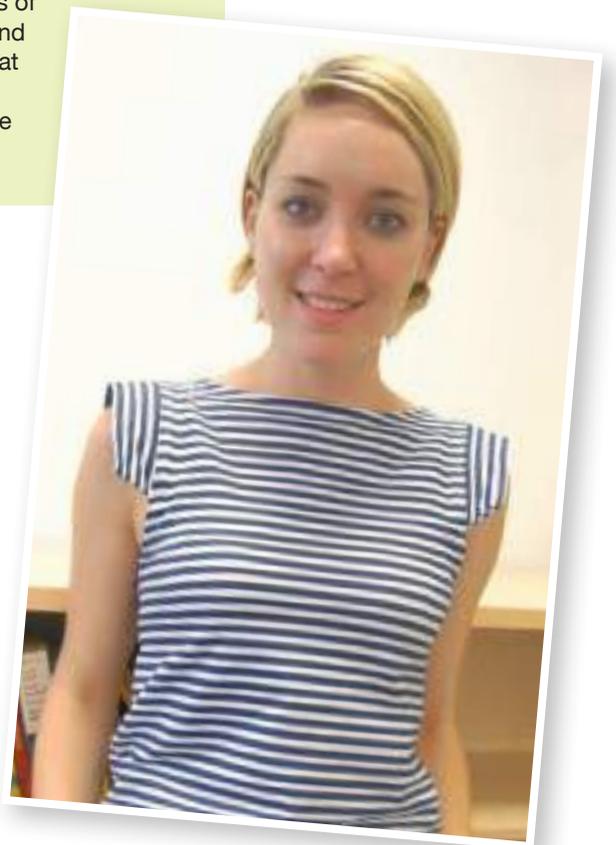
Marrying her interest in gender issues with the ongoing debates in India about Section 377 of India’s Penal Code — which criminalizes homosexuality — she started investigating colonial laws that targeted social groups considered sexually “deviant.” In particular, she started investigating the everyday lives of different groups of eunuchs who were stigmatised by the British in 18th and 19th century North India. Asst Prof Hinchy looked at their networks

of support as well as interactions with the then colonial government in trying to answer the question of whether homophobia was a Victorian import into Indian lands.

Asst Prof Hinchy explained the relevance late 18th and 19th century colonial laws and policies targeting eunuchs have to the contemporary context, “It goes into matters that are of public debate, such as in the context of Section 377. But there are also ongoing debates about gender and sexuality in Indian society. Just a few weeks ago, Penguin banned a book by a woman named Wendy Doniger that Hindu nationalists had opposed partly because of the arguments she made about sexuality and Hindu mythology.”

In her upcoming project, Asst Prof Hinchy continues to shed light on the contentious territories of gender, censorship and the law as she looks at “criminal” women in modern India after the late 18th century.

“*I like reading family dramas and I was also interested in stories about Indian women’s lives as well...*”



# ACTOR, SPORTSMAN, PHILOSOPHER

By Chen En Jiao

What do you get when you put an aspiring actor, soccer player and philosopher together? The unlikely answer is an Assistant Professor now with the Philosophy programme at HSS — Asst Prof Preston Greene.

When Asst Prof Greene enrolled at the University of California, Santa Cruz, his plan was to become an actor. And while he signed up for the university's Theatre Arts programme, he was more excited about being recruited to play for the university's soccer team.

"That was the most important thing for me at the time," said Asst Prof Greene. "It was neat because I was actually from Santa Cruz so there was an article written in the local paper with the headline 'Local Soccer Standout Chooses to Stay Home, Signs with UCSC'".

A bad break of his leg during his first season, however, brought Asst Prof Greene to the other half of his undergraduate education.

"When I was recovering, I took a philosophy class. It engaged me in a way that I had never experienced before. I had all these thoughts and theories and ideas that I'd been thinking about since high school. But in high school, at least where I grew up, there is no class dedicated to philosophy. So when I took this first class, I realised that all these things I'd been thinking of, other people have been thinking about for thousands of years and people continue to be thinking about them today."

In effect, this realisation was Asst Prof Greene's Departure from the Cave moment as all these ideas came to life for him in the classroom. He has not looked back since, graduating summa cum laude in Philosophy from the University of California, Santa

Cruz in 2006 with a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy and Theatre Arts before getting his Ph.D in Philosophy at Rutgers University in 2013. Specialising in Ethics, Epistemology, and Philosophy of Science, he is currently working on an inquiry into the role temporal considerations should play in the formation of decisions and preferences, with specific focus on the rationality of time-biased decision theories and temporally-neutral alternatives.

While Asst Prof Greene looks back fondly on his acting career — from playing Romeo in a four-man adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* in his junior year in college to his leading role in an online action series called *Identity* — he now satisfies his passion for performing through public speaking. His talents have already been seen at TEDxNTU "The Luck Factor" last semester, in which Asst Prof Greene opened the conference with a talk on the difference between succeeding because of luck and succeeding because of skill. Nevertheless, Asst Prof Greene's interest in acting has remained strong and he hopes to do more of it down the road. With his dedication and passion, it seems both students and faculty alike should not be too surprised if we find him appearing at a screen near us!

*"When I took this first philosophy class, I realised that all these things I'd been thinking of, other people have been thinking about for thousands of years..."*



# A LOVE FOR LINGUISTICS

By Chen En Jiao

The Division of Linguistics and Multilingual Studies (LMS) of HSS has Bruce Springsteen to thank for its newest faculty member. A native of Italy, Asst Prof Luca Onnis' initial motivation for learning a second language came from his love for American rock music.

"I was listening to a lot of Bruce Springsteen," said Asst Prof Onnis. "I wanted to understand what he was singing about because to me it's just sounds. In the beginning I just learned the lyrics by heart, I didn't know what that meant. I wanted to be a rock star."

Eager to understand what he was singing, he agreed when his parents asked if he wanted English lessons. As he started to pick up English, he went on to perform in a high school band and became fascinated by a person's ability to learn a language.

"I was interested in these things, these people that I cannot talk to," said Asst Prof Onnis. "Like Mandarin, it's fascinating – How do you crack that code? If you go to a country and you just listen, it's like 'how on earth do I learn this stuff? How does a child learn this stuff?' So you realize how computationally difficult this is, and yet it becomes so clear and easy. But it's not. So there's this astonishing learning power in infants, and that's how I became interested. Not just in the what, but also the how, and the why."

Fascinated with linguistics, he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts (summa cum laude) degree in Linguistics & Translation Studies from the University of Bologna in 1999 before getting a PhD in Psychology from the University of Warwick in 2004.

His interest in human learning led him to pursue postdoctoral training in the Cognitive Neuroscience Lab at the

Psychology Department of Cornell University in 2003. From 2009 to 2013 he became Assistant and then Associate Professor at the University of Hawaii where he also served as Director of the Centre for Second Language Research. He was also a recipient of grants and awards from major funding bodies including the US National Institutes of Health and the European Research Council (ERC).

Asst Prof Onnis was recruited to join HSS in November 2013 to set up the LMS division's LEAP laboratory. An acronym for Language (L) Evolution (E), Acquisition, (A) and Plasticity (P), LEAP is concerned with following a group of infants over time, understanding how these tiny bodies acquire these immense machineries for language learning so that we can train adults more effectively.

By combining linguistic research with computational modeling, the LEAP lab hopes to be able to research how languages like our local lingua franca Singlish came about and perhaps go on to even predict how languages like Singlish will evolve in future.

*"How does a child learn this stuff? There's this astonishing learning power in infants, and that's how I became interested. Not just in the what, but also the how, and the why..."*



# MOE ACADEMIC RESEARCH GRANT AWARDS

*The Ministry of Education (MOE) Academic Research Fund (AcRF) Tier 2 and Tier 1 Funds research projects on a competitive basis across Singapore-based universities. The AcRF provides funding for research that has academic significance and will drive future research, potentially leading to innovations and discoveries. Three research proposals from HSS were awarded MOE AcRF Tier 2 research grants. Congratulations to all our researchers!*

## MOE Tier 2 Grants

### Chinese



**Title:** Acquisition of Physical Action Verbs by Bilingual Singaporean Preschoolers  
**PI:** Asst Prof Helena Gao Hong

**Description:** Physical action verbs (PA verbs) are lexical terms that describe human bodily actions. The early acquisition by children of verbs such as “eat”, “drink”, “take”, and “hold”, depends heavily on their cognitive understanding of the physical activities described by these verbs. Although PA verbs are an important part of the early lexical knowledge of children, studies of this type of domain-specific lexical development in children are rare, and many questions remain to be answered. The main goal of this study is to use language-specific and culture-appropriate methods to determine the factors that may have contributed to the learning of PA verbs in bilingual children, and the reasons why certain verbs were more easily acquired in one language but not in the other.

### Psychology



**Title:** Lifespan Career Development in Entrepreneurship, Professionalism, and Leadership  
**PI:** Assoc Prof Ringo Ho Moon Ho

**Description:** New career development frameworks are needed that can better address the aspirations of individuals, organizations, and national economies, and that can better guide national-level human capital development and innovation/enterprise policies in the 21st century. Since 2010, our research team has pioneered “Entrepreneurship, Professionalism & Leadership” (EPL) as a theoretical framework for conceptualizing careers in an increasingly boundaryless work context (Chan, 2011, Chan et al., 2011, 2012). Our three dimensions of EPL career space were theoretically justified on the basis of the contextually-derived career frameworks earlier proposed by Kanter (1989) and Schein (1978) at national/economic and organizational levels. Our initial university-wide survey of 10,326 students showed that E, P, & L career aspirations could be measured independently, that these dimensions are independent of vocational interests, and that they are to some degree viewed as competing career alternatives.

### Public Policy and Global Affairs



**Title:** Decentralized Governance/Hybrid Federalism in Asia  
**PI:** Prof He Bao Gang

**Description:** Asia provides a rich field for studying how decentralized governance is being incorporated in national institutions. The central aim of this project is to distill and explain how governance is decentralized, both institutionally and operationally, in Asian countries. We seek to explain the commonalities and differences among a selection of leading Asian countries, and how these experiences can inform and advance a new theory of hybrid federalism. In particular, we intend to identify the different patterns in which both centralized (unitary) and decentralized (federal) elements are combined creatively, resulting to what we call “hybrid federalism”. We use the term ‘hybrid federalism’ to capture the various ways in which Asian countries have adapted federal institutions to suit their national purposes.

## Science reviews

# NTU BOOK ON BIOINFORMATICS



Asst Prof Hallam Stevens

*Life Out of Sequence: A Data-Driven History of Bioinformatics*, a new book published in November 2013 by Asst Prof Hallam Stevens, Division of History, HSS, has been reviewed in the 7 February 2014 issue of *Science*, one of the world's leading journals.

The academic journal of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, *Science* is one of the world's most influential journals. Articles published in *Science* are routinely cited in academia as the journal is only one of two scientific journals that cover the full range of scientific disciplines.

Entitled *Making Sense from Sequences* (*Science*, Vol 343, No. 6171 pp.613-614), the book review talks about Asst Prof Stevens' book – a historical and

ethnographic account of the changes wrought to biological practice and biological knowledge by the introduction of the computer. Asst Prof Stevens' book delves into how the recent advancement in the study of biology gave rise to the interdisciplinary field of Bioinformatics where scientists develop software tools to store, retrieve, organise and analyse biological data.

“One thing that's striking in the history of recent biology is the way life is often conceived in 'informatic' terms. Biologists speak of codes, programs, and information when they are talking about organisms. I became interested in finding out more about the origins of these ideas and also trying to figure out more about what consequences they have for our understanding of life,” said

Asst Prof Stevens as he revealed his inspiration for writing the book.

“Biology is increasingly dependent on computers – they are used for all sorts of things from data analysis to global communication of ideas,” he added. “Computers are impacting the kinds of biomedical discoveries that are made every day and that will come to affect all of us during our life (like in understanding the causes of diseases like cancer). The aim of this book is to understand more about the impact that computers have on biology – what difference does it make that discoveries are made using computers?”

An expert in the history of science and technology, Asst Prof Stevens had to overcome a steep learning curve working alongside biology scientists on their projects in their labs as part of his fieldwork research for the book.

“This was a challenge because I had to learn their language, including programming languages, to be able to understand their work and participate in it.”

Asst Prof Stevens is currently pursuing similar kinds of “participation observation” in biological laboratories in Asian countries like Singapore and China. His new book, *Biotechnology & Society*, which will be published by the University of Chicago Press next year, provides an overview of historical, philosophical, sociological, and anthropological approaches to thinking about biotechnology and its effects on society, politics, economics, ethics, and culture.

## BOOKS

### 《多元视角与文学文化：古典文学论集》 *Multiple Perspective & Literary Culture: Essays on Classical Chinese Literature*



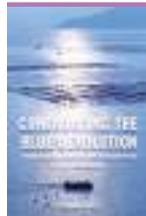
Asst Prof Qu Jing Yi (Division of Chinese)  
and Asst Prof Li Jia (Asian Languages &  
Cultures Academic Group, NIE) (eds)

Beijing Normal University Press &  
Anhui University Press, 2014

This book, embodying 13 papers (9 in Chinese and 4 in English), focuses on multiple perspectives and literary culture in discussing Classical Chinese Literature with different historical periods and literature genres. Featuring authors from Singapore, US, Hong Kong, Macau and Mainland China, it delves into the different aspects of Classical Chinese Literature including narrative structure, folklore, cultural study, textual research, edition study, intertextuality, English translation, Western Sinology, etc.

本书围绕“多元视角与文学文化”这一主题，收录13篇学术论文（9篇中文，4篇英文），作者分别来自新加坡、美国、香港、澳门、中国大陆等地域，研究的时代涵括先秦、汉魏、南朝、唐、宋、明、清各个时期，研究的文体包括诗、词、文、小说等诸种体裁，内容涉及叙事学、文化学、考据学、版本学、民俗学及互文性、文体互动、文本英译、西方汉学研究综述等多个领域，既有文学文化式的观照，又有文本细读式的体悟，旨在以多元视角展示当代中国古典文学研究的各个面向。

### *Confronting the Blue Revolution: Industrial Aquaculture and Sustainability in the Global South*



By Asst Prof Md Saidul Islam  
(Division of Sociology)

The University of Toronto Press, 2014

The Blue Revolution accomplished for the global aquaculture sector what the Green Revolution did for agriculture in the 1960s — increase production and stave off hunger in the global South. Although widely heralded, it was geared to quench the appetite of wealthy consumers in the North. This book reveals its bitter price and side-effects: a transformation of agrarian landscapes into large farms owned by a select few, ecological devastation, displacement of rural subsistence farmers, rural tensions and violence and exploitative gender and labour relations. With a robust conceptual framework comprised of global commodity chain, environmental governance, agrarian change and gender relations plus rigorous methodological tools, this book examines recent environmental politics with particular emphasis on certification regimes in the global aquatic sector specially shrimp.

### *Life Out of Sequence: A Data-Driven History of Bioinformatics*



By Asst Prof Hallam Stevens  
(History Programme)

University of Chicago Press, 2013

The use of computers in biology has radically transformed who biologists are, what they do, and how they understand life. This book chronicles the emergence of bioinformatics—the mode of working across and between biology, computing, mathematics, and statistics—from the 1960s to the present. It shows how scientific data moves from living organisms into DNA sequencing machines, through software, and into databases, images, and scientific publications. It reveals a biology very different from the one of predigital days: a biology that includes not only biologists but also highly interdisciplinary teams of managers and workers; a biology that is more centred on DNA sequencing, but one that understands sequence in terms of dynamic cascades and highly interconnected networks.

### *Sociolinguistics Today: Routledge Library Edition*



By Prof Kingsley Bolton (Division of  
Linguistics and Multilingual Studies) and  
Helen Kwok

Routledge, 2013

This collection of essays developed out of a conference held in Hong Kong in 1988. The aim was to provide a forum for an exchange of views between academics working within the field of sociolinguistics, in particular between those in the West and the East. This book produces an overview of contemporary research into sociolinguistics worldwide. It contains articles by acknowledged leaders in the study of language and society, and the presence of sociolinguists working in Asia provides a new and exciting challenge to the hitherto western-dominated field. The comprehensive study of Asian sociolinguistics is unique and engages with the non-Asian contributions to great effect. The range of contributors reinforces the international emphasis of the book.

### *Working with Written Discourse*



By Asst Prof Ivan Panović (Division of  
Linguistics and Multilingual Studies)  
and Prof Deborah Cameron (Oxford  
University)

SAGE Publications, 2014

Addressing the practicalities of research, and embracing the complexity and variety of written forms of language, this book grounds readers in a broad range of concepts, debates and relevant methods; focuses on both theoretical questions and the ‘how to’ of analysis; is loaded with practical activities and advice on the design and execution of research; highlights computer-mediated communication and new media discourse, from text messages and tweets to mobile phone novels and online encyclopedias; and draws on data from international and multilingual communities. This book equips readers with practical and conceptual tools to ask questions about written discourse, and to analyse the huge variety of texts that make up our linguistic landscape.

## The Confucian Philosophy of Harmony



By Assoc Prof Li Cheng Yang  
(Philosophy Programme)

Routledge, 2014

Harmony is a concept essential to Confucianism and to the way of life of East Asians. Integrating methods of textual exegesis, historical investigation, comparative analysis, and philosophical argumentation, this book presents a comprehensive treatment of the Confucian philosophy of harmony. Tracing the roots of the concept to antiquity, it examines its subsequent development, explicating its theoretical and practical significance for the contemporary world. Confucian harmony has been misinterpreted in the West as presupposing an invariable grand scheme of things that pre-exists in the world to which humanity has to conform. The book shows that Confucian harmony is a dynamic, generative process, which seeks to balance and reconcile differences and conflicts through creativity.

## JOURNAL ARTICLES

开放包容成就共生共荣——从《谏逐客书》的教学论新加坡政府的移民政策  
(*Opening-up and Inclusiveness Make Co-Existence and Co-Prospersity: On Singapore Immigration Policy from Teaching “Jian Zhu ke Shu”*)

By Asst Prof Qu Jing Yi (Division of Chinese)

Journal of Qiongzhou University 2013  
Issue 6, Pages 10-14

The article talks about immigration policy in Singapore through the analysis of *Jian Zhu Ke Shu* — an outstanding, persuasive document written in the Qin Dynasty. Li Si and the first Qin Emperor are famous historical figures whose life stories, political struggles and brilliant writing students are very interested in. Students connect the subject with modern immigration policy in a way which enables the teaching to transcend to the socio-cultural level. The article analyses the phenomenon of immigrants contributing to social pressure while contributing tremendously to society. With more countries opening up to foreign talents, inclusiveness is needed in order to ensure the prosperous co-existence of local citizens with new immigrants in Singapore.

*An Egalitarian Regime breeds Generosity: The Effect of Endowment Allocation Procedures on Social Preferences*

Assoc Prof Yohanes E Riyanto (Division of Economics) and  
Dr Zhang Jian Lin (SIM Global Education)

Economic Inquiry, forthcoming, 2014

This paper investigates the effect of endowment allocation procedures on social preferences using a two-stage dictator game. In the first stage, participants randomly (to be continued →)

(→ continued) selected as allocators perform tasks in order to earn money with better performances earning higher pay. In its baseline meritocratic treatment, the allocators' initial endowment was set equal to their individual earnings. This was compared with an egalitarian treatment where high performers were taxed and under performers subsidized by the high performers. In the second stage, the allocators had to divide their endowment with the recipients. The allocators were more generous in the egalitarian treatment than in the meritocratic treatment. Being taxed didn't reduce the high performers' generosity but being subsidized significantly increased the underperformers' generosity towards other people.

*Beyond Co-ethnicity: The Politics of Differentiating and Integrating New Immigrants in Singapore*

By Prof Liu Hong (History Programme)

Ethnic and Racial Studies, 2014  
Vol. 37, Issue 7, Pages 1-14

This essay looks at how co-ethnic ties affect diaspora identity by examining Singaporean Chinese perceptions of new mainland immigrants and the state's strategies in integrating the newcomers. Public discourse on newcomers have centred on them: (1) being socially and culturally different from earlier immigrants; (2) intensifying the competition for scarce resources; and (3) being politically attached to China. This paper argues that co-ethnicity and common cultural heritage play little role in shaping Singaporeans' view of the new diaspora. Instead, political pragmatism and new identity politics that prioritize nation above ethnicity are the key factors influencing public attitudes and policy options regarding new immigrants.

<跨国网络与全球治理：东亚政治经济发展的趋势与挑战>  
*Transnational Network and Global Governance: Trends and Challenges of the New Political Economy in East Asia*

By Prof Liu Hong (History Programme)

《当代亚太》 Journal of Contemporary Asia-Pacific Studies, 2013  
Vol. 21, Issue 6, Pages 4-29

Existing studies on East Asian regional integration is dominated by the nation-state framework and “Methodological Nationalism”, giving scant attention to transborder flows of population, capital and ideas. This article posits two propositions. Firstly, that the predominant nation-state framework analysing East Asia's political economy, while indispensable in its own right, can't adequately explain the profound transformations resultant from increased cross-border movements of people, practices, ideas and capital. Secondly, by going beyond conventional state-society dichotomy and the rigid theoretical divide between statism and institutionalism, transnational network and global governance can be employed as useful analytical tools in deciphering the new dynamics of the East Asian political economy.

## Global Food Supply: Certify Sustainable Aquaculture?

By Asst Prof Md Saidul Islam (Division of Sociology), Froukje Kruijsen, Dr Benjamin Belton (WorldFish Center), Assoc Prof Derek Hall, Assoc Prof Peter Vandergeest (York University), Dr Francis J. Murray (University of Stirling), Prof Stefano Ponte (Copenhagen Business School), Assoc Prof Simon Bush, Dr Peter Oosterveer, Prof Arthur P.J. Mol, Rini Kusumawati (Wageningen University), Dr Maki Hatanaka (Sam Houston State University), Dr Tran Thi Thu Ha (Hue University), Prof David C. Little (Sustainable Aquaculture Group)

Science, 2013

Vol 341, Issue 6150, Pages 1067-1068

Aquaculture, the farming of aquatic organisms, provides close to 50% of the world's supply of seafood, with a value of U.S. \$125 billion. It makes up 13% of the world's animal-source protein (excluding eggs and dairy) and employs an estimated 24 million people (1). With capture (i.e., wild) fisheries production stagnating, aquaculture may help close the forecast global deficit in fish protein by 2020 (2). This so-called "blue revolution" requires addressing a range of environmental and social problems, including water pollution, degradation of ecosystems, and violation of labour standards.

## Newton's "satis est": A new explanatory role for laws

By Asst Prof Ida Lina Jansson (Philosophy Programme)

Studies in History and Philosophy of Science, 2013

Vol 44, Part A, Pages 553-562

This paper argues that Newton's stance on explanation in physics was enabled by his overall methodology which didn't commit him to embrace action at a distance or set aside philosophical and metaphysical questions. It allowed him to embrace a non-causal, yet non-inferior, kind of explanation. It suggests that Newton believed the theory developed in the *Principia* provided a genuine law-based explanation but lacked a causal account of the explanandum. Finally, it argues that examining what it takes to have law-based explanation in the face of agnosticism about the causal process makes it possible to recast the debate over action at a distance between Leibniz and Newton as empirically and methodologically motivated on both sides.

## In the Absence of Animacy: Superordinate Category Structure Affects Subordinate Label Verification

Asst Prof Suzy Styles (Division of Psychology), Olivera Ilic, Dr Vanja Kovic (University of Belgrade)

PLoS One, 2013

Vol 8, Issue 12, Page 1

Theoretical accounts and behavioural studies reporting animacy effects offer inconsistent and sometimes contradictory results which may be due to inadvertent biases in the stimuli selected for testing. This study pits animacy against feature structure (intra-item variability) in a picture-word matching task. For unimpaired adults, regardless of whether objects were from animate (mammals; insects) or inanimate (clothes; musical instruments) superordinate categories, participants were faster to match basic level labels with objects from categories with low intra-item variability (mammals; clothes) than from categories with high intra-item variability (insects; instruments). By pitting animacy against variability, we clarified that observable differences in processing speed between animals and instruments are systematically driven by the intra-item variability of the superordinate categories, and not by animacy itself.

## Fostering Public Service Motivation through Workplace Trust: Evidence from Public Managers in Taiwan

By Asst Prof Chen Chung An (Public Policy and Global Affairs Programme), Asst Prof Hsieh Chih Wei (University of New Mexico), Prof Chen Don Yun (National Chengchi University)

Public Administration, forthcoming, 2014

Existing literature addressing antecedents of public service motivation (PSM) focuses on personal predisposition and institutional shaping. The authors argue that workplace trust resulting from human interaction and personal choice has a bearing on PSM. It is postulated that public managers' trust in citizens, colleagues and agency leaders enhance their PSM. The authors affirm this proposition by using data collected from middle managers working in the Taiwan central government. This study brings trust into the study of PSM, facilitates interdisciplinary dialogues, and thus helps make PSM a type of knowledge that pushes back the boundaries of public administration.