

# HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

Department of English Language and Literature

## Cultures and Interdisciplinarity

A Half Day Seminar

**Date:** 5 November 2012 (Monday)

**Time:** 2pm-6pm

**Venue:** Room 1312, 13/F., Academic and Administration Building, 15 Baptist University Road, Kowloon Tong

The ambiguous 'and' in the seminar title is deliberate. First, the seminar will examine the highly contested notion of cultures from the perspectives of different disciplines including anthropology, communication, sociolinguistics and sociology. Second, there is a common thread that is shared in the seminar: interdisciplinary is essential to the understanding of any social phenomenon including cultures. The seminar also hopes to identify some specific areas of collaboration for future research.

Speakers	Titles
<b>Prof. Chen Ling</b> School of Communication, Hong Kong Baptist University	<b>Of Cultures, About Cultures and For Cultures: Reflections on Interdisciplinary Study of Intercultural Communication</b>
<b>Dr. Matthew Chew</b> Department of Sociology, Hong Kong Baptist University	<b>Why Chinese Online Games Differ from Global Ones: An Explanation based on the American Cultural Sociological Approach</b>
<b>Dr. Kenneth Kong</b> Department of English Language & Literature, Hong Kong Baptist University	<b>Social Theories and Discourse Analysis: Agency and Performativity in Two Cultures of Analysis</b>
<b>Prof. Gordon Mathews</b> Department of Anthropology, Chinese University of Hong Kong	<b>The Complexities of "Culture" in Anthropology Today</b>
<b>Dr. Jonathan Corpus Ong</b> Department of Sociology, Hong Kong Baptist University	<b>The 'Conversation' of Media and Culture: Persuasive Movements between the Two Interlocutors of Mediation Theory</b>

**All are welcome and no pre-registration is required!!**

Recognized CCL Seminar. For enquiries, please email [eng@hkbu.edu.hk](mailto:eng@hkbu.edu.hk).



香港浸會大學  
HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY



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### **Seminar Introduction**

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*Of Cultures, About Cultures and For Cultures: Reflections on Interdisciplinary Study of Intercultural Communication*

Prof. Chen Ling

School of Communication, Hong Kong Baptist University

### **Abstract:**

I would like to share my reflection on the concept of culture with all its nuance, richness and complexity as relevant to intercultural communication including cross cultural communication. From a communicative perspective I will focus on a dynamic process that, in a sense, produces, constitutes, reflects, and is shaped by culture, as seen in day-to-day activities and social interactions.

### **Bionote:**

Prof. Chen's areas of interest include Intercultural Communication and Chinese Communication, with some 50 publications so far. The interactive role of culture and communication in different social contexts at different interaction levels has been a center of her research and scholarship.

*Why Chinese Online Games Differ from Global Ones: An Explanation based on the American Cultural Sociological Approach*

Dr. Matthew Chew

Department of Sociology, Hong Kong Baptist University

Abstract:

This presentation illustrates the 'American cultural sociological approach' through applying it to explain why Chinese online games are different from global ones. The American cultural sociological approach does not prioritize 'remote' and intangible causes such as the Chinese cultural tradition, contemporary Chinese culture, the Chinese psyche, or Chinese gamer preferences. It instead focuses on immediate and tangible variables such as government policy and commercial imperatives.

Bionote:

Matthew M. Chew's research interests include cultural sociology, globalization, popular culture, new media, and social theory. His work deals with a wide spectrum of empirical materials ranging from early modern Japanese universities to online gaming in China.

*Social Theories and Discourse Analysis:  
Agency and Performativity in Two Cultures of Analysis*

Dr. Kenneth Kong

Department of English Language and Literature, Hong Kong Baptist University

Abstract:

Agency and performativity are essentially about the human capacity to act and the ability to enact changes, which are the central themes of many humanities and social science disciplines. Focusing on these two concepts, the paper will discuss the boundaries and overlapping concerns of two closely related disciplines: social theories and discourse analysis. The paper will also discuss the role of discourse (including both linguistic and visual) in constituting and constructing cultures.

Bionote:

Kenneth Kong is teaching linguistics and discourse analysis in the English department of Hong Kong Baptist University. His main research interests are discourse analysis and multimodal analysis. His new book on professional discourse will be published by Cambridge University Press in 2013.

*The Complexities of "Culture" in Anthropology Today*  
Prof. Gordon Mathews  
Department of Anthropology, Chinese University of Hong Kong

Abstract:

"Culture" has long been the key term of anthropology, at least in its American variant. But over the past several decades, anthropologists have largely stopped talking about culture. In this talk, I explore the reasons why anthropology has shied away from the term, and discuss what this means for contemporary anthropology; and I explore how the concept can perhaps best be revived, through focus not on regions, groups, or systems but through examination of the cultural shapings of individuals.

Bionote:

Gordon Mathews teaches anthropology at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He has written the books *What Makes Life Worth Living?* (1996), *Global Culture/Individual Identity* (2001), *Hong Kong, China: Learning to Belong to a Nation* (with Eric Ma and Tai-lok Lui, 2008), and *Ghetto at the Center of the World* (2011).

*The 'Conversation' of Media and Culture: Persuasive Movements between the Two  
Interlocutors of Mediation Theory*

Dr. Jonathan Corpus Ong  
Department of Sociology, Hong Kong Baptist University

Abstract:

This paper presents a trajectory of how media and communications studies have conceptualized culture, particularly in the critical tradition of audience studies and media ethnography. Arguing against political economic approaches that overemphasize how media technologies and texts transform or 'destroy' local cultures, early audience and reception research used essentialist understandings of 'culture' in explaining the multiple interpretations that arise from reading media texts. Developing from a critique of both perspectives, mediation theory—and its related term "mediatization"—conceptualizes the relationship between media and culture as a dialectic, or a 'conversation', which implies a process of mutual shaping and interaction between the two, and suggests media power as diffuse and encompassing yet undetermined. Reviewing and critiquing claims about a "Trinidadian Internet" (Miller & Slater, 2000), "a Filipino morality" animating Facebook relationships (Madianou & Miller 2012), and "a Russian reading" of American soap operas (Liebes & Katz 1989), this paper retells a history of media studies as persuasive communication between culture and media.

Bionote:

Jonathan Corpus Ong is assistant professor in sociology at Hong Kong Baptist University. A graduate of the University of Cambridge, Jonathan has published his work on media ethics, media and migration, and mediated politics in journals such as *Media, Culture & Society*, *Television & New Media*, and *Communication, Culture & Critique*.