Littérature Au Vol (literature on the fly) is an original project designed by the HKU French programme. The project was presented in the 2019 Hong Kong edition of Novembre Numérique; a worldwide annual festival organized by the Institut Français to celebrate digital cultures.

Littérature Au Vol focuses on revisiting classic French literary texts in the age of the digital cultures.

In this project students were given the opportunity to discuss, contextualize and interpret collectively a French literary text chosen for its interest or relevance in the context of Hong Kong.

This year, a group of HKU French students worked on a video adaptation of Les Djinns by Victor HUGO. Les Djinns, one of the most famous poems by Victor HUGO, was published in 1829 in Les Orientales. The poem is distinguished by its very original form, in "crescendo" and "decrescendo". This form resonates with the poem which is the account of the crash caused by the passage of a swarm of djinns around the narrator's house.

Students chose to render the poem as a short narrative video depicting the sense of urgency and dramatization which emanate from the text.
2nd Latin American and Iberian Film Series

Spanish programme, 02 Oct - 21 Nov 2019

SMLC’s new edition of Spanish-language and Lushophone cinemas continued successfully in October and November 2019 with screenings of recent films and post-screening discussions with its directors via Skype. The 2nd Latin American and Iberian Film Series opened with the Portuguese film The Dead Queen (2018) followed by a discussion with the director, António Ferreira, on October 2. At the opening, we were honored with the presence of Consul Alves from Portugal and representatives from the Instituto Português do Oriente, Consul Grygianiec from Argentina, Consul Zambrano from México, and Mr. ROLDÁN and Ms. MIGUÉLEZ from the Spanish Consulate in Hong Kong. The other two films shown in the first semester of 2019-20 include the successful Argentine tragicomedy Wild Tales (2014) and the religious Peruvian film The Eyes of the Journey (2017). This series, co-organized with the Consulates General of Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Peru, Portugal and Spain, and the Honorary Consulate of Uruguay, and two universities (PolyU and CUHK), has been extremely successful with the public and we hope to continue with it in the second semester.
On November 7, 2019, the Arabic Programme organised an event “Arabic Programme Booth - Come and have a taste of Arabia”, at the University of Hong Kong.

This event is a start of a series of events to be organised by Arabic Programme aiming to introduce Arabic language and culture to the students of The University of Hong Kong and the general public.

The booth welcomed a large audience from inside and outside the University to enjoy the Arabian hospitality by tasting the Arabian dates, the hot anise drink and the cold hibiscus drink. The visitors had their names written in Arabic Calligraphy on a beautifully designed card.

The booth was a great opportunity to meet students face to face, answer their questions about Arabic language and the Arabic courses offered by the School of Modern Languages and Cultures, that include Credit courses, non-credit courses, culture courses, and general public courses.
Rigoletto from the pit: Up close and personal with Maestro Paolo Olmi

Italian Programme, 27 Sep 2019 (Fri)

On September 27th, the Italian programme hosted the internationally renowned conductor, Paolo OLMI, for a speaking engagement on Rigoletto, one of the most famous Italian operas composed by Giuseppe VERDI.

The event “Rigoletto from the pit” was co-organized by the Italian programme, the Italian Club@HKU, the Italian Consulate and Istituto italiano di cultura. The event was open to the public.

Paolo OLMI engaged in a meaningful conversation with Peter GORDON, editor of the Asian Review of books. They first discussed the origin of opera, and then its rendering in the different theaters around the world.

Although it remains one of the most fascinating performing arts, Opera is gaining less attention from the public, especially from younger audiences. This is largely due to its complexity. Engaging with its major experts is an excellent opportunity for students to enhance their understanding and enjoy the art form more fully.

8 keywords to understand today’s Italy (Otto parole per spiegare l’Italia di oggi)

Italian Programme, 24 Oct 2019 (Thu)

On October 24th, the Italian programme hosted Beppe SEVERGNINI at the HKU. SEVERGNINI is, among other things, a columnist and editor of one of the major Italian newspapers, Il Corriere della Sera. He was a foreign correspondent from various countries, including United Kingdom and Russia. He is also the author of numerous books and the editor of a very popular online blog, ‘Italians’.

The event at HKU, “8 keywords to understand today’s Italy”, was co-organized by the Italian programme, the Italian Consulate and the Istituto Italiano di Cultura as part of the celebrations of The Week of Italian Language in the World.

In his lecture, SEVERGNINI gave an ironic and highly entertaining presentation of some interjections in Italian, demonstrating through a series of anecdotes the expressive importance of various sounds and words in Italian (Oh, Ah, Eh, Boh, etc.) that are typically ignored or underestimated in formal studies of linguistics and lexicography.

The event was well-attended. It offered another great opportunity for our students to enhance their understanding of the Italian language as spoken by native Italians.
Animal-Human Interactions in the Anthropocene China and Asia:
Interdisciplinary Approaches

East Studies Division, 04 - 05 Dec 2019 (Wed - Thu)

This international workshop is generously funded by the Faculty of Arts Conference Fund and co-sponsored by the Harvard Yenching Institute. Convened by Dr Victor TEO, the aim of this workshop is to bring together an interdisciplinary research group to further scrutinize the theme of animal-human interactions contextualized against the idea of the Anthropocene, with a focus on China and Asia. By centralizing how animals are broadly treated and discussed across disciplines, the workshop aspires to enhance the understanding of existing broader environmental and ecological problems related to animals through discussion and criticism. In particular, the workshop hopes to transcend the duality of nature versus culture debate by locating animal-ecological problems in the behavior of human institutions, beliefs and practices – often which are affected by prevailing political ideologies, economic interests and scientific agendas. This workshop thus provides humanists and area studies specialists to provide a voice to these challenges, particularly so in China and Asian studies. Fifteen papers were selected through an open call for papers issued earlier. The researchers hailing from the United States, Israel, Sikkim, India and from Asian countries such as Singapore, Japan and China met to discuss their findings and future plans for publication, further conference and grant applications. The workshop is grateful to Miss Francisca Kwok at the Arts Faculty Office and Miss Zena CHEUNG, Miss Lucilla CHENG, Miss Lavender LUI, Mr William HO and other colleagues at the SMLC Technical Office for their logistical assistance.
Memory at the Margins - Photo Exhibition Opening

American Studies, 23 Sep 2019 (Mon)

KWOK Ka Ling, year 4 student, American Studies Major

Memory at the Margins featured photos taken during the two-week American studies field trip of June 2018. Under the guidance of Dr. Tim GRUENEWALD, the study trip employed a critical memory studies approach to national remembrance in Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. The exhibition traced how painful chapters of American history are remembered and forgotten. The individual exhibits used a montage approach by juxtaposing seemingly unrelated images. For example, one frame displayed the domes of the National Museum of the American Indian and of the Jefferson Memorial, asking the viewer to reflect on the impact of Jefferson's Louisiana Purchase on Native Americans. Another example was a photo of a sandstone and marker commemorating enslaved African American labor used for the construction of the U.S. Capitol displayed in its Visitor Center, which also contains a statue of James Zachariah George, who supported secession as a member of the Mississippi Secession Convention. Overall, the American studies field trip and photo exhibition aimed at encouraging critical reflection on how public commemoration contributes to the U.S. national imagination.

Personally, assisting with the curation of the exhibition was a rewarding learning experience as a major in American Studies, which demanded a synthesis of my knowledge of the field. Working on the exhibition was like writing a condensed thesis, since it required finding connections between different memorials and museums and capturing them succinctly for the captions.

We would like to thank the United States Consulate General of Hong Kong and Macau and the Faculty of Arts at HKU for their generous support of the exhibition.
New Russian courses

European Studies

About 300 million people in the world speak Russian, which puts the Russian language in 5th place in the world. At the same time, the Russian language is one of the UN languages and opens up for the speaker the entire post-Soviet space. The rich Russian literature, especially classical authors such as Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Chekhov became a strong motivator to study Russian language and culture worldwide. This minor is intended whether for complete beginners in Russian or advanced level speakers. The course offers a broad introduction to the Russian language and culture of contemporary Russia. While participants will learn how to express themselves in Russian and understand the fundamentals of the language, they will also gain a deeper appreciation of the Russian society, its cultural heritage and its way of life. Separate practice groups to consolidate the work done in lectures will also be arranged separately on a regular basis.
Seminars and Conferences

Hong Kong Studies

21 Sep 2019 (Sat)
Voices of Hong Kong - The New Sensitive
香港的聲音–新敏感詞

China Studies

03 Oct 2019 (Thu)
Building a Comprehensive Database for Social Science and Evidence-based Policy Research: Hong Kong, Shanghai and Shenzhen

By Professor Xiaogang WU

American Studies

17 Oct 2019 (Thu)
Jews as Books and Books as Jews: On History, Memory, People and Objects

By Dr. Zvi SEPTIMUS
China Studies

24 Oct 2019 (Thu)

Mutable Inequalities: Meritocracy and the Making of the Chinese Academe, 1912-1952, A Data Analytic Approach

By Professor James Z. LEE

European Studies

07 Nov 2019 (Thu)

1989-2019, The End of Communism in Central and Eastern Europe: A panel discussion on the significance and contemporary relevance of the 1989 revolutions in Europe

By Dr. Stefan AUER, Dr. CHAN Ka Lok Kenneth, Dr. Roman DAVID, Dr. Loretta KIM, Dr. Krzysztof SLIWINSKI as panelists

Global Creative Industries

27 Nov 2019 (Wed)

Baudelaire Contra Benjamin: A Critique of Cultural Marxism and Politicized Aesthetics (co-authored with Beibei Guan) and Idolizing the Idea: A Critical History of Modern Philosophy: Challenging Consensuses in Literary Theory and Philosophy

By Professor Wayne CRISTAUDO

Spanish

07 Nov 2019 (Thu)

Open Class With Mexican Writer Cristina Rivera Garza at HKU

By Ms. Cristina RIVERA-GARZA

Global Creative Industries

30 Nov - 01 Dec 2019 (Sat-Sun)

Food Cultures in East Asia

The Cultural Intermediaries in the East Asian Film Industries
Publications

BORLAND, Janet

LI, Ji
“A Study on the Archives of the Mission Mandchourie at the Missions Étrangères de Paris."

LI, Ji
“Little Flowers’: Chinese Christian Women in Northeast China”

POCH, Daniel
Licentious Fictions: Ninjō and the Nineteenth-Century Japanese Novel
New York: Columbia University Press, 2020

FERNÁNDEZ MELLEDA, Bárbara
“Notas para una refundación de Chile."
In the Media

American Studies

Dr. Bárbara FERNÁNDEZ MELLEDA

The Chilean Spring (Part One): Tip of the Iceberg
Alborada
21 Oct 2019

The Chilean Spring (Part Three): How the Elite Tricked Us All
Alborada
3 Nov 2019

Boris Johnson has defied all his critics on Brexit
CNBC
18 Oct 2019

China Studies

Dr. Ji Li

Report on new book manuscript (Catholics in China: A Survival Story)
HKU Bulletin Vol. 21
November 2019

Conservative manifesto gives UK’s Johnson a strong position
CNBC
25 Nov 2019

Chile Protests: Chileans Are Angry About Far More Than Rising Metro Fares
Novara Media
22 Oct 2019

The Chilean Spring (Part Two): It’s Thirty Years, not Thirty Pesos
Alborada
24 Oct 2019

Protesters in Chile Aren’t Angry About 30 Pesos. They’re Angry About 30 Years of Neoliberalism
Novara Media
25 Oct 2019

European Studies

Dr. Stefan AUER

Hong Kong, el nuevo espejo del independentismo (Comparisons between Catalan fight for independence and the situation in Hong Kong)
El País
14 Sept 2019

Boris Johnson has done fairly well in the election campaign
CNBC
11 Dec 2019
Cultural and Other Events

American Studies

17 Oct 2019 (Thu)
Award Presentation 2019

Swedish

25 Oct 2019 (Fri)
The 100-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out of the Window and Disappeared (Hundraåringen Som Klev Ut Genom Fönstret Och Försvann)
Film Screening

European Studies

05-06 Nov 2019 (Tue-Wed)
Zen in Ice Rift
Screening and panel discussion
with Dr. Li CHONG and Dr. Mercedes VÁZQUEZ

Co-sponsored by the Committee on Gender Equality and Diversity of the Faculty of Arts at HKU and the Italian Cultural Institute in Hong Kong

Japanese Studies

10 Dec 2019 (Tue)
New MOU with UTokyo and JAL to Enhance Collaborative Opportunities

SMLC’s Japanese Studies Department has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Global Japan Studies Research Network in the Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia at the University of Tokyo and Japan Airlines Co., Ltd. (JAL), with the aim of enhancing collaborative opportunities for both staff and students. The MOU, which was signed in Tokyo on 10 Dec 2019, formalizes existing cooperative ties between the three parties, particularly in the area of the two institutions’ joint summer programs.

JAL is a long-time supporter of the HKU-UTokyo Joint Summer Program. The program was first launched in August 2013 and provides opportunities for students from both institutions to engage with business and academic leaders, and gain greater insight into the social, cultural and commercial ties that connect Japan and Hong Kong. The MOU will enable further cooperative activities between JAL and the two universities, including visits and exchanges of faculty and students, joint research initiatives, and the identification of other areas for potential collaboration.

French

02 Dec 2019 (Mon)
Award Ceremony 2019

The ceremony was held at the Residence de France.
Students Achievements

China Studies

Shoujie Dongbeiya Shehui Wenhua Luntan首届東北亞社會文化論壇 [The First Northeast Asia Social and Cultural Forum] was held in Harbin, China in December 2019. CHANG Kin-Ian, first year PhD student in China Studies, presented a paper titled “Cong Duanfang Zhi Shi Kan Xinhai Geming De Man Han Guanxi 從端方之死看辛亥革命的滿漢關係 [Looking at the Manchu-Han relation during 1911 Revolution through the death of Duanfang]”. This forum was followed by a field trip to a Manchu village in Yingchengzi Manzu Xiang 營城子滿族鄉 in Wuchang city 五常市 in Heilongjiang province.

PhD student CHEN Sixing has finished Archival Research in SOAS Library and Cambridge Library funded by Pilot Scheme in Fall 2019. She also presented her research in The Oxford International History of East Asia Seminar Autumn 2019 Session.

PhD student Ignatius SUGLO participated in the Africa-China Mini-Symposium, organized by Chi Sun College, HKU, in November 2019 (Poster attached). His paper ""The Sound of Friendship": The Role of Music in Cultural Understanding in Africa-China relations" was accepted by AAS to be held in Boston in March 2020.

Chengyi ZHOU (PhD, China Studies) gave a presentation on "A Study of the Standardization of Manchu-Han Transcription Based on the Three Versions of the Old Manchu Archives" at the "Manchu Language and Qing History Research Workshop" sponsored by the Sun Yat-sen University in Zhuhai, Guangdong from 02 to 04 Nov 2019.
Staff News

New Staff

Dr. Jin JEONG
Assistant Lecturer
(Korean Studies)

Dr. Maggie LEUNG
Lecturer
(Hong Kong Studies)

Ms Lavender LUI
Executive Assistant
(General Office)

Dr. Amir MALIKOV
Assistant Lecturer
(European Studies (Russian))

Dr. Francisco ROMO SIMON
Assistant Lecturer
(Spanish Programme)

Mr. Kin WONG
Assistant IT Officer
(Technical Office)

Staff taking up new positions

Dr. Nadia CAMPORESE
Lecturer
(Italian Programme)

Ms. Eunkyung CHANG
Lecturer
(Korean Studies)

Mr. Martin JUARISTI GARAMENDI
Lecturer
(Spanish Programme)

Miss Yukiko SASAKI
Assistant Lecturer
(Japanese Studies)

Dr. Roland VOGT
Associate Professor
(European Studies)

Dr. John WONG
Associate Professor
(Hong Kong Studies)

Departing Staff

Ms. Ada WONG
Laboratory Assistant
(Technical Office)

Staff Achievements

Dr. Loretta KIM (China Studies)
Dr. Loretta KIM gave the opening presentation, “Daur Names and Daur Identities: Testing Boundaries of Social and Cultural Perceptions,” at the International Workshop on Peoples and Languages of Sino-Russian Borderlands: Dauria held at Palacky University (Olomouc, Czech Republic) on 09 Oct 2019 (Wed), and was the solo speaker for an exclusive session on “Food as a Medium of Cross-Cultural Contact and Ethno-Local Identity in the Benxi-Huanren-Xinbin Region,” at the 2nd International Conference for Reconciliation and Coexistence in Contact Zones at Chung-Ang University (Seoul, South Korea), on 08 Nov 2019 (Fri).