

Interdisciplinary Innovation in the Asian Liberal Arts University

Annual Presidents' Forum of the
Alliance of Asian Liberal Arts Universities

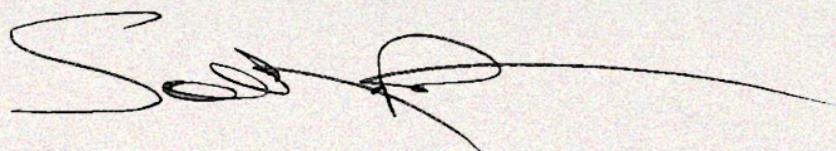
Duke Kunshan University

November 13-15, 2025



Welcome

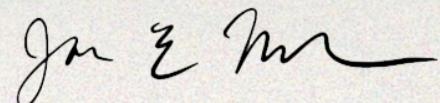
I am delighted to welcome the AALAU delegates and speakers to our beautiful campus for the AALAU Presidents' Forum in 2025. Our university is keen to strengthen ties with liberal arts universities across Asia and to deepen our mutual understanding of the role that our universities can play in the Asian context. Interdisciplinarity has been at the heart of the DKU curriculum from the very beginning and we are continually trying to find ways to deepen connections between and among our various programs and research centers. We know this is a complex and challenging task and look forward to learning from the experience of AALAU member universities and sharing what we have learned since establishing our undergraduate program in 2018.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott MacEachern".

Scott MacEachern
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Welcome

It has been a great honor for us to put together this wonderful program. We were particularly delighted to see the large numbers of DKU faculty who are willing to contribute their expertise to the program, and we hope that all participants in the conference can learn from each other about best practices in implementing interdisciplinarity across the curriculum. We offer our sincere thanks to everyone for their contribution and look forward to learning more from all the panels.



James Miller
Associate Dean for Interdisciplinary Initiatives

On behalf of the Organizing Committee

Nellie Chu, Assistant Professor of Cultural Anthropology
Zach Fredman, Associate Professor of History
Gergely Horvath, Associate Professor of Economics

Thursday 13 November

Note that all events take place in the Academic Building (AB) unless otherwise indicated.

1700 AB Ballroom

Opening Ceremony and Welcome Remarks

James Miller, Associate Dean for Interdisciplinary Initiatives, DKU

Scott MacEachern, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, DKU

John Quelch, Executive Vice Chancellor, DKU

1730 AB Ballroom

Keynote Address

James Miller; Moderator

In Knowledge and in Deeds Unto the Whole Person: A 20-Year Journey in Liberal Arts Education at BNU

Haipeng Guo, Beijing Normal-Hong Kong Baptist University

Founded in 2005 in Zhuhai, Beijing Normal-Hong Kong Baptist University (BNU) began as a radical experiment: to create the Chinese mainland's first modern liberal arts university. This talk charts its pioneering 20-year journey in liberal arts education. We will uncover how a model forged from a unique Mainland-Hong Kong collaboration synthesizes Eastern and Western liberal arts with whole-person education. This distinctive fusion cultivates professionals endowed with an understanding of Chinese culture and a global outlook, offering a vital blueprint for the future of education in China and beyond.

1830 Executive Dining

Buffet Dinner for Presenters

2000 AB Ballroom

Friend or Foe: Best Practice Surrounding the use of ChatGPT or DeepSeek in Interdisciplinary Learning and Assessment

An open discussion moderated by Bradley R. Barnes, Lingnan University

Friday 14 November

Plenary Session

0900 AB Ballroom

Opening Remarks from University Representatives

Scott MacEachern, Moderator

Bradley R. Barnes, Lingnan University
Raymond Chan, Lingnan University
Jeanne Fu, The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong
Jeng Liu, Tunghai University
Junsheng Liu, East China Normal University
Timothy O'Connor, American University of Central Asia
Shweta Sinha Deshpande, Symbiosis International University
Sittithep Eaksittipong, Chiang Mai University

1010

Group Photo and Tea Break

Parallel Sessions

1045 AB Ballroom

1A Interdisciplinary Learning through Practice: The ARC102 Experience and Beyond

Zach Fredman, Moderator

Marc Aurel Schnabel, XJTLU
Juan Carlos Dall'Asta, XJTLU
Ying Zeng, China Academy of Art (Hangzhou)
Sandro Rolla, XJTLU

AB 2103

1B Beyond Boundaries: Innovating Curriculum Design for Transdisciplinary Learning

*Yi-Lung Kuo, HKUST Guangzhou, Moderator
Huaxiong Huang, DKU, Moderator*

Man Chan, HKUST Guangzhou
Lan Li, CUHK Shenzhen
Rebecca Wakelin, XJTLU

AB 2107

1C1 Quantifying Interdisciplinarity via Course Tagging: A Way to Measure ID at the Course, Faculty, Major, and Institutional Levels

Jason Todd, DKU
Jingduo Bi, DKU

1C2 Designing the Undisciplined University: Lessons From Daoist Philosophy

James Miller, DKU

1C3 Liberal Arts Education in Chinese Societies: Historical Development in Former Christian Universities, Cultural Integration in Contemporary Institutions, and New Opportunities and Challenges

Leping Mou, University of Glasgow

1200 Lunch in the Community Center (CCT) Cafeterias

Parallel Sessions

AB Ballroom

1300 **2A Embodied Learning in the Asian Liberal Arts**

Nellie Chu, Moderator

Ziying Cui, DKU

Kim Hunter Gordon, DKU

Ian McNally, DKU

Hui Yao, DKU

AB2103

2B Mind, Morals, and Machines: Integrating Humanities and Sciences in Research and Teaching

Gergely Horvath, Moderator

Shan Wang, DKU

Sze Chai Kwok, DKU

Wen Zhou, DKU

Yucheng Jin, DKU

1415 Short Break

1430	<p>3A Voice Matters: Integrating Humanities and Sciences in Transdisciplinary Learning</p>	<p>3B Designing an Asian Liberal Arts Experience: The Chinese Arts of Education Lab at DKU</p>
	<p><i>Yi-Lung Kuo, HKUST Guangzhou, Moderator Huaxiong Huang, DKU, Moderator</i></p>	<p><i>James Miller, Moderator</i></p>
	<p>Theresa Kwong, Hong Kong Baptist University Wenbo Zhang, HKUST Guangzhou Ruimeng Zhou, DKU</p>	<p>Kim Hunter Gordon, DKU Wenting Ji, DKU Lianyun Pang, DKU Ben Van Overmeire, DKU Yisu Zhou, DKU</p>
1545	<p>Tea Break</p>	
1615	<p>4A Interdisciplinarity in the Humanities and Social Sciences: Insights from Teaching, Research, and Intellectual Exchange at Sino-Foreign Universities</p>	<p>4B Bridging Boundaries: Interdisciplinary STEM Teaching and Research in the Asian Liberal Arts University</p>
	<p><i>Nellie Chu, Moderator</i></p> <p>Hyun Jeong Ha, DKU Qian Zhu, DKU Shuang Wen, NYU Shanghai Jesse Olsavsky, DKU</p>	<p><i>Gergely Horvath, Moderator</i></p> <p>Hanbing Lin, DKU Weiwei Shi, DKU Xiaoqian Xu, DKU Renee Richer, DKU Paul Stanley, DKU</p>

Plenary Sessions

1730 AB Ballroom

Keynote Address

Nellie Chu, Moderator

Thinking Versus Doing in the Digital Era: Cultivating Actionable Intelligence to Transcend Boundaries

Jiawen Han, Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University

The current trajectory of liberal arts education reinforces the flight of academics into isolated silos through the overemphasis on disciplinary theories, consequently marginalizing the transformative potential of practice-based knowledge construction. For this talk, I have reflected on a decade of my workshop and seminar teaching and the pedagogical insights these experiences have yielded. It interrogates the humanities and social sciences and their overinvestment in abstract theory in higher education. Using mapping as a method, I show how an interdisciplinary, practice-based pedagogy can reattach ideas to sites, to communities, and to material conditions—reclaiming liberal learning as a public, hands-on enterprise in the digital age.

The Documenting Suzhou interdisciplinary workshop serves as the second case, demonstrating how media studies, architectural theory, social analysis, and critical discourse intersect and reconfigure through collaborative practice. By progressing through structured phases—from ethnographic interviews and spatial mapping to social media dissemination and curated exhibitions—students engage in a cyclical learning process that bridges theory and tangible outcomes. The physical exhibition component extends this pedagogy by fostering direct community engagement in Suzhou, creating a feedback loop between academic inquiry and public discourse. The talk further examines how digital literacy can be integrated into pedagogy through workshop-based practices that transcend disciplinary boundaries. Using city walking as a case study, I explore ways to cultivate students' awareness of how urban mobility converts digital data into embodied, experiential knowledge through sensory

engagement and participatory learning. Ultimately, my multiple pedagogical experiments underscore making and doing as acts of transformation: not merely producing outputs but reconfiguring disciplinary boundaries and cultivating actionable intelligence.

1830 Executive Dining

Buffet Dinner for Presenters

DKU Art Events on Friday November 14

Documentary Screening

15:45 – 17:30 AB Auditorium

Screening of Ho Rui An's *The World of Lines* (2025), a documentary born out of the artist-in-residency program at DKU with DKU student researchers in summer 2023.

Documentary Synopsis: *The World of Lines* (2025)

The World of Lines examines an over-hundred-year history of the textile industry and its many afterlives between the Yangtze River Delta and Pearl River Delta regions. Focusing on the shifting relations between labor, technology, and capital within and between the two regions, *The World of Lines* inquires into the origins of industrial capitalism in China, its subsequent displacement from, and its eventual “return” to the mainland. Building on four years of research across Nantong, Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Guangzhou, the project culminates in a feature-length “artistic documentary” film which unfolds across three chapters. Each recounts a historical period through archival material, interviews and observational footage, which together describes the transformation of the industry while reflecting on the spinning and weaving of history itself.

The form of the “artistic documentary” is inspired by the genre of the same name that was briefly championed in China during the late 1950s when filmmakers were encouraged to produce dramatic films using documentary methods, such as by casting factory workers to play themselves while reenacting episodes from their own lives. Eschewing the conventional interview format, the film chooses instead to embed its subjects within different physical and social environments that speak to their own positions within the history that they recount. Across these sites, there is a sense that history, once thought to have ended, is only just beginning, and that seizing the means of writing history has become more important than ever in understanding capitalism's deeply historical character, and how it might unravel.

Special Artist and Student Panel organized by dKunst Art on Campus

20:00 – 20:45 AB Ballroom

On the artistic research and interdisciplinary learning through the camera, inside the archive, on the road, in the gallery, beyond the classroom

Ho Rui An (Artist, Singapore)

Yueqi Dou, Haoxin Feng, Yuting Zeng (DKU Student Researchers of the project *Drawing the Line*)

Rosa Barotsi (Film scholar, Italy)

Zairong Xiang (Director of arts, DKU, convenor of dKunst Art on Campus)

Saturday 15 November

Parallel Sessions

AB Ballroom

0900 **5A Beyond Boundaries: Transdisciplinary Learning with Society and Industry**

Zach Fredman, Moderator

Albert Ko, Lingnan University

Liangliang Zhang, NYU Shanghai

Yuchen Han, CUHK Shenzhen

Liqi Ren, DKU

1015 Tea Break

AB2103

5B Making Interdisciplinarity Concrete

Gergely Horvath, Moderator

Yeshim Iqbal, DKU

Xin Jin, DKU

Lu Liu, DKU

Yucheng Jin, DKU

Rui Liu, DKU

1045 **6A SociTech Futures: Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts
Cultivating Student Leadership in
Advancing Technology for Society**

Nellie Chu, Moderator

Paula Ganga, DKU
Fan Liang, DKU
Dongping Liu, Amazon Web Services
Luyao Zhang, DKU

**6B Cultures in Practice: Interdisciplinary Approaches to
Intercultural Learning in Language Education**

James Miller, Moderator

Kevin Sprague, DKU
Liyi Feng, DKU
Joseph Davies, DKU
Tong Zhang, DKU
Wenting Ji, DKU
Junyi Li, DKU
Layla Shelmerdine, DKU

Plenary Session

1200-1230 AB Ballroom **Concluding Plenary Discussion and Closing Ceremony**

James Miller, DKU
Jiawen Han, XJTLU
Nellie Chu, DKU

Keynote Speakers

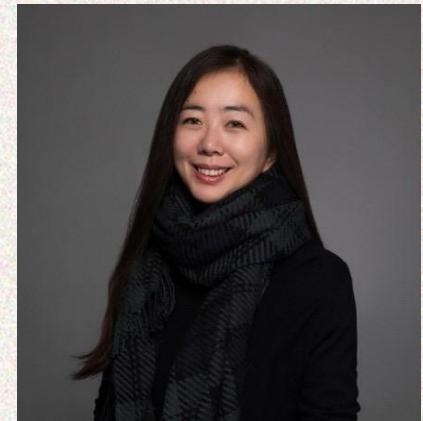
Haipeng Guo

Professor Haipeng Guo is Dean of the School of General Education and the Director of the Center for Whitehead Studies at Beijing Normal-Hong Kong Baptist University (BNBU) in Zhuhai. He formerly served as Head of the Department of Computer Science and Technology, Director of the Whole Person Education Office, Head of the English Language Center and Associate Dean of the School of General Education at BNBU. He has also been appointed as the Director of the UIC Boston Center. Professor Guo holds a PhD in Computing and Information Science from Kansas State University. His research investigates a number of areas including probabilistic reasoning, whole person education, process philosophy, and Confucian thought.



Jiawen Han

Professor Jiawen Han is Associate Professor of Architecture at Xi'an Jiaotong Liverpool University where she teaches multiple levels of design studio, as well as architectural theory. She is the co-author of the recent book, *Chinese Cities as Pedagogy: Interdisciplinary Teaching Practice* (Springer 2025). Her multicultural experience allows her to see architecture through multiple lenses, balance what may seem like irreconcilable values, and detect the potential innovations emerging from the new architectures and urban conditions in Asian cities. Her research interests range from new architecture and architects in China to spatial development in relation to modernity and the production of modern space.



Panel Abstracts

1A Interdisciplinary Learning through Practice: The ARC102 Experience and Beyond

This session presents a set of innovative teaching and research experiences that demonstrate how interdisciplinary strategies can be designed and implemented within the Asian liberal arts university context. At the center lies the ARC102 Experience, an undergraduate design studio at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University that integrates architectural design, urban studies, and cultural narratives. Over time, this studio has generated complementary initiatives: The Stage, an experimental platform for lectures, workshops, and performances; Incipit Lab, a network of more than twenty-five Italian architecture schools engaged in comparative approaches to design pedagogy; and most recently ASA2025 – Teaching Architecture, which frames these efforts within an international research context. The forthcoming Incipit Lab Asia-Pacific project further expands the vision, aiming to establish a platform for dialogue among schools of architecture across China, Korea, Japan, Southeast Asia, and Australia.

1B Beyond Boundaries: Innovating Curriculum Design for Transdisciplinary Learning

This interactive panel brings together faculty leaders and educational innovators from joint-venture universities in China. These institutions, situated at the intersection of Chinese and global higher education systems, are uniquely positioned to experiment with new models of curriculum development that emphasize transdisciplinarity, innovation, and industry integration. Panelists will share practical experiences and critical reflections on designing courses that transcend traditional academic silos. Topics will include how interdisciplinary curricula can better prepare students for real-world problem-solving; strategies for embedding outcomes-based, AI-enhanced, and student-centered learning into course design; and lessons learned from initiatives that integrate industry partnerships, quality assurance, and faculty development.

1C1 Quantifying Interdisciplinarity via Course Tagging: A Way to Measure ID at the Course, Faculty, Major, and Institutional Levels

We propose to apply a diversity index widely used across disciplines — and which political scientists call the "effective number of parties" — to measure curricular interdisciplinarity. Faculty members who have taught a course are asked to tag that course by selecting no more than six disciplinary labels from a predetermined list. When multiple faculty have taught a course, finer data are generated. Disciplinary shares at the course level are then summarized by a single statistic, the effective number of disciplines represented in course material. The measure can also be applied at levels of higher aggregation, including the faculty, major, and institutional levels. As a proof of concept, we present results from an initial round of faculty surveys covering all courses currently offered at DKU. These exploratory results illustrate that curricular interdisciplinarity varies across majors and fields, and highlight the promise of historical course tagging to illuminate the effects of curricular reforms on interdisciplinarity over time.

1C2 Designing the Undisciplined University: Lessons From Daoist Philosophy

This paper argues for a Daoist-inspired approach to the dominant disciplinary architecture of the modern research university, which has become misaligned with the complex, planetary-scale problems of the twenty-first century. The university's incentive structures encourage deep but partial knowledge that, while productive within narrow specializations, impede synthetic understanding and action on systemic challenges such as climate change and ecological degradation. Building on the work of economist Manfred Max-Neef (2005), who proposed a hierarchy of knowledge culminating in values-laden transdisciplinarity, I contend that higher education must reorient from "discipline" to "undiscipline": an organizational paradigm that privileges systemic, integrative, and future-oriented inquiry. I develop this paradigm through four metaphors of reversal—rewilding, recycling, decolonization, and forgetting—and show how each can guide institutional design and pedagogy. Drawing on Daoist resources, including the concept of *zuowang* 坐忘 ("sitting and forgetting") from the ancient text *Zhuangzi* and its later systematization in Sima Chengzhen's 司马承祯 (647–735) *Zuowanglun* 坐忘论, I propose "unlearning" as a critical academic practice for divesting from unproductive knowledge habits. The conclusion outlines design principles for undisciplined institutions capable of cultivating ecological consciousness and supporting the emergence of a planetary civilization.

1C3 Liberal Arts Education in Chinese Societies: Historical Development in Former Christian Universities, Cultural Integration in Contemporary Institutions, and New Opportunities and Challenges

Liberal arts education, with its Western origins, has gained increasing popularity in Chinese societies. This paper examines the historical development of LAE in a Chinese context, highlighting its integration with Confucian values of person-making. It traces the evolution of LAE from early initiatives at former Christian universities to contemporary models that emphasize holistic development within the unique social and political contexts of Greater China. By analysing both innovations and challenges, this paper offers valuable insights into how LAE can thrive in non-Western settings and contribute to higher education policy and reform aimed at cultivating responsible citizens equipped to address global challenges.

2A Embodied Learning in the Asian Liberal Arts

This session explores how embodied practice, especially that drawn from Asian theatre, dance, and martial arts, can function as an interdisciplinary strategy in the liberal arts classroom. We emphasize interdisciplinarity on two levels: between physical and scholarly modes of learning, and between academic disciplines themselves. Our starting point is the recognition that learning is reinforced when students *do* as well as think. We propose that role-play, rehearsal, improvisation and physical practice can be applied to teaching both complex ideas and capabilities; memory, adaptability, critical thinking, creativity, self-awareness and intercultural awareness. By integrating physical and intellectual approaches, we show how the liberal arts university can prepare students to learn more effectively and to respond with flexibility and confidence to new challenges.

2B Mind, Morals, and Machines: Integrating Humanities and Sciences in Research and Teaching

This symposium brings together cognitive neuroscience, developmental psychology, and computer science experts to explore questions at the heart of human experience: How do we know ourselves? How do we perceive humanness in others? How can we express our inner worlds? By weaving together methods from brain imaging to AI-driven design, and perspectives from moral philosophy to creative arts, our session offers theoretical insights and practical examples of interdisciplinary research and teaching to connect the rigor of science with the meaning-making traditions of the humanities.

3A Voice Matters: Integrating Humanities and Sciences in Transdisciplinary Learning

The integration of humanities and natural sciences has become a defining priority for universities committed to transdisciplinary innovation. This panel explores how teaching and learning across disciplinary boundaries can generate transformative educational outcomes and reimagine the purposes of higher education. While most current university education is discipline-based, and many people perceive the liberal arts as a luxury for the privileged, contemporary challenges—from climate change and AI ethics to health care and social equity—demand that students navigate the intersections of scientific inquiry and humanistic understanding. This interactive panel brings together faculty leaders and student voices from liberal arts and new research universities in China to illustrate how purposeful integration nurtures both transferable skills and holistic worldviews.

3B Designing an Asian Liberal Arts Experience: The Chinese Arts of Education Lab at DKU

Modern higher education is largely informed by Western philosophical paradigms that privilege technical competence, critical rationality, and individual autonomy. While fruitful, these frameworks often sideline questions of moral development, collective belonging, and embodied learning. In contrast, classical Chinese traditions place moral education, ritual learning, and ethical interdependence at the center of pedagogy. This panel discussion will present the activities of the Chinese Arts of Education lab which aims to revive and adapt the pedagogical insights of classical Chinese traditions by situating them in dialogue with contemporary pedagogical practice. It thus hosts both research-based projects (investigations: what are some practices from Chinese traditions that could be relevant today?) and practice-based projects (how do these practices play out in small liberal-art classrooms?).

4A Interdisciplinarity in the Humanities and Social Sciences: Insights from Teaching, Research, and Intellectual Exchange at Sino-Foreign Universities

Sino-foreign joint venture universities represent pioneering laboratories in global higher education, tasked with cultivating a new generation of scholars: agile problem-solvers with the interdisciplinary breadth to address complex global challenges and the disciplinary depth to drive genuine innovation. Yet, how is this ambitious vision translated into practice within curricula, pedagogy, and research? This panel offers a critical, evidence-based dialogue on the tangible achievements and persistent challenges of this educational model. Featuring scholar-educators from Duke Kunshan University (DKU) and NYU Shanghai, we delve into the realities of implementing integrated curricula, drawing from first-hand experiences in designing core courses, mentoring undergraduate research, and leading interdisciplinary projects within the humanities and social sciences.

4B Bridging Boundaries: Interdisciplinary STEM Teaching and Research in the Asian Liberal Arts University

This session explores practical strategies for fostering interdisciplinarity in Asian liberal arts universities, emphasizing research collaborations, curriculum design, and community engagement. Four STEM faculty from DKU will share examples of projects connecting the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities, offering actionable insights for both teaching and research. The session addresses three key questions: (1) How can undergraduate research tackle real-world challenges such as sustainability, health, and cultural heritage preservation? (2) What teaching models best promote interdisciplinary learning in liberal arts contexts? (3) How can institutions support sustained collaborations between STEM and non-STEM disciplines?

5A Beyond Boundaries: Transdisciplinary Learning with Society and Industry

This panel explores how liberal arts universities advance transdisciplinarity by forging collaborations with diverse partners. By engaging industry, communities, and NGOs in research and teaching, universities give students real-world problems that need integrated innovative approaches. Drawing on four cases across Asia, the panel shows how students, faculty, and external collaborators co-create knowledge, drive innovation, and turn challenges into opportunities for learning and societal impact. Four panelists will present their cases, followed by a conversation among panelists and participants on common challenges, strategies for collaboration, and broader implications for liberal arts education.

5B Making Interdisciplinarity Concrete

This proposal presents selected themes from a research network developed in the previous academic year (2024-25) at DKU. This network, entitled 'Making Interdisciplinarity Concrete' consisted of members across the Division of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities, Natural and Applied Sciences, and (more recently) the Language and Cultural Center, and was created with the purpose of defining interdisciplinarity as it appears in each of our current research and teaching. The significance of our research network lies in its ability to make concrete the specific interdisciplinary dynamics at play within our group. In this panel, we describe concrete examples of interdisciplinary teaching and student research, as well as reflections on DKU, that we identified through our activities as a network.

6A SociTech Futures: Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts Cultivating Student Leadership in Advancing Technology for Society

This panel explores how we, as liberal arts educators and practitioners, can reimagine higher education as an engine of interdisciplinarity that treats technology not as the ultimate end, but as a vital tool for advancing society and cultivating global student leadership. Rooted in the liberal arts spirit, this session highlights how we can prepare students to bridge computational, social, and humanistic perspectives while engaging directly with communities, industries, and global challenges.

6B Cultures in Practice: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Intercultural Learning in Language Education

While higher education often celebrates students' intercultural experiences, meaningful intercultural learning requires intentional pedagogical design. Successfully embedding culture into pedagogy involves moving beyond content towards bilingual classroom practices, reflective inquiry, project design, and interdisciplinary collaborations. As Hyland and Shaw (2020, 21) argue, different disciplines draw on different lexical, grammatical and rhetorical resources to form specialized knowledge. This is highly relevant to interdisciplinary language and culture teaching pedagogy as these "different ways of talking" (Shulman 2002, vii) need to be understood by members of different disciplines before successful collaboration can take place. This panel brings together faculty from DKU's Language and Culture Center to discuss diverse approaches to cultivating intercultural competence in English for Academic Purposes (EAP), Chinese Language (CSL), and Written and Oral Communication (WOC) courses.

Biographies of Panelists

Bradley R. Barnes is Professor, Special Advisor to President on Internationalization and Director of Global Education. Prior to joining Lingnan University, Bradley was Dean and Professor at the School of Business of The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong. He also served concurrently as Chair of Global Exchange prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. Before residing in Hong Kong, he was the Assistant Dean of Research and Professor of International Management & Marketing at Sheffield Business School and prior to that was Associate Dean for Internationalisation and Professor of International Management & Marketing at the Sheffield University Management School. His first professorial appointment was as the Hong Kong Alumni Endowed Chair Professor in International Management at the University of Kent.

Rosa Barotsi is a lecturer at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia and Principal Investigator of the NextGeneration EU-funded project IMFilm, which focuses on filmmaking cultures at the margins of industry. Her research and curatorial work explore the intersections of film, gender, and labour. She is a co-founder of the Feminist Frames network and the In Front of the Factory collective. Her recent publications include the special issue 'Gender and Labour in the Italian Screen Industries' in *Comunicazioni Sociali* (2023), "She Doesn't Even Know She Made Them: Ambiguous Attribution in Italian Exploitation Films" in *Studies in World Cinema* (2024), and the monograph *Time and the Everyday in Slow Cinema* (ICI Berlin Press, 2025). She was previously a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow and a Fellow at ICI Berlin.

Jingduo Bi is the Assistant Director of Assessment at Duke Kunshan University. He specializes in managing key assessment initiatives and analyzing complex educational data. His focus is on promoting the proper and efficient use of institutional data on campus to facilitate educational research and improvement. Currently, he is working on a DKU-Duke collaborative project to assess values-based competencies in global liberal arts education.

Nellie Chu is Assistant Professor of Cultural Anthropology at Duke Kunshan University. Her ethnographic and interdisciplinary research focuses on transnational and domestic migrant entrepreneurs across the global supply chains of fast fashion in southern China. Her book, *Precarious Accumulation: Fast Fashion Bosses in Transnational Guangzhou*, is forthcoming with Duke University Press in February 2026. Her teaching interests at Duke Kunshan include migration, globalization, fashion, and global commodity chains. Her work aims to demystify the globally-recognized "Made in China" label and shows how the proliferation of small-scale and informal garment workshops and wholesale sites link China with the world, particularly regions across the Global South.

Ziying Cui is a scholar, choreographer, and dancer who currently works as a Visiting Lecturer at Duke Kunshan University. After graduating with a PhD in Dance at Temple University, she became an Adjunct Professor and worked as an editor and writer for the thINKingDANCE journal based in Philadelphia. Her research focuses on the hybridity of Chinese dance and ballet in contemporary China. She is also interested in the development of ballet in China/Chinese diaspora as well as transnational Chinese dance practices. She earned her BA in Dance Theory and History from the Beijing Dance Academy and her MFA in Contemporary Dance from Case Western Reserve University in 2016. Ziying's research has been published in Asian Theatre Journal and presented at several dance conferences, including the Association for Asian Performance and the Dance Studies Association. She also choreographed dances for dance concerts and festivals in Philadelphia.

Juan Carlos Dall'Asta is Senior Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Architecture at Xi'an Jiaotong Liverpool University. He earned his PhD in Architectural and Urban Design from Politecnico di Milano, specialising in urban morphology and sustainable regeneration strategies. His research spans architectural design philosophy, the poetics of space and materiality, and the integration of Artificial Intelligence into human-centered design methodologies. With over twenty years of academic experience in Asia, Europe, and the Americas, he has collaborated with leading architects such as Kengo Kuma, Mecanoo, and Balkrishna Doshi. Dall'Asta has authored five books, over fifty research projects, and numerous international publications. He also serves on editorial boards of scientific journals including Vesper and Eidos. His work bridges advanced digital methodologies with theoretical frameworks, contributing to the renewal of architectural design education worldwide.

Joseph Davies is the Assistant Director for Graduate English for Academic Purposes and Senior Lecturer of English language at Duke Kunshan University's Language and Culture Center. His current research interests are in higher education assessment, focusing on feedback, specifically second language student feedback literacy, teacher feedback literacy, and feedback culture within Sino-foreign higher education contexts.

Yueqi Dou is an undergraduate student at Duke Kunshan University, majoring in cultural anthropology, class of 2026. Her academic interests center on the intersections of contemporary arts, localized knowledge, and public engagement. She has conducted fieldwork in rural and urban China, exploring topics such as temple transformations, cultural tourism, and grassroots participation in online protests. Yueqi has interned at institutions including the PSA & Shanghai Biennale, Rockbound Art Museum and Suzhou Museum. She is committed to using ethnographic methods to understand how local communities navigate social change and to promote culturally informed approaches to development and public dialogue.

Haoxin Feng is a senior majoring in Media and Art/Creative Practice. Interested in the tension between memory and reality, she adopts storytelling techniques like cinematography and photography. Often beginning with personal experience, her projects expand into broader social and cultural reflections. Her recent focus combines ethics and death education in experimental documentary form. Through the integration of research and visual practice, she seeks a balance between critical examination and emotional resonance. She also experiments with AI-assisted animation to explore new narrative possibilities that bridge virtual and real. In the project, she explores documentary sources to creatively narrate China's developmental history. She studies not only the materiality of images but also the mental status of individuals and collectives during specific historical periods. Drawing on the concept of film as archive, she combines observation and on-site participation to evoke contemporary reflection on how people record, interpret, and inhabit the world.

Jeanne (Ho-Ying) Fu obtained her PhD from The University of Hong Kong, and upon graduation, she joined the Stanford Graduate School of Business at Stanford University as a post-doctoral fellow. Prior to joining The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong (HSUHK), she worked at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore and City University of Hong Kong. She is primarily interested in how multicultural individuals organize and use the cultural knowledge acquired from different traditions, as well as how people from various cultures differ in their perceptions of social actions. Recently, she has developed theoretical frameworks that explain individual behaviors in cross-cultural settings, such as multiculturalism, expatriation, and intercultural interactions, and applies her theories to various organizational behaviors, including leadership, conflict resolution, and team dynamics. Since joining HSUHK, she has held leadership roles as program director, department head, and most recently, vice-president. She is highly committed to student development and global talent growth.

Liying Feng is a lecturer of Chinese language in the Language and Culture Center at Duke Kunshan University. Her research interests are CSL motivation, personality, emotions and assessment. Her teaching is primarily focused on Chinese language and culture courses for students at various proficiency levels, encompassing both heritage and non-heritage speakers.

Paula Ganga is an Assistant Professor of Political Economy at Duke Kunshan University. She is a comparative political economy scholar whose research examines how political institutions shape economic outcomes, with attention to inequality, populism, and democratic backsliding. She brings expertise in advanced statistical methodologies, multilingual scholarship, and global fieldwork. Her work spans corruption, energy politics, state-market relations, and the economic consequences of illiberalism. At Duke Kunshan University, she teaches courses in political economy, democracy, and authoritarianism, while leading research initiatives that connect students to pressing global challenges.

Huaxiong Huang, currently a Professor of Mathematics and the Director of the Zuchongzhi Center at Duke Kunshan University, received his BSc in mathematics from Fudan University and PhD in applied mathematics from the University of British Columbia. Professor Huang's research covers a wide range of topics, including mathematical modeling and scientific computing with applications in finance, biology, physiology and medicine. In addition to his problem-driven research approach, he has been a strong advocate of interdisciplinary learning and the Oxford-style problem-driven applied mathematics training over several decades. Before coming to DKU, he served as Dean of Science and Technology, Associate Vice President, and Vice President (Academic) of the Beijing Normal University-Hong Kong Baptist University United International College (aka BNU).

Hyun Jeong Ha is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Duke Kunshan University. Her research focuses on religion and politics, sectarianism, gender, and ethnography in the Middle East. Her current project examines Christian minority experiences in Egypt, with particular attention to the intersections of social class and urban space. Her work has been published in journals, such as *Journal of Peace Research*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts, and Change*, and *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, among others, as well as several edited volumes. She received the Nils Petter Gleditsch Article of the Year Award (2023) and the Excellent Academic Book Award (2023) from the National Academy of Sciences, Republic of Korea. At DKU, she has co-taught the interdisciplinary Senior Seminar for Humanities and Social Sciences, organized the Joint Conference of Seoul National University Asia Center & Duke Kunshan University, and co-led the Gender Studies Lab. She earned her Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Texas at Austin and, before joining DKU, was a Global Religion Research Initiative Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of Notre Dame.

Ho Rui An is an artist and writer working in the intersections of contemporary art, cinema, performance, and theory. Through lectures, essays, and films, his research examines the relations between labour, technology, and capital across different systems of governance in a global age. He has presented projects at the Shanghai Biennale, Bangkok Art Biennale, Gwangju Biennale, Jakarta Biennale, Kochi-Muziris Biennale, Centre Pompidou (Paris), Haus der Kulturen der Welt (Berlin), Kunsthalle Wien, Singapore Art Museum, Van Abbemuseum (Eindhoven), and Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media.

Kim Hunter Gordon is an Assistant Professor of Chinese and Performance Studies and major convenor for Global China Studies at Duke Kunshan University. He received his PhD from Royal Holloway, University of London. His research centers on Kunqu singing and stage performance, and his forthcoming book *Kunqu: China's Classical Song-drama* (Methuen Drama, 2026) examines how this tradition is contested and reinterpreted across historical contexts. As a translator, performer, and cultural liaison with the Jiangsu Kunqu Theatre and other troupes for over 12 years, he brings practice-based expertise into the liberal arts classroom, using embodied learning to connect performance, history, media studies and the arts. He also created and administers the series

of credited PE classes in Kunqu movements at DKU and organizes singing classes, theatre trips, student community work through stage translation and other locally engaged campus activities.

Yuchen Han is an Associate Professor (Teaching) of the School of Humanities and Social Science, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen. Dr. Han teaches Living Sociology, Gender Matters, Philanthropy and Social Innovation. The course of Philanthropy and Social Innovation has been awarded the Teaching Scholarship for the National University General Education Course on Philanthropy. Her research interests include gender, contemporary China, alternative development, philanthropy, qualitative inquiry, and pedagogies. Her research articles have appeared in high-ranked SSCI journals and academic collections, such as *Gender, Work and Organization*; *Gender, Place and Culture*; *Sage Research Methods: Diversifying and Decolonizing Research*, etc.

Yeshim Iqbal is an Assistant Professor of Behavioral Science at Duke Kunshan University. Prior to this, she was Senior Research Scientist at Global TIES for Children, New York University. She has a PhD from the Psychology and Social Intervention Program in the Department of Applied Psychology at New York University and a B.A. in Psychology from Cornell University. She worked for three years as a Research Coordinator at the Harvard Laboratory for Developmental Studies. She then went on to found Kaan Pete Roi, the first emotional support and suicide prevention helpline in Bangladesh. Broadly, her work and research examine how people respond to violence, both in their everyday lives and in their group's histories, and how belonging to certain social groups influence those responses. She has published in several internationally renowned journals, including the *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *International Perspectives in Psychology*, *Asian Journal of Psychiatry*, and the *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*.

Wenting Ji is an assistant professor at Duke Kunshan University, specializing in late imperial and early modern Chinese literature. Her research investigates how sensory experiences were represented in literary texts and how these depictions shaped literati and gentry women's self- perception, interpersonal relationships, and engagement with a rapidly changing early modern society. Her teaching focuses on introducing Chinese literature, films, and Suzhou local culture through bilingual (Chinese-English) classrooms.

Xin Jin is a Visiting Assistant Professor of Economics at DKU. Her research interest is the macroeconomic aspect of development and energy economics. She is particularly interested in the structural transformation experiences of the developing economies, noting that many of them have struggled to expand their manufacturing sectors and to achieve sustained economic growth and poverty reduction. In addition, she also has long-term interests in the co-movements of time series data, adopting a state space approach. Her teaching interests at Duke Kunshan include *Economic Principles*, *Economic Growth and Development*, and *Macro-*

econometrics. Her work has appeared in internationally renowned journals, including *The Economic Journal*, *Journal of International Money and Finance*, *Journal of Futures Markets*, and *Energy Economics*. She received her PhD in Economics from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. Currently she is also an Honorary Research Fellow in Business School with University of Aberdeen and Aberdeen Centre for Research in Energy Economics and Finance. Prior to joining DKU, she was a Lecturer (Assistant Professor) in Economics at University of Aberdeen, UK and Assistant Professor at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University.

Yucheng Jin is an Assistant Professor of Computer Science at Duke Kunshan University. His research combines Human-Computer Interaction and Artificial Intelligence to design human-centered systems that promote mental well-being and creativity. He has published over 30 peer-reviewed papers in venues such as CHI, CSCW, IJHCS, and *The Innovation*, holds ten patents, and serves on program committees for ACM RecSys, UMAP, and IUI

Albert Ko is a tech entrepreneur, award-winning engineer, experienced disaster relief worker and dedicated educator. His research interests include artificial intelligence, search and rescue robots, humanitarian technology and rural water and sanitation systems. Albert was the first Hong Kong engineer to join Medecins Sans Frontiers' field missions in 2000. He volunteered in South Sudan during the civil war, Uzbekistan during 911, Indonesia during the South Asia Tsunami, Pakistan during the Kashmir earthquake, and Sichuan during the Wenchuan earthquake. Albert co-founded INSIGHT Robotics with 2 friends in 2009 and developed world's most accurate wildfire detection robot. IBM named INSIGHT Robotics as Global Entrepreneur of the Year in 2014 for its cutting-edge technology and social contributions. In partnership with the United Nations University (UNU), Albert established the first UNU Hub in Asia on Humanitarian Innovation and Technology (HIT) at Lingnan University. He is currently serving as Director of Lingnan Entrepreneurship Initiative (LEI), Director of Service-Learning and Programme Director of two master programmes in Lingnan University. He is also a Visiting Professor at University of Toronto and Visiting Research Fellow at Cambridge University.

Sze Chai Kwok is an Associate Professor of Cognitive Neuroscience at Duke Kunshan University. His research sits at the intersection of neuroscience, behavior, and psychology. He leads the Laboratory of Phylo-Cognition (website: www.kwoklab.org), where his team investigates the neural foundations of episodic memory, metacognition, and other advanced cognitive processes in primates. Kwok earned his bachelor's degree in social sciences from the University of Hong Kong and completed his doctorate in experimental psychology at the University of Oxford.

Theresa Kwong is a Senior Fellow of Higher Education Academy and the Director of the Centre for Holistic Teaching and Learning, Hong Kong Baptist University. Theresa's major responsibilities at the Centre include: leading the promotion of a quality culture of learning and teaching within the University and beyond; advancing the scholarship of teaching and learning at the University; providing expertise to individuals and departments regarding pedagogical issues, e-learning adoption and outcomes assessments;

and advising on the development and implementation of eLearning strategy and the promotion of innovative pedagogical and assessment methods. Theresa received a number of teaching and learning grants from within and outside the university and her research interests include academic integrity, technology enhanced learning, faculty professional development, and outcomes assessment.

Yi-Lung Kuo is Head of the Department of Teaching Development and Associate Professor of Practice in Interdisciplinary Education at HKUST(GZ). He earned his Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from the University of Iowa and previously served as Founding Director of the Centre for Teaching and Learning and Associate Professor of Applied Psychology at Beijing Normal–Hong Kong Baptist University. A recognized Guangdong High-Level Talent, Dr. Kuo has received multiple honors, including the BNU President's Award for Teaching and Service and the Guangdong Philosophy and Social Science Outstanding Achievement Award. He was President of the Chinese American Educational Research and Development Association (2016–2018). His research focuses on social-emotional learning, large-scale assessment, innovative assessment tools, gifted education, and higher education teaching and learning. He has authored over 50 publications and presented at more than 100 academic conferences worldwide.

Dongping Liu is the Senior Industry Business Development Manager, Higher Education & Research at Amazon Web Services, and an industry leader bridging academia and technology. With over 15 years of experience in higher education and research, he specializes in digital transformation through artificial intelligence, deep learning, and high-performance computing. A recipient of the Beijing Science & Technology Award, he has authored more than 30 publications and holds over 10 patents. His work at AWS demonstrates how partnerships between industry and academia can expand the impact of higher education in the digital age.

Fan Liang is an Assistant Professor of Media at DKU. His research investigates the social and political dimensions of digital communication technologies and their governance. His scholarship, supported by major international foundations, has been published in leading communication and policy journals. At Duke Kunshan University, he integrates critical media studies into higher education, helping students to develop civic awareness and interdisciplinary skills. His teaching and mentorship emphasize student-led inquiry and collaboration in projects that bridge society, politics, and technology.

Hanbing Lin is an Educational Consultant for Sciences of Center for Teaching and Learning at Duke Kunshan University. Her main job responsibilities as senior educational consultant at CTL are to lead faculty development programs, design and implement teaching innovations, conduct educational research, provide pedagogical consulting, coordinate faculty learning communities, and contribute to institutional academic initiatives. She received her bachelor's degree in physics from Zhejiang University and PhD in Physics from Drexel University. Her field of study was computational biophysics.

Jeng Liu earned his Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Texas at Austin in 1998. His research focuses on social stratification and mobility, sociology of education, and labor market studies, with 50 journal articles and book chapters published to date. Dr. Liu was awarded the Fulbright Exchange Scholarship in 2012 and the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science Fellowship in 2015. His administrative roles have included Associate Director of the Office of Research and Development (2009–2011), Chair of the Department of Sociology (2012–2015), and Dean of the College of Social Sciences (2015–2018). Since 2022, he has been serving as Provost and Vice President of Tunghai University, advancing both academic research and institutional development.

Junyi Li is a Lecturer of English Language at Duke Kunshan University. Her research focuses on student engagement and motivation in language acquisition, intercultural communication, and AI-enhanced teaching and learning. Being an advocate for Industry-University-Research cooperation, she collaborates with national organizations and technology firms to promote an accessible and future-ready learning ecosystem through inclusive educational programs.

Junsheng Liu is the Director of the Office for Advanced Talent Cultivation and General Education, Undergraduate School, East China Normal University. His main research focus is on the social development of children and adolescents. Meanwhile, he holds concurrent positions as the Committee Member of the Developmental Psychology Professional Committee of the Chinese Psychological Society and the Executive Council Member of the School Educational Psychology Branch of the Chinese Society of Education.

Lan Li is the Director of the Centre for Learning Enhancement and Research (CLEAR) at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen. She is an Associate Professor with MPhil and PhD degrees in Applied Linguistics from the University of Exeter, UK. She is also a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Linguists, UK. She worked at Hong Kong Polytechnic University for nearly 20 years before joining CUHK(SZ). Her research interests and publications cover lexicology, lexicography, metaphor study, professional discourse, corpus linguistics and sociolinguistics. She has taught at universities for over 40 years, instructing undergraduate students, postgraduate students, and corporate trainees. She has also supervised more than ten doctorate students and worked as a PhD external examiner at different universities worldwide. She is the Copy Editor of *Lexicography, the Journal of Asialex*, and reviewer of several international journals.

Lu Liu is a Lecturer of Chinese Language at Duke Kunshan University. Her research focuses on bilingual Chinese culture communication. Previously, she taught in the Chinese Conversation Club at Duke University, tutored Chinese one-on-one at a Chinese school in Durham, U.S., and served as publicity officer for the North Carolina Chinese Scholars Sino-U.S. Exchange Association. Liu has a master's degree in teaching Chinese as a foreign language from the Communication University of China.

Rui Liu is an Assistant Professor of Chemistry at DKU. Rui's proposed research at DKU involves an interdisciplinary research program that will focus on Enabling Broad Classes of Bond-Forming Reactions through Multi-Red or NIR Photon Photoredox Catalysis. He published 13 peer-reviewed papers in *J. Am. Chem. Soc.*, *ACS Macro Lett.*, *ACS Appl. Polym. Mater.*, *J. Inorg. Biochem.*, and other journals. His teaching goal is to provide a motivating and enriched environment for students to learn and use chemistry and chemistry related knowledge in their professional development and career. He aims to create a dynamic and interactive learning and training environment that encourages students to explore fundamental concepts and new scientific frontiers driven by their innate curiosity. He is particularly interested in teaching organic chemistry, photochemistry, and photophysics. Rui earned his B.S. degree in Chemical Engineering from Jiangsu University, China, where he did undergraduate research with Prof. Zhongping Ou on electrochemical properties and oxygen reductions with metallocorroles. He earned his PhD from NC State University, NC, USA, with Prof. Jonathan S. Lindsey with a focus on molecular architecture for panchromatic light-harvesting and retention of fluorophore brightness in water. His postdoctoral research at Duke University with Prof. Michael J. Therien features chromophore design and polymer synthesis to build novel hybrid materials relevant to energy transducing, electro-optical, and information processing applications.

Ian McNally is a language coach at the Duke Kunshan University Writing and Language Studio, where he specializes in English writing and Japanese language coaching. He holds a master's degree in East Asian Studies from The Ohio State University, with a research focus on late-Qing martial arts identity and history through an interdisciplinary approach. He also has been a practitioner of martial arts for over 30 years. His most prominent practice is that of Ma Gui Baguazhang, which he has been teaching for 12 years. He currently offers a Baguazhang PE course through the Athletics department as part of an effort to allow students at DKU to experience traditional Chinese culture.

Leping Mou is Assistant Professor and Deputy Director of the Centre for Research & Development in Adult and Lifelong Learning (CR&DALL) in the School of Education at the University of Glasgow. He previously worked at universities in Canada and China, including the University of Toronto and Shanghai International Studies University, before moving to Glasgow in 2023. His research focuses on comparative and international higher education, with particular interests in liberal arts education, whole-person development, and capability cultivation. He serves on the editorial boards of *Studies in Higher Education* and the *Journal of Further and Higher Education*.

Jesse Olsavsky is an assistant professor of History at Duke Kunshan University. He is the author of *The Most Absolute Abolition: Runaways, Vigilance Committees, and the Rise of Revolutionary Abolitionism, 1835–1861* (2022), which was a finalist for the Harriet Tubman book prize. In the previous year he was a research fellow at Yale University and the University of Connecticut writing his second book on the ways abolitionism influenced the rise of Pan-Africanism. At Duke Kunshan, he teaches courses on

Pan-Africanism, US History and Politics, Arts and Humanities, Historiography, and has been past Co-Director of the Gender Studies Initiative.

Timothy O'Connor is the President of the American University of Central Asia (AUCA). Dr. O'Connor has a distinguished career of academic and administrative leadership, including over 30 years of teaching experience, 20 of which were as Professor of History at the University of Northern Iowa. For more than 12 years he served as the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs at the National University of Science and Technology MISIS in Moscow. In these positions, he was primarily responsible for institutional transformation, having conceived and implemented international accreditation for select educational programs; foresights with industrial partners in materials science, metallurgy, and mining; a new Learning and Teaching Center; projects on both Student Journey and Faculty Journey; and an International Scientific Advisory Council for external expertise on strategic development. He also led the University's participation in the Russian national initiative on enhancing academic excellence (5- 100 Project) from 2013 to 2020. He is the author of six books, and scores of articles and other publications.

Lianyun Pang is a Lecturer of Chinese Language at Duke Kunshan University. She holds a Ph.D. in Chinese as a Second Language from Peking University and has strong experience in teaching, curriculum development, and intercultural programming. Her research focuses on pragmatic development in second language acquisition and effective instructional strategies for Chinese language learners. She has designed and implemented Chinese curricula and facilitated workshops on Chinese language and culture in both domestic and international contexts. At DKU, she also served as Co-Chair of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee and is a core member of The Chinese Arts of Education Lab under the Institute for Global Higher Education (IGHE).

Liqi Ren is a leader in innovation and entrepreneurship at Duke Kunshan University (DKU), where she develops programs that strengthen student engagement and community collaboration. She has established a sustainable model for advancing innovation within a liberal arts context, shaping DKU's growing innovation ecosystem. Her research explores how culture influences China's design innovation potential, with a focus on the creative industries, the knowledge economy, and entrepreneurship in the creative sector. Specializing in design thinking as a transdisciplinary method, she applies it to drive innovation, creative expression, and entrepreneurial success. Dr. Ren holds dual bachelor's degrees in Industrial Design and Marketing from Taiyuan University of Technology, and both a Master of Science in Design and a PhD in Design from Arizona State University.

Renee Richer is an Associate Professor of Biology at Duke Kunshan University. Her work is at the intersection of environment and biology (particularly physiological ecology) with emphasis on the impacts of climate change and ameliorating the impacts of climate change. Uniquely, she has worked extensively with plants, animals and microbial communities, focusing on semi-arid to hyper-arid environments. For more than a decade, she has been working to understand the physiology and ecology of complex biocrusts in deserts and the bioactive compounds they produce. She is particularly interested in how environmental factors influence compound production and isomer ratios. Her teaching interests include biology and environmental science. She has edited a book on developing university courses for environment, development and sustainability studies (Central European University Press), and has published a guide to the flora of Qatar (Akkadia Press). She served as guest editor for a Journal of Arid Environments special issue, Toxins in Desert Environments, and has published numerous peer-reviewed papers. She is a full member of Sigma Xi and a certified senior ecologist of the Ecological Society of America. Richer has a B.A. in biology (honors) from the University of Chicago and a Ph.D. in biology from Harvard University.

Sandro Rolla is an Associate Professor of Architecture at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, Suzhou, where he has been teaching since 2018. His academic career began at the Accademia di Architettura in Mendrisio, Switzerland, and later continued at Politecnico di Milano, where he coordinated design studios and workshops. He has collaborated with the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou, leading international workshops on urban landscapes, and has been an active participant in the International Laboratory of Architecture and Urban Design (ILAUD), working with Giancarlo De Carlo, Donlyn Lyndon, and Balkrishna Doshi (2018 Pritzker Prize). Alongside academia, Rolla founded ARSarchitects in Milan in 1992, a practice focused on architecture, environment, and landscape. His teaching and research activities converge on intercultural and interdisciplinary approaches to architectural education, exploring the intersections between design, heritage, and contemporary urban transformations.

Sittithep Eaksittipong is currently an Assistant Professor and serves as Director of both the Integrative Center for Humanities Innovation (ICHI) and the Humanities Academic Service Center (HAS) at the Faculty of Humanities, Chiang Mai University. As Director of ICHI, he collaborates closely with the Chair of the BA in Humanities and Sustainability program—the flagship international program in humanities at Chiang Mai University. Sittithep's research interests focus on Global China, with a particular emphasis on issues concerning Overseas Chinese and transnational cultural interactions between China and Thailand.

Layla Shelmerdine is a Senior Lecturer in the Language and Culture Center at Duke Kunshan University, where she teaches English for Academic Purposes and advanced writing and communication courses. She has over 15 years of international experience across the U.S., Europe, and Asia, with expertise in academic writing, English for Specific Purposes, and student support through writing centers. Her current research focuses on generative AI and student writing, particularly how multilingual students negotiate authorship, voice, and originality in AI-assisted contexts.

Marc Aurel Schnabel is the Dean of the Design School at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, leading the departments of Architecture, Civil Engineering, Industrial Design, and Urban Planning and Design. An internationally recognised expert in digital transformation, intelligent cities, and extended reality environments, he has over thirty years of experience across Germany, China, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. Previously, he founded the FORUM8 Research Lab in Tokyo and has held leadership roles including Dean of Architecture in New Zealand, President of the Architectural Science Association (ANZAScA), President of CAADRIA, and Principal Investigator of New Zealand's National Science Challenge Better Homes, Towns, and Cities. He is a Fellow of ANZAScA, CAADRIA, and Salzburg Global, and a member of the Austrian Science Fund's Arts-Based Research Board. His work bridges academic leadership with interdisciplinary research to advance sustainable and innovative design practices.

Kevin Sprague is a Lecturer of English Language at Duke Kunshan University. His research focuses on intercultural communication, internationalization of higher education, and teacher development.

Paul Stanley is a Senior Lecturer in Physics and Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies at Duke Kunshan University. His research focus is on intersections of nonlinear dynamics, acoustics of Asian musical instruments, and mathematical physics. He is currently interested in the tuning of the guqin and guzheng, and with high-frequency overtones of both spoken Chinese and Asian operatic singing. For fun, he writes high school-level physics competition problems and experiments. His teaching interests at Duke Kunshan include introductory physics courses, courses that bridge music and science, quantum physics, chaos, and real-time learning environments.

Shweta Sinha Deshpande is the Director and Associate Professor at the Symbiosis School for Liberal Arts (SSLA), Symbiosis International University, Pune, where she also heads the Anthropology and Archaeology programmes. A founding member of SSLA, she has been instrumental in shaping its vision, pedagogy, and international collaborations since its inception in 2011. She holds a Ph.D. in Archaeology and undertakes interdisciplinary research that spans archaeology, anthropology, globalization, migration, education, and socio-cultural change. Dr. Deshpande has authored several books and research articles. She is the founding President of the India Big History Association, a founding member of the Society for South Asia Archaeology (SOSAA). She has served on the Executive Committee of the Nehru Science Centre, Mumbai and is on the Editorial Board of *Migration Letters*, an international journal. Committed to global education, she actively fosters international partnerships, joint research, and visiting faculty programs at SSLA, integrating global perspectives into liberal arts education and advancing intercultural dialogue.

Weiwei Shi is an Assistant Professor of Material Science at Duke Kunshan University. Her research focus is the bio-inspired smart materials with advanced functions and high performance, e.g., water harvesting, solar evaporation, and special wettability. Dr. Shi got her Ph.D. in Engineering Mechanics from Virginia Tech and has published peer-review papers in leading academic journals including Advanced Materials, ACS Nano, Science Advances, and ACS Applied Materials & Interfaces. Her research has attracted much attention, featured in CNN, Boston Globe, Washington Post, etc., and highlighted by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and U.S. Oak Ridge National Lab (ORNL).

Jason Douglas Todd is Assistant Professor of Political Science and Director of the Global Elections Lab at DKU. His research examines how elections and legislative institutions shape responsiveness and representation in legislatures around the world, with a particular focus on authoritarian regimes and backsliding democracies. His work has appeared in the American Political Science Review, The Journal of Politics, and Political Behavior. A lifelong Tarheel, he has studied at Xiamen University, the University of North Carolina, and Duke University.

Ben Van Overmeire is an Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at Duke Kunshan University and a scholar of Zen Buddhism. He is the author of *American Koan: Imagining Zen and Self in Autobiographical Literature* (2024) and is currently writing a book on the Buddhist imagination of outer space. He leads the Chinese Arts of Education Lab.

Shan Wang is an Assistant Professor of Psychology at Duke Kunshan University. Her research interests lie primarily in human cognition with a focus on perception and action, such as pain and movement control. Shan joined DKU in 2019. Prior to this, she received her Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of Bath and completed her postdoctoral training at Oxford Brookes University in the UK.

Xudong Wang received his Ph.D. in Electrical and Computer Engineering from Georgia Tech in 2003. He is Professor in the Thrust of Internet of Things and Acting Dean of the College of Future Technology at HKUST(GZ), and an Affiliate Professor at the University of Washington. His research focuses on wireless communication networks (6G and beyond), distributed machine learning, mobile edge computing, and joint communications and sensing. He previously held the John Wu and Jane Sun Chair Professorship at the UM-SJTU Joint Institute, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, and has worked in the U.S. as a senior engineer, network architect, and R&D manager. An IEEE Fellow, he has served as editor for leading journals including *IEEE Transactions on Mobile Computing* and *IEEE Transactions on Vehicular Technology*, and chaired major international conferences such as the IEEE 5G Summit (2017).

Rebecca Wakelin is the Director of the Educational Development Unit at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University. A certified teacher from Ontario, Canada, she brings a rich background as a high school teacher, professor, curriculum consultant, and educational developer. Her early career includes roles with the Simcoe County Catholic District and Algoma District School Boards (2004–2007), followed by positions at Georgian College, the Canadian Armed Forces, and Algonquin College, where she served as educational developer through 2023. Rebecca's research focuses on how higher education instructors learn to teach, with interests in classroom management, high-impact instructional techniques, practical assessment, curriculum design, and teacher development. She holds a Bachelor of Education and a Master of Education from Nipissing University, as well as a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Political Science from Wilfrid Laurier University; she is currently pursuing a PhD in Education at the University of Ottawa.

Shuang Wen is a historian of modern China and the Arab world. Prior to joining NYU Shanghai, Prof. Wen held fellowships at the National University of Singapore and New York University Abu Dhabi. Prof. Wen specializes in the multilayered interactions and exchanges between China and the Middle East, which comprises agricultural, diplomatic, intellectual, labor, medicinal, and religious affairs. She is a recipient of New York University Teaching Advancement Grant in 2025 for her pedagogical innovation of "Bringing Middle Eastern History to Life: Enhancing Student Engagement and Learning Experience with VR Simulation Technology" and a finalist of NYU Shanghai Teaching Excellence Award (AY23-24).

Xiaoqian Xu is an Assistant Professor of Mathematics at Duke Kunshan University. His research interests are mathematical modeling of mixing in fluids, investigating the properties of solutions to some types of fluid mechanics equations and studying the time-fractional differential equations. His teaching interests at Duke Kunshan include mathematical foundations and advanced courses in pure math. Xu has a B.Sc. in mathematics (honors) from Zhejiang University and a Ph.D. in mathematics from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. From 2016 to 2019, he held postdoctoral research positions at Carnegie Mellon University and the Institute for Computational and Experimental Research in Mathematics, Brown University.

Zairong Xiang's research, teaching, and curatorial practices engage with cosmology and cosmopolitanism in their culturally diverse, historically specific, and conceptually promiscuous manifestations in English, Spanish, French, Chinese, and Nahuatl. He teaches literature and art at Duke Kunshan University, and was co-curator of the 2021 Guangzhou Image Triennial, *Ceremony (Burial of an Undead World)* at Haus der Kulturen der Welt (Berlin), and the 14th Shanghai Biennial *Cosmos Cinema* (2023-2024). He has curated the *minor cosmopolitan weekend* (HKW Berlin, 2018) and the exhibition *How to be Happy Together?* at Para-Site Hong Kong (Dec. 2024). He is currently co-curating (with Denise Ryner) a research and exhibition project on Afro-Asian solidarities at ICA Philadelphia (2026). Author of *Queer Ancient Way: A Decolonial Exploration* (punctum books), he is the editor of exhibition catalogues, journal special issues, and a film archive. He is currently completing his second book on "transdualism."

Through the concept of “shanzhai/counterfeit,” he continues a multifaceted research into the artsitic and intellectual exchanges in the Global South, especially between Latin America and China since the nineteenth century. All his writings and previous lectures could be accessed here: www.xiangzairong.com.

Hui Yao is a lecturer of Chinese language at Duke Kunshan University. Her research interests include modern Chinese literature, film, theater, and literary translation. She completed her PhD in the Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures at The Ohio State University in 2025. Her dissertation examines the art of director Fei Mu (1906-1951), which draws from media theory to investigate Fei’s poetics of remediation as well as how artistic practices in China’s Republican-era traverse temporal, spatial, and medial boundaries. She is the Chinese translator of Raymond Carver’s collection *Call If You Need Me* (Nanhai Publishing, 2023). Her reflections on and practice of sanqu song translation can be found in “In Search of Pure Sound: Sanqu Songs, Genre Aesthetics, and Translation Tactics,” a multi-author essay in the *Journal of Chinese Literature and Culture*.

Liangliang Zhang is an Assistant Professor of Global China Studies at NYU Shanghai. She received her Ph.D. in Social Anthropology from the University of Cambridge in 2022, where she was a Gates Cambridge Scholar. She also holds an M.Phil. in Social Anthropology (Medical Anthropology Concentration) from Cambridge and a B.A. in International Comparative Studies from Duke University. Liangliang’s research explores the intersection of citizenship, well-being, and lived ecology in a globalizing China. Her current book project, *Embodying Chinese Citizenship: Self-Transformation and Social Innovation from China’s Revitalizing Ruralities*, examines personally and socially transformative practices within grassroots education and healing initiatives based in rural China, with an amplifying reach. As an engaged anthropologist and educator, Liangliang is committed to community-engaged, co-creative ethnography and transformative experiential learning, guided by the core ethics of permaculture—earth care, people care, and fair share. Her research, teaching, and activism converge around the central theme of relational regeneration—nurturing generative connections with the self, other beings, and the Earth.

Luyao Zhang is Assistant Professor of Economics at DKU. Her scholarship centers on computational economics in the context of ground-breaking technologies. She has led initiatives to publish open educational resources and interdisciplinary student research, while integrating frontier technologies into pedagogy and research to advance society and humanity. Her leadership in undergraduate research, global experiential learning, community-based education, and innovation-focused events exemplifies how higher education can empower students as interdisciplinary leaders and change-makers.

Qian Zhu is the Associate Chair of the Division of Arts and Humanities and Assistant Professor in History at Duke-Kunshan University. Holding a doctorate degree in Chinese history from New York University, Dr. Zhu joined DKU in 2018 as one of the inaugural founding faculty of DKU's undergraduate program. Her teaching and research areas include Chinese history, intellectual history, history of everyday life, history of grassroots movements in 20th century, and methods of historical research and global China studies. At DKU, she was the co-designer of the common core course China in the World for all freshmen, which won the 2020 Apereo Teaching and Learning Award for the innovative course design. She also has co-taught the interdisciplinary Senior Seminar for Humanities and Social Sciences. In 2023, she won the CSCC Outstanding Faculty Mentor Award for excellence in mentoring faculty-student research. In 2023-2025, Dr. Zhu served as PI for the (post) Modernity and China Research Lab funded by DKU-WHU Seeds Research Grant. Her publications appear in leading academic journals and by academic presses in the fields of history and Asian studies including Brill, University of Cambridge Press, positions: *asia critique*, Duke University Press, Nan/Nu, *Twentieth Century China*, *China and Asia: A Journal in Historical Studies*, *the Chinese Historical Review*, Taylor & Francis, and University of Manchester Press.

Ruimeng (Raymond) Zhou is an undergraduate student in the Class of 2027 at Duke Kunshan University, pursuing a major in Mathematics and Computational Sciences with a track in Mathematics. With an interdisciplinary background, Raymond has engaged in research spanning mathematical modeling, medical physics, and large language models, serving as a research assistant at Duke Kunshan University and Shanghai Jiao Tong University (SJTU), where he contributed to publications in these fields.

Tong Zhang is an Assistant Professor at Duke Kunshan University. Her research focuses on second language writing, metacognition in language learning, classroom assessment, and writing teacher identity, with a particular interest in formative assessment in college writing instruction. Through her work, she aims to support student writers and contribute to research-informed pedagogy in the evolving landscape of academic writing.

Wenbo Zhang, one of the first batch of graduates from the HKUST(GZ) Red Bird Program, with a master's degree in interdisciplinary research, is engaged in research in the field of intelligent distribution. He is the first president of the Red Bird alumni association, the co-president of the HKSUT (GZ) entrepreneurship association, author of the popular science book *What Do Psychology Majors at University Study?*, CEO of Guangzhou Yuedizuda Technology Co., Ltd, and member of the AI Agent 2025 organizing committee.

Wen Zhou is Assistant Professor of Evolutionary Anthropology at DKU. Her research aims to understand what it means to be a human and the moral status a human is believed to deserve. Her current projects focus on dehumanization and its developmental origins. Her work also involves research on social hierarchy, human-animal relations and conservation, deploying an interdisciplinary approach drawn from social and developmental psychology. She joined the faculty of Duke Kunshan University in 2022 after obtaining her PhD in Evolutionary Anthropology from Duke University.

Yisu Zhou is Professor of Public Policy and Sociology and China Director of the Institute for Global Higher Education at Duke Kunshan University. His research focuses on education policy and higher education development in the Greater China region, with methodological versatility in his approach. Zhou holds a PhD from Michigan State University and previously served thirteen years at the University of Macau. He is frequently featured in Chinese media discussing education issues and is currently researching Chinese higher education development.

Ying Zeng is the Vice Dean of the School of Architecture at the China Academy of Art, Hangzhou, where he teaches Landscape Architecture. His academic focus includes vernacular landscapes, sustainable design, and landscape urbanism. He earned a Master of Landscape Architecture from the University of Pennsylvania and a PhD from the China Academy of Art. Zeng gained professional experience at SWA Group's Sausalito office before founding LANDartitude, a design studio based in Hangzhou. He is the translator of Landscape Infrastructure Case Studies by SWA Group and has published widely in leading journals such as *Journal of Landscape Architecture*, *Architectural Journal*, *Time+Architecture*, *Landscape Architecture Frontiers*, and *New Arts*. Combining academic research with professional practice, Zeng advances site-specific and experiential approaches to landscape interpretation and design, training a new generation of architects and designers.

Yuting Zeng is a senior undergraduate at Duke Kunshan University, majoring in Media and Arts (Art History Track). Her research focuses on women's writing, emotion, and kinship in late imperial China, examining how mourning and memory shaped the construction of female identity. Drawing on affect theory, embodiment, and sensory studies, she explores how emotion functions as a form of knowledge in literary practice. She has curated interdisciplinary projects such as *Silent Field* (寂静地), exploring the sonic afterlives of folk culture in Sichuan, and co-organized *Voice of Late Imperial Chinese Women: Literature, Life and Legacy*, a series of dialogues on gender and art. Her ongoing work includes the study and translation of *Destiny of Rebirth* (再生缘) and independent research on *Wumengtang ji* (午梦堂集). She aims to continue studying women's literature and emotional life in East Asian cultural history through graduate research.