SERIES B: Perspectives on China

Fridays, 10:00 – 11:45 am, September 18 to November 27, 2020
Friday, November 13 for Reading Week
Innis College, Town Hall

Speakers will explore a broad range of historical and contemporary aspects of China. They include: former Canadian ambassador to China, John McCallum; Professor Vic Falkenheim; former Canadian senator, Vivienne Poy and Dr. Jack Leong; VP Art and Culture and Senior Curator at the ROM, Dr. Chen Shen; former director Canadian International Educational Association (Guangzhou), Paul Kozy; mystery author, Ian Hamilton; Professor Gary Crawford; doctoral candidate (U of T) and research associate International Drug Policy Unit (LSE), Emile Dirks; director of Starlight Chinese Opera, Alice Chan; and research associate at U of T’s Citizen Lab, Dr. Christopher Parsons.

September 18: China: Challenges and Opportunities: Honourable John McCallum
Knowledgeable, experienced, and forthright, John McCallum, will review the difficult relations between Canada and China over the past few years and consider possibilities for the future.

Canadian politician, economist, diplomat and former university professor, John McCallum was the Canadian Ambassador to China from 2017 to 2019.

September 25: China’s Modern Transformation: From Revolutionary State to Global Superpower: Professor Victor Falkenheim
China has experienced dizzying changes over the past 70 years, from the revolutionary Mao era, to the market reforms of the Deng period, to the current era of the “China Dream’ under Xi Jinping. The lecture will trace these transformations and assess the prospects for future developments in upcoming decades.

Victor Falkenheim is Professor Emeritus, Political Science and East Asian Studies, University of Toronto. His research interests and publications centre on local politics and political reform in China. For the past two decades, Professor Falkenheim has lectured widely in China and has worked on a number of CIDA and World Bank projects in China.

October 2: In Conversation: Honourable Dr. Vivienne Poy, and Dr. Jack Hang-tat Leong
A special opportunity to hear the personal reflections on the ties that bind Hong Kong and Canada with former Canadian senator, author, historian, and entrepreneur, Honorable Dr. Vivienne Poy and Dr. Jack Leong, director of the Richard Charles Lee Canada-Hong Kong Library, University of Toronto.

October 9: Objects of the Past: The Art and Culture of Ancient China in its Archaeological Context: Dr. Chen Shen:
Dr. Shen is Vice President, Art and Culture and Senior Curator at the ROM and an Adjunct Professor of Early China in the Department of East Asian Studies, University of Toronto. His presentation will provide an overview of his own research and of some of the exceptional archaeological treasures found in collections at the ROM.

October 16: Living in China – A Personal Account: Paul Kozy
Former director of English Education at the Canadian International Educational Association, Paul Kozy spent 16 years living and working in Guangzhou, China. In the summer of 2020, he and his partner made the difficult decision to move back to Canada. This morning Paul gives us his personal account of life in China today.
October 23: Interview: Author Ian Hamilton

Ian Hamilton is the prolific author of the wildly popular Ava Lee mystery novel series. Ava, a young Chinese-Canadian forensic accountant, specializes in recovering massive debts that aren’t likely to be recovered through traditional methods. Her motto is: “people always do the right thing for the wrong reason.” Number 13 in the series, The Diamond Queen of Singapore, will be published in July-August, 2020. ianhamiltonbooks.com

Our interviewer, Helen Sugar, is a recent LLL Board member, program committee member, and Ava Lee enthusiast. She looks forward to using some of Ava’s investigative skills in her interview with Ian!

October 30: Controlling Key Populations: How the Chinese Government Monitors, Harasses and Detains Its Most Marginalized Citizens: Emile Dirks

It is well-known that both political dissidents and non-political criminal offenders are targets of the Chinese police. Yet there is a third group which the Chinese state views as a threat: “key populations”. This presentation will examine how the policing of users of drugs, religious and ethnic minority communities, citizen petitioners, and the mentally ill has deepened China’s systems of authoritarian surveillance and social control.

Emile Dirks is a PhD candidate in the Department of Political Science at the University of Toronto and a Research Associate at the London School of Economics’ International Drug Policy Unit. His work on surveillance, detention and drug policy in China has been published in Foreign Policy, VICE and the Globe and Mail and his research findings covered in the New York Times and the Washington Post. His June 2020 co-authored report for the Australian Strategic Policy Institute -- “Genomic Surveillance: Inside China’s DNA dragnet” -- detailed a previously unknown program of police-led compulsory DNA collection targeting men and boys across China.

November 6: Revealing the Ancient History of Food Culture in China: Professor Gary Crawford

We will take an archaeological journey to times that long precede the great Chinese cuisines, that reflect the local, common cuisines of indigenous peoples, long before the Han, whose humble beginnings lie in the millennia before written records when families lived off the land and started transforming both the landscape and the organisms on the landscape to the benefit of both.

Professor Crawford is an anthropological archaeologist specializing in archaeological botany and environmental archaeology. The field, known as palaeoethnobotany or archaeobotany, studies the relationship between plants and people in prehistory. Professor Crawford has conducted his fieldwork in China for more than 34 years.

November 13: NO CLASS - Reading Week

November 20: The World of Chinese Opera: An Introduction: Ms. Alice Chan

Ms. Chan is director and instructor of the Starlight Chinese Opera Performing Arts Centre, a non-profit organization with the mission to increase public interest in, and knowledge of, the art of Chinese Opera. She is a graduate of the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts and has trained with masters in both Chinese and Cantonese Opera.

November 27: Title: Huawei and 5G: The Canadian Equities: Dr. Christopher Parsons

The range of concerns associated with Huawei 5G technologies are routinely muddied due to the often overlapping, yet unique, equities that are in play; the 5G question is not merely one of economics, politics, or national security: it is all of these, and more. This presentation will draw exclusively on open-source resources to explain these equities and how they have driven the Canadian government’s policy positions concerning Huawei 5G.

Dr. Parsons is Managing Director, Telecom Transparency Project and Senior Research Associate, at Citizen Lab, University of Toronto.