



Department of Sociology

Seminar

Authenticity and Authority in the Emergence of a Global Daoist Field

Speaker: Dr. David Palmer
Associate Professor, Department of Sociology
The University of Hong Kong

Date: 30 November 2017 (Thursday)

Time: 2:30 pm – 4:00 pm

Venue: Rm 1045, 10/F., Academic and Administration Bldg.,
15 Baptist University Road, Kowloon Tong, Kowloon

Abstract

This talk is based on the newly released book *Dream Trippers: Global Daoism and the Predicament of Modern Spirituality* (University of Chicago Press), a multi-sited ethnographic study of transnational encounters between American spiritual tourists and practitioners and the Chinese monks and hermits of the sacred Daoist peak of Huashan. In this talk, co-author David A. Palmer will use this case to critically engage with Bourdieu's theory of religious fields. He will discuss the historically evolving position of Daoism in the Chinese and American religious fields, and the formation of a global Daoist field in which self-identified Daoist practitioners from around the world contest each other's claims to authenticity and authority.

Biographical note

Dr. David A. Palmer is an Associate Professor in Anthropology at the University of Hong Kong (Department of Sociology and HK Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences). After completing his PhD in the Anthropology of Religion at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes in Paris, he was the Eileen Barker Fellow in Religion and Contemporary Society at the London School of Economics and Political Science, and, from 2004 to 2008, director of the Hong Kong Centre of the French School of Asian Studies (Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient). His books include the award-winning *Qigong Fever: Body, Science and Utopia in China* (Columbia University Press, 2007); *The Religious Question in Modern China* (co-authored with Vincent Goossaert, University of Chicago Press, 2011; awarded the Levenson Book Prize of the Association for Asian Studies); and *Dream Trippers: Global Daoism and the Predicament of Modern Spirituality* (co-authored with Elijah Siegler, University of Chicago Press, 2017).

***** ALL ARE WELCOME *****

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