



Friday Seminar

Gold is Silence: The Flow of Money in Field Research

Date : 5 Feb 2021

Time : 1:00 - 2:30 pm

Speaker : Prof. Sealing Cheng

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://cuhk.zoom.us/j/96451156363>

Meeting ID:

964 5115 6363

Passcode:

578783



In this talk, I discuss some of the dilemmas around money in relationships between researchers and their socially and financially precarious research subjects. These questions are particularly pertinent for researchers who interact with their informants beyond a defined research setting (an interview room, a school, a hospital, for example), and beyond a specific time frame (research relationships that last for years if not decades). What kinds of assessments are appropriate in making decisions about money in these relationships? What are the limits for giving and receiving? How much is enough when financial needs are virtually unlimited for the marginalized groups that one works with? These pertinent issues are particularly complex for researchers who become enmeshed in local social and kinship ties in long-term field research, as well as long-term reciprocities and expectations well after fieldwork.

Instead of providing a uniform answer, my goal is to provoke discussion by harnessing my own struggles to speak about concerns of ethics, morality, debt and reciprocity within what Emily Martin (1986) called the “dense meanings deposited in money”.

Biography:

Sealing Cheng is Associate Professor in the Department of Anthropology, The Chinese University of Hong Kong. She started conducting fieldwork research on issues of gender, sexuality, human rights, and nationalism in South Korea since 1997. Her book, *On the Move for Love: Migrant Entertainers and the U.S. Military in South Korea* (University of Pennsylvania Press 2010) received the Distinguished Book Award of the Sexualities Section of the American Sociological Association in 2012. Her current research is on asylum-seekers and refugees with a focus on existential agency and intimacy.

ALL INTERESTED ARE WELCOME!