

COLLOQUIUM BY CHRISTOPHER CONNERY

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM IN CHINA

TIME: 5:00-6:00 PM, WEDNESDAY, 14 SEP 2016

VENUE: AB 1079

The Future of Socialism in China

Speaker: Christopher Connery, Professor of Literature and Cultural Studies, University of California Santa Cruz

ABSTRACT:

Although China's leadership continues to refer to the system as "socialist", few, especially outside China, take this appellation seriously, primarily given China's importance to and integration into global capitalism. And yet, Chinese socialism's legacy is not restricted solely to the CCP's self-definition. In the labor movement and in leftist intellectual circles in China, there are significant critical voices advocating for a non-market-fundamentalist political economic order capable of addressing China's problems of economic inequality, environmental degradation, and the urban/rural divide. Marxist and quasi-Marxist analysis of capitalism's crisis tendencies has been flourishing in the west, as well as elsewhere in Asia, since the 2008 recession, and while anti-capitalism has won few sustained political victories—although phenomena such as Bernie Sanders and Jeremy Corbyn are not to be discounted—its renewed intellectual vitality is a significant phenomenon. This talk focuses on contemporary left thought in China, on some of the particular features that distinguish Chinese anti-capitalist thought and anti-capitalist politics, and speculates on possible sources of political and social change.

BIO:

Christopher Connery is Professor of Literature and Cultural Studies at the University of California Santa Cruz, and is also Professor in the Department of Cultural Studies (M.A. and Phd programs) at Shanghai University. From 2010-2012 he was Director of the University of California's Education Abroad Program office at Fudan University in Shanghai. He received his PhD in East

Asian Studies from Princeton University. His first area of research was early imperial China, and his publications in that field include *The Empire of the Text: Writing and Authority in Early Imperial China* (1998). Since that time his research and publications have been primarily in four areas: philosophical, literary, and ideological dimensions of oceanic space under capitalism; the global 1960s; contemporary leftist thought in China; and the city of Shanghai. In addition to his academic work, he has since 2010 been a member of the Shanghai-based Chinese social theater group Grass Stage (草台班) as writer, consultant, and occasional actor, touring with the group in China, Asia, and the United States.