

Distinguished Lectureship in Chinese Culture and Digital Studies 2025

Professor Peter K. Bol

Charles H. Carswell Professor of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University

Sponsored by Bei Shan Tang Foundation

Background:

The Institute of Chinese Studies is pleased to launch the “Distinguished Lectureship in Chinese Culture and Digital Studies”, which is sponsored by Bei Shan Tang Foundation. The Lectureship brings together experts to create a platform for intellectual exchange and dialogue in the field of digital humanities. Renowned scholars from around the world are invited to CUHK to inspire and nurture the next generation of scholars with digital knowledge across all areas of Chinese Studies.

Speaker:

Professor Peter K. Bol is the Charles H. Carswell Professor of East Asian Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University. His research concerns the history of China’s cultural elites at the national and local levels from the 7th to the 17th century. He is the author of *"This Culture of Ours": Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China*, *Neo-Confucianism in History*, and *Localizing Learning: The Literati Enterprise in Wuzhou, 1100-1600*, the co-author of *Sung Dynasty Uses of the I-ching*, co-editor of *Ways with Words*, and various journal articles. He co-directed the [China Historical Geographic Information Systems](#) project, a collaboration between Harvard and Fudan University to create a GIS for 2000 years of Chinese history. He directs the [China Biographical Database](#) project, a collaboration between Harvard, Academia Sinica, and Peking University, currently with 640,000 historical figures.

Public Lecture 1

Title: “From Old DH to New DH: How AI is Transforming the (Digital) Humanities”

Date: 6 May 2025 (Tuesday)

Time: 4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. (Tea Reception at 4:00 p.m.)

On-site participation: LT1A, Cheng Yu Tung Building, CUHK

Online broadcasting: ZOOM

Abstract:

When Professor Bol first began to understand the value of digital humanities methods and use them correctly, first in conjunction with the China Historical GIS since 2000 and then with the China Biographical Database project since 2005, the processes were slow. Effective use required coding in Python and iterative training. Although it took weeks and months then, today it can be done in seconds and minutes. Ultimately the AI revolution is not just transforming the digital humanities, whether we like it or not it will also transform the humanities. What is not to like?

Public Lecture 2

Title: “Dimensions of Experience, Domains of Learning: On the Study of China’s Intellectual History”

Date: 8 May 2025 (Thursday)

Time: 4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. (Tea Reception at 4:00 p.m.)

On-site participation: LT1B, Cheng Yu Tung Building, CUHK

Online broadcasting: ZOOM

Abstract:

The study of China’s intellectual history has given particular attention to philosophical and moral thought. Professor Bol proposes to broaden the field by making “learning” the focus of study. This would suggest that the traditions of learning focused on the domains of institutions, literature, and “heaven-and-earth” are on a par with philosophy. But are these domains of learning actually of equal importance? Whether they are or not, Professor Bol will argue that the real and necessary differences between domains make the attainment of ideological unity impossible.

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