Project Abstracts for PhD Student Recruitment AY2025/26

Department of Geography

Project title	**Choices and Experiences of China's Rural Migrant Workers in the Gig Economy**	
Research Clusters	☐ Creative Media/Practice ☐ Health and Drug Discovery ☐ Data Analytics and Artificial Intelligence in X √ **Humanities and Cultures**	 ***Dr HAO Pu*** *Email address:* *ppuhao@hkbu.edu.hk* *Learn more:* *https://geog.hkbu.edu.hk/people/detail/114/*
Keywords	*gig economy; rural migrant workers; platform economy; algorithmic control; China*	
Project abstract	The rise of the gig economy has led to a labor market dominated by freelance work, such as food delivery and ride-hailing. This research employs mixed methods to explore the tension between the algorithmic control exerted by gig platforms and the efforts of Chinese rural migrant workers to negotiate for choice and autonomy. In a context where gig platforms operate with minimal regulatory oversight, the analysis aims to contribute to theory building on the impact of platform-based algorithmic control on work and life. It also seeks to update knowledge on the contemporary employment conditions of rural migrant workers in China.	

Project title	Reconciliation and Its Resentments: The Suppression of Justice and Truth Recovery in Germany, Northern Ireland, and Western Balkans	
Research Clusters	☐ Creative Media/Practice ☐ Health and Drug Discovery ☐ Data Analytics and Artificial Intelligence in X √ **Humanities and Cultures**	 ***Dr CHUNG C. K. Martin*** *Email address:* *ckmartin@hkbu.edu.hk* *Learn more:* *https://scholars.hkbu.edu.hk/en/persons/c-k-martin-chung*
Keywords	*Political reconciliation, Conflict resolution, Transitional justice, Truth recovery, Comparative politics*	
Project abstract	In the past three decades or so, there has been a sustained effort to promote "reconciliation" among historical enemies around the globe. Yet, there has also been growing resentment among those directly affected by the project of reconciliation, whose needs for justice and for truth have time and again been sacrificed in the name of peace and mercy. Such discontents and resentments with regard to political reconciliation are the subject of the research project. Using process tracing and triangulated comparative historical analysis, the project examines the cases of reunified Germany, post-accord Northern Ireland and the disintegrated former Yugoslavia.	

Project title	Two way interactions between extreme climate/weather and atmospheric chemistry	
Research Clusters	☐ Creative Media/Practice ☐ Health and Drug Discovery √ **Data Analytics and Artificial Intelligence in X** ☐ Humanities and Cultures	
Keywords	*Extreme weather, climate change, atmospheric chemistry, air quality, climate modeling*	
Project abstract	Extreme climate events, such as hurricanes, droughts, and wildfires, significantly influence chemical interactions in the environment. For instance, increased temperatures can accelerate chemical reactions, leading to more rapid decomposition of organic matter and altered nutrient cycles. Wildfires release carbon dioxide and other pollutants, affecting air quality and atmospheric chemistry. Additionally, heavy rainfall can cause runoff, transporting chemicals like fertilizers and pesticides into water bodies, disrupting aquatic ecosystems. These interactions create feedback loops, where changes in chemical composition can further exacerbate climate change, highlighting the intricate link between climate extremes and environmental chemistry. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for effective climate mitigation strategies.	 ***Prof GAO Meng*** *Email address:* *mmgao2@hkbu.edu.hk* *Learn more:* *https://geog.hkbu.edu.hk/people/detail/151/*