EALCTalks!

Robert Sharf (EALC and Buddhist Studies), "Can AI Meditate? (And Why It Matters)"

There is now considerable debate about whether AI based on large language models may qualify, at some point in the future, as sentient or conscious entities, and if so, what the moral and ethical ramifications might be. In these debates, some philosophers have averred to the Buddhist doctrine of non-self (anātman) in support of the claim that there is no a priori reason that a soulless machine could not in principle become self-conscious. My talk will focus on what Buddhist thought might contribute to the debates surrounding AI, and, in turn, what thinking about AI can teach us about Buddhist models of cognition.
Friday, February 21, noon to 1pm, EALC Library, 287 Dwinelle Hall

Marco Pouget (LMU-Munich), "Then and Now: Historical Consciousness and the Reception of Antiquity in Han China"

This presentation exemplarily analyses discussions of antiquity (gu 古) in contrast to his own lifetime (jin 今) in Zheng Xuan's 鄭玄 (127–200 CE) commentary to the Liji 禮記. This research sheds light on the world view and self-perception of an early imperial scholar in an age of turmoil, who held on to the classics as vestiges of an idealized sagely past. Of particular interest will be how this historical consciousness influenced the commentarial practices Zheng Xuan employed for his readings of the text, and vice versa.
Friday, February 28, noon to 1pm, EALC Library, 287 Dwinelle Hall

Sean H. Yeh (EALC and Santa Clara University), "Navigating Challenges and Innovations in the L2 Taiwanese Online Classroom"

This talk explores the challenges of teaching L2 Taiwanese in an online setting and highlights innovative strategies that enhance accessibility and engagement for students from diverse sociocultural backgrounds and proficiency levels. The instructor will demonstrate how inclusive teaching techniques and digital tools are integrated to create an interactive and supportive learning environment. Additionally, the talk will examine the role of learning objectives and backward design in developing structured, scaffolded, and meaningful pedagogical activities. By showcasing practical applications and lesson design approaches, this presentation aims to provide insights into making the teaching of a less commonly taught language more effective and inclusive in a digital learning space.
Friday, March 14, noon to 1pm, EALC Library, 287 Dwinelle Hall

Song Han (EALC), "Wireless Games in Socialist China"

This talk explores ways of playing at war via wireless in midcentury China. Engaging with the emerging field of "everyday militarism," the ongoing studies of wargaming, as well as recent reflections on the everyday effects of war in China, Asia, and beyond, it tries to rethink socialist state control and Cold War "closed-world" politics through wireless games.
Friday, April 11, noon to 1pm, in the EALC Library, 287 Dwinelle Hall

Mei-yen Lee (National Pingtung University and Center for Chinese Studies), "The Significance of 'Tranquility' in Guqin Aesthetics and its Embodiment"

Playing *guqin* music embodies a kinesthetic sense by combining hearing and vision. The ancient Chinese called this kinesthetic sense: *qi*. This kinesthetic sense is related to the inner natural body energy when the body energy is associated with the external natural energy. The paper examines the synesthetic combination of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic sounds produced by the famous *guqin* tune "Wild Geese Descending on the Sandbank."
Friday, April 25, noon to 1pm in the EALC Library, 287 Dwinelle Hall