

East Asia Fall 2009 Seminar Series

710 Social Science Building 3:30 - 5:00 p.m.

October 6

David Tucker

Department of History, University of Minnesota

*Kwantungchukuo: An Attempt to Rehabilitate the Notions of
Puppet State, "State," and Colonial for Manchoukuo*

The historiography of Northeast Asia has moved increasingly from a view of Manchoukuo as a mere puppet state to examinations of it as a place of paradoxes in which the attempt to develop Manchoukuo as a sovereign nation-state was a crucial part of interaction between imperialism, national aspiration, and Pan-Asian idealism. But if we take seriously this attempt at national development, what kind of sovereignty and what kind of state were created? I argue that Manchoukuo and the adjoining Kwantung Territory should be seen as elements of a composite, hybrid structure, and that colonialism, the puppet state, and the ambiguity of Manchoukuo's sovereignty are necessary to understanding that structure and the role Manchoukuo played in Asian history.

November 10

Reginald Jackson

Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, University of Chicago

*Mourning Reading: The Genji Scrolls'
'Tangled Script' and the Limits of the Legible Subject*

The ways in which sections of the Illustrated Handscrolls of the Tale of Genji (ca. 1140) perform a kind of mourning for dying modes of writing and reading. In considering the material properties of the texts in relation to the political contexts in which they were produced and came to circulate, he hopes to underscore the complex ways in which midaregaki, or 'tangled-script,' comes to refigure the logics according to which Heian reading subjects experienced affective investments in pictorial narrative. By reading closely pictorial and calligraphic depictions of dying in the Scrolls, Professor Jackson will theorize how tangled-script's interruption of desires for historical and textual linearity bear upon the relation between calligraphic movement and the subjectivity of the viewer, and will suggest ways of thinking through this relation's implications for reassessing not only the question of legibility in late-Heian narrative, but the question of where boundaries of the 'human' should be drawn, as well.

December 8

Frederik Green

Department of Asian Language and Cultures, Macalester College

*Nostalgia, Politics and the (In)-voluntary Exile of an Incurable Romantic:
Xu Xu's Postwar Writings from Hong Kong*

This presentation will explore the fiction of one of Republican China's most popular authors after his forced exile to Hong Kong in the wake of the founding of the PRC. By reading Xu Xu's (1908-1980) Hong Kong fiction in the context of Romantic nostalgia, Professor Green will first challenge conventional notions about cause and effect of nostalgia and emigre identity of Chinese writers in exile. He will then briefly comment on the extent to which Xu's Romanticism influenced a younger generation of Hong Kong writers and filmmakers.