



St. John's College
聖約翰學院

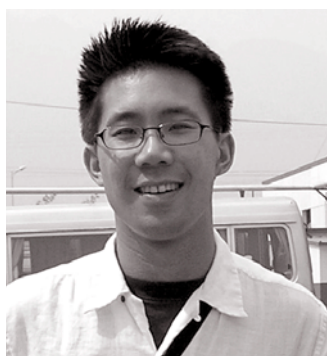
Spring 2008

newsletter



College creates space for academic exploration

Junior Faculty Fellow Chris Lee finds support and inspiration at SJC



Assistant Professor Chris Lee is one of SJC's newest Junior Faculty Fellows.

St. John's College provides the intellectual "space" for the exploration of academic ideas and the sharing of them with the outside world. And this, according to Chris Lee, Assistant Professor of English in UBC's Faculty of Arts and one of the College's newest Junior Faculty Fellows, is a rare and wonderful thing.

Chris was recruited into College life in 2007 as part of the New Faculty Fellows program (see page 4) and already the appointment is helping him fulfill one of the most significant challenges of working at a university: "One of my goals has always been to connect what happens in and outside of the classroom. For me, St. John's College serves as the facilitator, connecting my

teaching and research in Asian-North American studies and Chinese literature to Vancouver's vibrant Asian Canadian community.

"The College provides all of the necessary resources to help organize events, lectures and seminars, as well as a beautiful physical space to bring people to from off campus, but even more important, it provides Fellows and Residents with a welcoming intellectual space to come together and talk about and share ideas that might not otherwise be discussed," emphasized Chris. "This is incredibly difficult to find in any setting, academic or not."

Chris is a Vancouver native, who grew up on the North Shore and completed his undergraduate degree in the Honours English Program at UBC in 1999. Soon after, he relocated to the eastern United States to attend graduate school at Brown University. From there, he went on to spend a year in China. He returned to Vancouver in 2006 and began his appointment as Assistant Professor of English at UBC in July 2007.

Within his work on Asian North American literature and cultures, Chris' focus is on race/ethnicity

and transnationalism, critical and literary theory, and aesthetic philosophy. He is currently revising his dissertation into a book tentatively titled, "The Semblance of Asian America: Aesthetic Mediation and the Politics of Post-identity". He has also published a number of articles on Asian Canadian Studies.

In March 2007, Chris and colleague Henry Yu served as co-conveners of "Refracting Pacific Canada," a three-day international conference supported in part by the Social Sciences and Humanities Council of Canada. This event was organized in conjunction with a Vancouver-based consortium of community, cultural, and labour organizations marking 2007 as an anniversary year in the search for justice and a multicultural Canada. Of particular interest to Chris and Henry was the 100th anniversary of the 1907 anti-Asian riots in Vancouver, B.C., and the lasting effect this moment in time has had on local society.

Hosting the Refracting conference at St. John's College gave Chris his first taste of what the environment could offer: "This

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Manufacturing Islam

Visiting academics share insight on critical contemporary issues

Photos: Martin Dee



More than 600 guests took in the keynote opening of the Manufacturing Islam series hosted at UBC earlier this year.

How do Muslims negotiate cultural challenges in the 21st Century? What are the implications of these issues for Muslims and non-Muslims? What is the place of Islam in an increasingly globalised world? How do gender, race and ethnicity impact on Muslim identities? These are some of the critical questions recently addressed by a visiting group of leading Muslim academics from Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States.

A keynote opening on January 11 featured “An Evening with Zarqa

Nawaz,” at UBC’s Chan Centre for Performing Arts. Zarqa is best known as the creator of the hit CBC series, “Little Mosque on the Prairie,” and she captivated close to 600 audience members with stories about her experience as a Muslim woman and then shared a recently aired episode of “Little Mosque”. This opened the door for lively panel discussions on three subsequent Saturdays, which collectively provided all participants with opportunity for extensive exploration of the following issues:



From left to right: “Little Mosque” actors Aliza Vellani (“Layla”) and Manoj Sood (“Baber”) with producer and keynote speaker Zarqa Nawaz.

January 19, 2008 — Gendering Muslims

Moderator: Dr. Sunera Thobani, Associate Professor, Centre for Women’s & Gender Studies (UBC)

Speakers: Rokhsana Bahramitash (University of Montreal), Jasmine Zine (Wilfred Laurier University), Amina Jamal (Ryerson University)

January 26, 2008 — Managing Muslims

Moderator: Dr. Maged Senbel, Assistant Professor, Urban Design (UBC)

Speakers: Saeed A. Khan (Wayne University), Omid Safi (University of North Carolina), Salman Sayyid (University of Leeds)

February 2, 2008 — Islam and the Law

Moderator: Dr. Maya Yazigi, Assistant Professor, Classical, Near Eastern & Religious Studies (UBC)

Speakers: Mohammad H. Fadel (University of Toronto), Asifa Quraishi (University of Wisconsin)

The series attracted a number of co-sponsoring departments including: UBC Community Affairs; the Office of the Vice-President, Students; the International Canadian Studies Centre; the Faculty of Arts; Community Partners for Internationalization; the Faculty of Graduate Studies; the Department of Classical, Near Eastern, and Religious Studies; the Centre for Women’s and Gender Studies; the Centre for Feminist Legal Studies; the Liu Institute for Global Issues; the Women’s Studies Undergraduate Program; and the Departments of History and Sociology.

We thank all participants for their support and their willingness to share their personal perspectives on issues that have such important implications in the contemporary world.

“Space”... *Continued from page 1*

is an incredibly welcoming and supportive environment,” he said. “As a Fellow with the College, I’m free to come up with ideas and no matter how grand they may seem, the administrative staff just make it happen. I’m so grateful for their help and expertise.”

Help in organizing special events is not all that Chris has gained by becoming associated with the College. As a Junior Fellow, he’s expected to attend one resident dinner per week and much to his surprise, this has turned out to be the highlight of his appointment. “Being at these dinners, talking to students and being

part of College life in a small way has become so important to me. I look forward to it all week.”

While Chris has yet to find his next major professional project to organize, he has set his sights on some personal goals: He recently got some advice that you need to plan your relaxation time

so he has been taking Tai Chi and he soon hopes to fulfill a dream of once again playing piano. He admits that he was enticed to become a Fellow to be able to play the grand piano in the SJC Social Lounge, so if time and that welcoming College “space” allow for it, watch for his fingers on the keys this summer!



Principal Tim Brook

Message from the Principal

Cardinal Newman's The Idea of the University is one of those moralizing 19th-century tomes that no one reads any more. I find it worth going back to in troubled times—not for its Christianity, at least in my case, but, in the simple words of our College motto, for its insistent dedication to the pursuit of Light and Truth.

Newman was a theologian, but he was also an educator who cherished the value of the university. He was astute enough to realize that a group of highly educated individuals might well be “zealous for their own sciences, and rivals of each other”. But put them into a university and they are obliged to “adjust together the claims and relations of their

respective subjects of investigation. They learn to respect, to consult, to aid each other”.

Newman was an optimist. Within the last few years—indeed, in just the last few months—there has been a deficit of respect for the value of independent knowledge. The eight Muslim scholars who took the trouble to come to the College and participate in our

seminar series on Muslim Identities in January, gently reminded us of the ongoing personal cost of pursuing a topic that is politically unfashionable with the Canadian and American governments, and of having the courage to bring that knowledge to bear on issues of public concern.

Recent events in Tibet have similarly provoked a fear of pure knowledge. Anxious lest differences of views muddy the atmosphere within the University, the two principals of St. John's and Green Colleges organized a joint Public Events Forum on March 26. Two Senior Fellows of St. John's, Tim Cheek and Tsering Shakya, opened the discussion by providing background to the present crisis and sharing their insights into problems and misunderstandings that impede the emergence of a more cooperative and conciliatory relationship between Tibetans and Chinese. The discussion, at times intense, was nonetheless unfailingly caring and compassionate. I believe that we managed to meet Newman's goal of respecting,

consulting, and aiding each other. The same spirit of seeking Light and Truth has proved harder to nurture outside our community. For publicly urging the Chinese government to take a more conciliatory approach, several members of the two Colleges have been targeted with hate mail. In my case, the attacks have been mild; the most ingenious was that I ask the universities that issued my degrees for a refund, as I was clearly so badly educated. In another case, however, one member of the College has been threatened with physical violence. Light and Truth are not easy to find, and when found, not always welcome. Still, it is our duty to persevere in the pursuit of knowledge and have the courage to share what we know. As Newman reminded us, knowledge is not just something you can “take into the market; it is an acquired illumination, it is a habit, a personal possession, and an inward endowment”. And if you can't take it into the market, it's hard to know where to apply for a refund.

Vermeer's Hat A new book by SJC Principal Tim Brook

From David Porter's review on The China Blog

Have you ever suspected that recent talk about globalization might be just a little belated? Professor Tim Brook reminds us in a new book that global commercial and cultural exchanges were already profoundly shaping the lives and world views of Europeans 350 years ago.

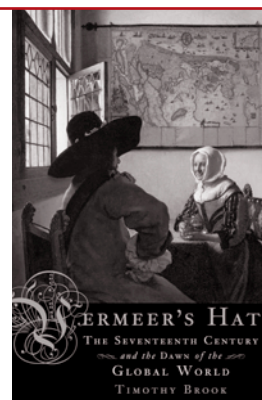
Vermeer's Hat: The Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of the Global World offers an eye-opening and eminently readable account of how the ever-expanding circulation of goods and people from several continents began flattening the world

several centuries before NAFTA and Wal-Mart.

The story begins in the Dutch city of Delft, where Brook happened to fall off his bike on a youthful cycling journey across the Low Countries. The discovery of Johannes Vermeer's gravestone in the city's Old Church led to an enduring fascination with the painter's works. Five of his paintings serve as starting points for journeys transporting us to Acapulco, Lake Champlain, Manila, Korea, and of course, China. Details in the paintings—a river barge, a porcelain dish, a

felt hat—lead to tales of pitched battles and piracy, captivity and conversion, riots and massacres, concealed beneath the cozy bourgeois scenes depicted on the canvas.

The book demonstrates that lives in seventeenth-century Holland and China reveal remarkable parallels: From worries about plague epidemics and concerns about the effects of luxury, to a delight in tobacco and an insatiable lust for silver. Vermeer's paintings make the seventeenth century an intricately interconnected world, in which translation and



Vermeer's Hat: The Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of the Global World is available online and in store at most major book sellers in North America.

transculturation played crucial roles in the creation of meanings within and beyond the picture frame.

New program draws Faculty Fellows into campus life

*St. John's College is reaching out to tenure-track faculty with the launch of an invitation-only program, **New Faculty Fellows**, which is intended to welcome new faculty into the campus community and help them be more directly involved in campus life. By increasing the presence of faculty members at the College the program will also enhance the scholarly and intellectual potential of our community overall.*

New Faculty Fellows are appointed for an initial two-year term during which they attend dinner one evening per week, allowing them to interact with staff, students and colleagues. Other benefits include invitations to College formal dinners, use of College facilities to hold meetings at no charge, and access to funding to support College-based academic activities such as lecture series, seminars, colloquia, and cultural performances. In turn, new Faculty Fellows are asked to make a

commitment to taking part in the life of the College by acting as informal mentors to SJC students, participating in academic and cultural programs, or agreeing to serve on various College committees.

At the conclusion of the two-year term of appointment, Fellows who wish to continue their association may be invited to become Senior Fellows for a further three-year period.

We are pleased to announce that the College has so far welcomed the following three Junior Faculty under the new program:

- Assistant Professor Chris Lee, Department of English: Asian North American literature and cultures (with a focus on race/ethnicity and transnationalism), American Studies, critical and literary theory, and aesthetic philosophy. (See page 1 profile.)
- Assistant Professor Maged Senbel, School of Community

and Regional Planning: Urban sustainability, analytical methods for making cities more ecologically sustainable as well as the deliberative and participatory processes that contribute to implementing sustainable designs. Maged is himself a former St. John's College resident, and we are delighted to welcome him back in his new role.

- Assistant Professor Neil Safier: The history of Europe's interactions with the non-European world during the early modern period, with a special focus on France, Spain, Portugal and their respective overseas empires.

We look forward to welcoming more faculty into the New Faculty Fellows program in the year ahead. For more information, please contact Principal Tim Brook.

Pacific Worlds in Motion

Graduate Colleges host interdisciplinary conference on Asian migrations

By: Lawrence Santiago

In March, UBC's two graduate residential colleges—St. John's and Green Colleges—came together to host an international and interdisciplinary conference on Asian migrations. The landmark event took place as part of the University's annual "Celebrate Research Week". It was the perfect setting for graduate students focused on the movement of Asians in Canada and the rest of the world to receive hands-on

mentoring from established researchers and professors equally passionate about the subject area. The student planning committee was headed by Lawrence Santiago, a first year graduate student in the Department of Geography, and a resident of Green College.

The Conference's plenary speaker was Dr. Brenda Yeoh, Professor of Geography, and Chair of the Southeast Asian Studies Department at the National

University of Singapore, who spoke enthusiastically about "Asian Migration Studies in Transition".

Over the two-day period, more than 20 participants zeroed in on two particular themes: Asian Canadian Studies and Transpacific Migration Studies. Each topic yielded discussion about the issues faced by Asian migrant communities in Canada, and intra-regional and cross-regional Asian migrations, respectively.

UBC Faculty discussants included Professors Nora Angeles (SCARP, WGST), Jennifer Chun

(Sociology), Jim Glassman (Geography), Chris Lee (English), David Ley (Geography), Renisa Mawani (Sociology) and Henry Yu (History). A follow-up workshop is planned at the National University of Singapore (NUS) in the coming year, with graduate students from NUS and UBC collaborating on a proposed Transpacific Summer Institute for the Study of Asian Migrations.

As well as the two Graduate Colleges, sponsorship was generously provided by Metropolis British Columbia and the UBC Faculty of Graduate Studies.

SJC celebrates 10 years of enlightenment

Photos: Darin Dueck



Mr. T.F. Ying shared his thoughts on the success of the College with guests and alumni.

On the weekend of September 17, 2007, St. John's College marked its 10th anniversary with a full weekend of celebrations with friends new and old. The festivities began on Friday with a gala wine, cheese and jazz reception. Maxime Foucault, the College's resident cheese expert, organized the first part of the evening, a tasting featuring a wide selection of cheese ranging from Quebec Oka Classique and Swiss St. Maure Caprifeuille to French Epoisses. Andy Milne, jazz

pianist and one of the College's past Distinguished Artists in Residence, graced the gathering with selections from his newly released recording, *Dreams and False Alarms*.

Saturday started with a group outing to Mount Seymour, where hikers were rewarded with breathtaking panoramic views of Vancouver and the Fraser Valley. Later that afternoon, guests enjoyed an alumni panel discussion, "From St. John's College to

the Real World," during which four College alumni shared their thoughts about making the transition from graduate education to the career world.

The highlight of the weekend was a gala dinner hosted in the College's courtyard as, happily, guests outnumbered the capacity of the SJC Dining Hall. Thirty alumni joined current residents and honoured guests, including UBC President Stephen Toope, and "original" Johanneans T.F. Ying, Stanley Kwok, and William Tong. The evening included remarks by President Toope and Mr. Ying, as well as John Grace, former Dean of Graduate Studies, who gave a tribute to SJC's Founding Principal Grant Ingram, who passed away in June 2007 (see page 6). At this event, guests also learned of the launch of the new SJC Society and then enjoyed a dance. The weekend celebrations wrapped up with brunch on Sunday morning.



Guests enjoyed a gala dinner in an elegantly decorated pavilion in the SJC courtyard.

College launches SJC Society for alumni

In September 2007, St. John's College announced the official establishment of its alumni association, intended to provide the College's more than 1,000 alumni with a formal means to develop and maintain relationships with fellow alumni once their campus days are done. Junior Fellow Belinda Schubert earned a prize for suggesting that the association be named The St. John's College Society. All alumni in good standing are encouraged to join the Society and Facebook users can join the Facebook group: St. John's College Society. Contact alumni representative Sin Jin at sjc.alumni@ubc.ca to join the Facebook group or to join the Society contact list.

St. John's loses Founding Principal

Johanneans bid farewell to Grant Ingram



The College's excitement at marking its 10 year milestone was tempered with sadness by the sudden and tragic passing of Grant Ingram, the first Principal of St. John's College, on June 15, 2007. Upon hearing of Grant's untimely death from an aortic aneurysm, Principal Tim Brook wrote the following to all members of the College:

"Grant was a rock of calm good sense on whom many relied, myself most of all.

We all thought that we could go on relying on him for years to come. His unexpected death comes as a great shock.

Grant built St. John's literally from the ground up. He oversaw the long period of construction, put in place the processes and procedures by which the College governs its affairs, and provided the moral and intellectual guidance the College needed in its early days to become the place as we know it today. His contributions to the College were incalculable. Since completing

his tenure as Principal in 2002, Grant continued to contribute to the College by serving as a Senior Fellow."

Grant is survived by his children, Jonathan, Sara and Kate, and his wife Dr. Helen Burt. He will be remembered by generations of Johanneans to come thanks to the creation of the Grant Ingram Distinguished Visiting Scholar program.

Ingram Distinguished Visting Scholar program

Thanks to the generosity of Dr. Helen Burt, Grant Ingram's wife and St. John's College Senior Fellow, we have established the Grant Ingram Distinguished Visiting Scholar program. Annually, a Visiting Lecturer will be invited to spend a period in residence at St. John's College and give public talks on their area of expertise, which will focus on one of the following general themes:

- Aboriginal issues, including poverty, health, education, environment, youth, or housing;
- Environment and sustainability, including climate change, marine conservation, water resources, polar research, or biodiversity;
- Women in science, including contributions made by women scientists, and the working climate.

The inaugural visitor will be invited in the 2008/2009 academic year.



About St. John's College

St. John's College has roots that extend back to St. John's University in Shanghai, China. Graduates of the University—known as Johanneans—are able, through a blending of Chinese and Western approaches to teaching, to be at home anywhere in the world. Continuing in the tradition of excellence and internationalism of its namesake, St. John's College at UBC aims to build links between different parts of the world, and to serve as an intellectually and culturally diverse centre for its members.

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