

The Graphic Narrative Goes to China

UNH English professor Monica Chiu introduces Asian American studies and graphic narrative to Chinese students and scholars

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Monica Chiu, professor of English, recently returned from China where she served as a Fulbright Specialist, a short-term opportunity offered by the Department of State. For

four weeks, Nov. 20 to Dec. 21, 2019, Chiu worked with faculty in literature, translation and education at Minnan Normal University, located in the southern city of Zhangzhou.

At Minnan Normal, Chiu introduced faculty and students, both graduate and undergraduate, to Asian American studies and graphic narrative.

“Graphic narrative is a new topic for scholars in China,” says Chiu. “While the curriculum in many Chinese universities like Minnan Normal is often tightly tailored to address state exams, thus prohibiting the introduction of the medium, many expressed an interest in how to teach the topic.”

The one-month exchange has resulted in a long-term translation project between Prof. Yi Liu of Minnan Normal University and Chiu. Yi will translate Professor Longhai Zhang’s 2018 study “Reading Asian American Literature” (Xiamen University Press), and Chiu will edit the book and look for a U.S.-based publisher. The project will assist scholars in the field of Asian American studies, American Studies and transnational studies in discovering how the literature is read and taught on various shores, says Chiu.

Chiu was previously a Fulbright Scholar at The University of Hong Kong in 2011-12. She lived in Hong Kong with her family and taught Asian American literature, film and a survey of American literature. That exchange resulted in her edited collection “Drawing New Color Lines: Transnational Asian American Graphic Narratives” (Hong Kong University Press, 2015), the first study to address this topic.

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