



SCHOOL OF
MODERN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES
FACULTY OF ARTS, THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

SMLC Seminar Series

All are welcome. No registration is required.
For enquiries, please contact Dr Javier Cha at javierc@hku.hk.



Will China Ever Have Its Own Barack Obama?

Some Reflections
on the African
and Arab Diaspora
in Guangzhou

4 Mar 2015 (Wed)
4:30 - 6:00 pm

CRT-4.36, Run Run Shaw Tower,
Centennial Campus, HKU

Guangzhou is today the most multi-cultural city in China, not least because of its large African and Arab populations. Unlike most Europeans and Japanese, some Arabs and Africans seek to stay in the city and make it their home, marrying Chinese and having children. But can they ever fully accepted, not as foreigners but as legitimate residents of China? In this talk, based on research conducted along with Lin Dan and Yang Yang in 2012-2014, I explore the relations between these Africans and Arabs and the Chinese residents of Guangzhou, looking at such areas as legal/illegal residence status, low-end globalization in its Guangzhou manifestations, business relations and trust between Africans/Arabs and Chinese, romantic relations between Africans/Arabs and Chinese, and religious belief and its complications. I will not be able to answer the rhetorical question of my title, but I will offer arguments for and against the prospect of a multicultural and global future China.

Prof. Gordon Mathews

The Chinese University
of Hong Kong



Gordon Mathews is Professor and Chair in the Anthropology Dept. at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He has written, among other books, *What Makes Life Worth Living? How Japanese and American Make Sense of Their Worlds* (1996), *Global Culture/Individual Identity: Searching for Home in the Cultural Supermarket* (2000) and *Ghetto at the Center of the World: Chungking Mansions, Hong Kong* (2011). He spent much of 2013-14 living in Guangzhou, thanks to an HSSPF Fellowship.