



Faculty of Arts and Humanities  
Department of English Distinguished Lecture Series 2019

## Dr. Aaron Magnan-Park

Leukocentric Hollywood: Whitewashing, *Aloha*gate  
and the Dawn of Hollywood with Chinese Characteristics  
(with film clips and Q&A)

Wednesday March 13, 2019  
Venue: E21-1055  
Time: 1900 to 2150 hours



### Abstract:

Hollywood's long-standing practice of leukocentrism is condemned as a false and outdated adherence to an aspect of commercial determinism whereby whitewashing a film is held to ensure its profitability, universality, popularity and social meaningfulness, especially when it involves Asian and Asian American characters. Criticism of this practice came to a head in what became known as 'Aloha'gate', which started with the miscasting of Emma Stone in *Aloha* (2015) and continued with *Doctor Strange* (2016), *Birth of the Dragon* (2016) and plans for the live action version of Disney's animated *Mulan* (2020 forthcoming). Asian American filmmakers protested via their #WhiteWashedOut Twitter campaign and drew attention to the targeting of Asians for racist jokes at the 2016 Oscars. The Hollywood response is one of innocent ignorance, which only highlights rather than dispels the deep-rootedness of leukocentrism. These individuals are identified as *hūpō haole*, Hawaiian for 'clueless Caucasian/foreigner', who are granted an opportunity to become enlightened by abandoning their leukocentric bias.

### Biography:

Aaron Han Joon Magnan-Park (Ph.D. Iowa) is Assistant Professor in the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of Hong Kong. He is co-editor of *Palgrave Handbook of Asian Cinema*. He has published in *Asian Cinema*, *Journal of Chinese Cinemas*, *Journal of Japanese and Korean Cinema*, *Journal of Korean Studies*, *Post Script*, and *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*. He has chapters in *Chinese Connections*; *Hong Kong Film, Hollywood and New Global Cinema*; *Korean Wave*; *New Korean Cinema*; *Palgrave Handbook of Asian Cinema*; *The Politics of Community*; and *Towards Sustainable Economics and Security Relations in East Asia*.

**All are Welcome**