

# Zhang Yang and Sixth Generation Representations of Filiality in Chinese Cinema

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**Dr. Christopher Lupke, Professor of Chinese and Cinema Studies,  
Department of Foreign Languages & Cultures, Washington State  
University**

Date | **Thursday, January 22**  
Time | **4:00 – 5:30pm**  
Location | **Room 120**  
Address | **C.K. Choi Building, 1855  
West Mall, Vancouver**

**REGISTRATION:**

To register, please RSVP [here](#).



## ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Dr. Christopher Lupke is the editor of *The Magnitude of Ming: Command, Allotment and Fate in Chinese Culture* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2005) and *New Perspectives on Contemporary Chinese Poetry* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008). Lupke's early work centered on the interrogation of the cohesive nation state in contemporary Chinese literature. He has recently completed a book on the Taiwanese auteur filmmaker Hou Hsiao-hsien that is forthcoming from Cambria Press. His current work is on a book-length project on the Chinese notion of filiality (xiào) as it has been represented in the modern era.

## ABOUT THE TALK

During the early 20th century the Confucian notion of filiality (孝 xiào) was subjected to a thoroughgoing critique by the intellectual iconoclasts who fueled China's radical transformation into the modern era. How has the battered notion of filiality survived through to the contemporary era in Chinese visual representation? The filmmaker Zhang Yang provides a partial answer to this question of his own, inserting Zhang Xiaogang's work into the narrative of his own work, the film *Sunflower*, released in 2004. *Sunflower* resurrects the traditional trope of filiality and places the responsibility for the disintegration of the family in general, and the father-son relationship in particular, squarely at the feet of the Cultural Revolution. The film is a perfect example of how contemporary China, with its post-Mao legacy, rampant free market sensibility, inexorable dismantling of its traditional domestic architecture, and move toward the nuclear family as the basic social unit, has been catastrophic for the traditional concept of filiality. Yet, it also demonstrates that filiality continues to weigh on the minds of Chinese intellectuals dedicated to representing the current social milieu in visual, aesthetic forms.