

Date: March 26 at 17-18.30 **Place:** Geijer-salen, Engelska parken 6-1023

Title: Chinese Science Fiction: New Wave, Heterotopia, and the Posthuman
Speaker: Professor Mingwei Song

Abstract: The contemporary new wave of Chinese science fiction presents a subversive vision of China's pursuit of power and wealth, a dystopian counterpart to the government-promoted "Chinese dream." This lecture explores the cutting-edge literary experiments that characterize the new wave, which evoke sensations ranging from the uncanny to the sublime, from the corporeal to the virtual, and from the post-human to the transcendent. We will discuss some important science fiction novels such as *Mars over America* (Han Song, 2000), *The Three-Body Problem* (Liu Cixin, 2006) and *The Waste Tide* (Chen Qiufan, 2013).

The new wave has a dark and subversive side that speaks either to the "invisible" dimensions of the reality, or simply the impossibility of representing a certain "reality" dictated by the discourse of the national "dream." Representing the impossibilities and uncertainties, as well as imagining a future history and larger space beyond the known and visible in scientific and political terms, has made sf a distinctive literary genre that cut sharply into the popular imagination and intellectual thinking of those who are, even faintly, aware of the alterity. On its most radical side, the new wave of Chinese sf has been thriving on an avant-garde cultural spirit that encourages one to think beyond the conventional ways of perceiving reality and challenge the commonly accepted ideas about what constitutes the existence and self-identity of a person surrounded by technologies of self, society, and governance.

Bio: Mingwei Song is an Associate Professor of Chinese Literature at Wellesley College. His research interests include modern Chinese literature, cinema studies, youth culture, and science fiction. He is the author of numerous books and research articles, including *Young China: National Rejuvenation and the Bildungsroman, 1900-1959* (Harvard, 2015), and *Criticism and Imagination: Collected Literary Critical Essays* (Fudan, 2013). He has been researching on Chinese science fiction since 2010. He edited four special journal issues on Chinese science fiction: *Renditions* 77/78 (2012), which features English translations of thirteen Chinese science fiction stories and novel excerpts; *China Perspectives* 1 (2015); *Chinese Comparative Literature* 100 (2015); *Literature* 5.1 (2017). His academic articles and essays on Chinese science fiction appeared in English and Chinese journals such as *Science Fiction Studies*, *Shanghai Culture*, *Shanghai Literature*, *People's Literature*, and *Dushu*. Some of his writings on Chinese science fiction have been translated into German, French, Italian, and Chinese. He gave talks on Chinese science fiction at Harvard University, University of California at Berkeley, MIT, University of British Columbia, Charles University (Prague), Deutsche Kinemathek (Berlin), University of Sydney, University of Bologna (Italy), Naples University of Oriental Studies (Italy), University of Helsinki (Finland), University of Cambridge (UK), and other universities. He organized three conferences on science fiction: "Global Science Fiction" (Wellesley College, 2013); "Science Fiction Workshop (Fudan University, 2016); and "Human/Inhuman/Posthuman Conditions" (Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2017). He served as the jury for numerous major Chinese science fiction awards. He is currently editing *Reincarnated Giant: An Anthology of Twenty-First Century Chinese Science Fiction* (Columbia, 2018) and writing a monograph *Posthuman China: Poetics and Politics of Science Fiction*. At Wellesley College, he taught a seminar on "Science Fiction and the Future of China" in spring 2017.