Guanxi (关系) and Xing hun (形婚):
The Queer Art of Getting Things Done

Dr. William Schroeder (University of Manchester)
5pm, January 28 (Wed), 2015; Rooms 8 & 9, FAMES

Abstract Debates about guanxi in the PRC seem never to get resolved—some scholars insist it's simply a human relational practice with a special Chinese name; others argue it's part of the unique fabric of Chinese cultural life. This talk does not take sides but seeks to move the debate into its proper arena: translation. This is an early-stage attempt to figure out why debates about guanxi and many other cultural practices with names become so entrenched. By looking at the contemporary phenomenon of 'formal marriage' (形式婚姻) among gays and lesbians in the PRC, the talk will explore the similarities between general guanxi practice and a specific queer practice to suggest some ways of not getting lost in semantics.

Dr. William Schroeder is Lecturer in Chinese Studies at the University of Manchester. He received his PhD in Sociocultural Anthropology at the University of Virginia in the United States in 2010. His research has focused on leisure practices in the queer community in Beijing and draws on queer, play, affect, and kinship theories. He is editor with Elisabeth Engebretsen of Queer/Tongzhi China: New Perspectives on Research, Activism and Media Cultures (June 2015, NIAS Press), and his work has appeared in GLQ (Duke University Press) and edited volumes. He is the founder of the Queer China Working Group, an international collaboration of artists, activists, and scholars concerned with the queer PRC and is co-editor of Manchester University Press's new book series 'Alternative Sinology'.

All seminars take place on Wednesdays (unless otherwise arranged) at 5pm in rooms 8 & 9 in the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies. Tea will be served at the same venue at 4:45pm. All are welcome!