

China Research Seminar Series

**Institutional Politics and Social Change
through Multiple Lenses: Looking at
Labour, Law & Land
in Contemporary China**



Professor William Hurst
(FAMES, University of Cambridge)

2pm, 12 Oct (Thursday), 2023 (in-person only)
Room LG18 (Law Faculty, Sidgwick Site)

Abstract

This is more of an overview of an arc of research across several decades, rather than a lecture on a discrete piece of work. That said, I'll focus mostly on two books and one ongoing book project, with an emphasis on the different conceptual and methodological tools employed for each. I will discuss subnational comparative analysis and interview-based research in relation to my first book on labour and unemployment in the Chinese state sector; cross-national paired comparison and observational, interview, and document-based research in relation to my second book on law and legal institutions in China and Indonesia; and small-n historical comparison and archival/library research in relation to my third and ongoing book project on land in Mainland China, Taiwan, Indonesia, and Malaysia. I will also talk about blending approaches from sociology, history, law, and political science to study important phenomena in contemporary China and elsewhere.

Speaker



William Hurst is the Chong Hua Professor of Chinese Development in the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies and fellow of Wolfson College. He has been at Cambridge since January 2021 (having been in the department of Politics and International Studies up until Summer 2023). Currently deputy director of the Centre for Geopolitics, he previously served as director of the Centre of Development Studies. Before coming to Cambridge, Hurst was professor of political science at Northwestern University in Illinois. Earlier in his career he held a variety of posts at Bowdoin College, the University of Oxford, the University of Texas at Austin, and the University of Toronto. He has held visiting fellowships at Harvard, Airlangga University (in Indonesia), and the LSE. In addition to four edited books, and more than 50 articles, chapters, and essays, he is the author of: *Ruling Before the Law: the Politics of Legal Regimes in China and Indonesia* (Cambridge 2018) and *The Chinese Worker after Socialism* (Cambridge 2009).