*PHIL5180  Special Seminar on Selected Philosophical Issues  (Fall 2014)*

哲學視野中的漢語和漢字理論 　　（普通話講授）

Chinese Language and Script in Philosophical Perspectives (in Putonghua)

Teacher: Prof. KWAN Tze Wan

Mainstream linguistics has considered language to have an absolute priority over script. This seminar attempts to show that in the Chinese context the above thesis should not be taken for granted but deserves fundamental reflections. Wilhelm von Humboldt, acclaimed father of general linguistics, for example, once remarked that the Chinese script has over millennia developed into “an inherent component” of the Chinese language.  Besides Humboldt, the seminar will embark upon the works of other linguists and philosophers, as, for instance, Jakobson, Benveniste, and particularly Husserl, to pave its way towards philosophical reflections on issues at stake.  In order to remain well-informed about technical issues concerning Chinese language and script, traditional Chinese scholarship as well as more recent researches by Chinese scholars will be examined.  The “Multi-function Chinese Character Database” implemented by the course teacher will also be used extensively to provide information for further discussion.

Topics:

Humboldt’s understanding of the Chinese language and script

Husserl’s phenomenology and its relevance for Chinese script formation

Abstract concept formation in the Chinese context

The Fourfold Root of the notion of “being” in Chinese language and script