

PPA Talk Series 2025-26:

Relational Non-Domination: A Normative Reconstruction of Political Realism



May 14, 2026 (Thursday)



4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.



Rm 1103-1104, 11/F The Jockey Club Tower Centennial Campus

Speaker:

Prof. KWAK Jun-Hyeok

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Department of Philosophy
Sun Yat-sen University (Zhuhai)



Biography:

KWAK, Jun-Hyeok is Yixian Professor of Philosophy at Sun Yat-sen University (Zhuhai). He received his PhD from the University of Chicago in 2002. His research interests lie at the crossroads of the history of political philosophy from Socrates to Machiavelli, contemporary political theory, and comparative political philosophy. He has published numerous articles and books on political philosophy, comparative philosophy, and global justice in multiple languages, including his recent works, "Displacing the Christian Theodicy of Hell" (Religions 2025), "Individuality with Relationality" (Philosophy East and West 2023), "Confucian Role-Ethics with Non-Domination" (Ethical Theory and Moral Practice 2022), 《马基雅维利政治哲学导论》(中国社会科学出版社, 2025), 《西方政治哲学导论》(中国社会科学出版社, 2023), and Relationality across East and West (Routledge 2025). Currently, he is writing his forthcoming monograph, Machiavelli and Republican Leadership (Routledge, forthcoming), and he is serving as General Editor of the Routledge Series of Political Theories in East Asian Context and co-editor of The Journal of Social and Political Philosophy (Edinburgh University Press).

Abstract:

In turbulent times marked by existential insecurity, democratic erosion, and unilateral uses of force, this lecture advances relational non-domination as a regulative principle for ordering relations among persons, between citizens and public authority, and within the international order. It argues that, within a republican reconstruction of political realism, the normative grammar of coexistence must be reoriented away from the primacy of power and toward the realization of non-domination. The argument proceeds in three steps. First, it reconceives individual freedom not merely as reciprocal non-interference but in terms of the social and institutional conditions that make relational non-domination possible. Second, it rearticulates democratic accountability beyond contestation by grounding fiduciary delegation under reversed verticality in relational non-domination, understood as the regulative principle that keeps political authority normatively subordinate to citizens. Third, it shows why the prevailing understanding of international order should be recast not through the lens of universal security alone, but through the lens of relational non-domination.

Moderator:

Prof. JIN Yutang
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