



All Members of the Saint Mary's University Community

Are

Invited

To a Talk by

Dr. Eric Henry*

Carleton University

The Foreign Adventures of Xiaoming: Narrative, Agency and the English Modern in Northeastern China

Wednesday, March 14th
10:00-11:15 am
Loyola 178

Abstract

“Having already taught English to over 300 million students, the Chinese government’s mandate to raise a generation of active bilinguals is unprecedented in scale. However, in this talk I will argue that the usual justifications for such a massive educational project—including rationalizations that are economic, political, and global—ring hollow in the context of actual patterns of everyday foreign language use and popular language ideologies. Instead, we should view the desire for English fluency as part of a broader strategy of individual self-transformation engendering new forms of citizenship and identity, and understood through a distinctive Chinese notion of ‘modernity.’ Through an examination of diverse narrative practices, including a series of stories about Chinese abroad, I examine how individual foreign language users situate themselves in relation to the ongoing transformations in Chinese society.”

*Dr. Henry is a candidate for an Assistant Professorship in Anthropology with a specialization in linguistic anthropology.