

Departmental Forum, 2025–26

The Impossible City
Tracking the Swift, Systemic and Material Erosions to
Rights and Freedoms in Hong Kong

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Once a bastion of civil liberties and rule of law, since the promulgation of the National Security Law in Hong Kong in 2020 the city has seen its previous identity as a land of press freedom, individual and collective rights, academic freedom and fair trial rights systematically eroded. The crackdown has led to the arrest of the entire legislative pro-democracy opposition, the purging of sensitive academic topics and instructors, the closure of the two most widely read media outlets in the city and the detention of over 1000 political prisoners in a city which prior to 2020 housed none. In this talk, the variety of mechanics of how these events unfolded will be discussed, including in particular the use and resurgence of application of colonial laws and the curtailing of judicial independence by the PRC government.

Sharron Fast was the Deputy Director of the Master of Journalism Programme at the University of Hong Kong, and a Senior Lecturer in Media Law. Prior to and concurrent with her role as Senior Media Law Lecturer, she taught Human Rights in Practice, Rule of Law, Hong Kong Legal Systems and Criminal Law in the Faculty of Law at the University of Hong Kong. Her most recent areas of research include fair trial rights, freedom of expression and court reporting. From 2020 to 2025 she was the Primary Investigator of a pioneering research project (“Confidence in the Courts”) on fair trial rights under the new national security laws enacted in the city.

Wednesday, 12 November 2025 @ 15:00
Department of English Studies Conference Room
[9 Klimentos Str.](#) (2nd floor, Eliades Building), 1061 Nicosia
All welcome!