

From *Tianxia* to Tianxia: The Generalization of a Concept**Speaker:****Prof. Salvatore Babones**Associate Professor of Sociology & Social Policy
University of Sydney**Date: 12 November 2020 (Thursday)****Time: 11am – 12:30pm****Zoom Link:** <https://lingnan.zoom.us/j/96184228454>**Abstract:**

The philosopher Zhao Tingyang argues that some 3000 years ago there existed a meaningful Chinese *tianxia*, at the time of the classical Zhou Dynasty. But what does the term mean today? And what does it (or should it) mean in English? Just as the Greek word *hegemonia* became the English hegemony and the Latin word *imperium* became the English empire, the Chinese word *tianxia* is entering English-language political discourse as something related to, but distinct from, its original Chinese meaning(s). Like hegemony and empire before it, the English-language term *tianxia* is likely to lose its cultural specificity while retaining its generic meaning as an international community of spirit. New political structures call for new terms to describe them, and *tianxia* may emerge as a useful supplement to empire and hegemony as a term to describe a more spiritual form of international society coordinated, but not dominated or ruled, by a single, central state.

Biography:

Salvatore Babones is a political sociologist at the University of Sydney. His book *The New Authoritarianism: Trump, Populism, and the Tyranny of Experts* was named 'Best on Politics 2018' by the *Wall Street Journal*. Salvatore is also the author or co-author of six other books, including the 2017 book *American Tianxia: Chinese Money, American Power, and the End of History*. His academic research takes a long-term approach to interpreting the structure of the global economy, with a particular focus on China.