

## **Announcing the Final Examination of Hui-Chih Huang (LLC Cohort 10)**

*Date and Location:* April 9, 2015 at 2:00 p.m.  
Education Conference Room, 426 Sherman Hall

*Title:* Variational Pragmatics of Mandarin Chinese: A Comparative Study of Gossip in China and Taiwan Sitcoms with Implications for the CSL Classroom

Conceptualizing Mandarin Chinese as a homogeneous linguistic system is both inaccurate and misleading for students of the language. This study compares and contrasts how one form of small talk, gossip, is conducted differently to establish rapport in two Mandarin Chinese speaking regions, China and Taiwan. Based on Schneider and Barron's (2008) variational pragmatics and Spencer-Oatey's (2000, 2003, 2005, 2008) rapport management, this research not only studies pragmatic variation resulting from the impact of age, gender, region, and socio-economic class, but also looks into how social relationships among family members, friends, and neighbors are constructed, maintained, or threatened through small talk. The higher-level focus of this study is the impact of regional differences on intra-lingual pragmatic variation in Mandarin Chinese. Following Ishihara (2010), who argues that the design of a language curriculum should not merely rely on fluent L2 speakers' intuitions but should present explicit pragmatic information and draw on research-based insights, this study goes on to develop a variational pragmatic-focused Mandarin teaching unit with a focus on small talk.

*Dissertation Committee:* Thomas Field, Chair  
Ana Oskoz, Co-Chair  
Anna Shields  
Jodi Crandall  
Fang-Yi Chao

*The public is welcome to observe.*