

Princeton University

HONORS FACULTY MEMBERS
RECEIVING EMERITUS STATUS



May 2021

The biographical sketches were written by staff and
colleagues in the departments of those honored.

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In the Nation's Service and the Service of Humanity

CONTENTS

Faculty Members Honored in 2021 for Receiving Emeritus Status

| | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| Chih-p'ing Chou | 3 |
| Lynn William Enquist | 7 |
| Edward William Felten | 10 |
| Andrew L. Ford | 12 |
| Olga Peters Hasty | 15 |
| Michael Jennings | 18 |
| Gerta Keller | 21 |
| Sara McLanahan | 24 |
| Alexander Nehamas | 29 |
| Philip Nord. | 32 |
| James Richardson. | 36 |
| Thomas Shenk | 38 |
| Yakov Sinai. | 41 |
| Marta Tienda | 43 |
| Robert J. Wuthnow | 46 |

CHIH-P'ING CHOU



Chih-p'ing "CP" Chou, professor of East Asian studies, director of the Chinese language program in East Asian studies, and director of the Princeton in Beijing summer language program, will transition to emeritus status after forty-two years on the Princeton faculty. CP was born in 1947 in Shanghai, and his family moved from Shanghai to Taiwan in 1952. He received his elementary and secondary education in Taiwan, his bachelor of arts in Chinese literature from Soochow University (Taipei) in 1970, and his master's degree in Chinese literature from Tunghai University (Taichung) in 1974. While at Tunghai University, he had the opportunity to teach at Oberlin College from 1974 to 1976. He earned his Ph.D. in Chinese at Indiana University, where he studied with prominent literature scholars Irving Lo and Leo Lee, who advised his dissertation.

He first came to Princeton as a lecturer in 1979 while he was finishing his dissertation, and after completing his Ph.D. in 1982, he was appointed assistant professor of Chinese, teaching Chinese literature, culture, and language. He received tenure in 1987 and was promoted to full professor in 1990.

Over the course of his long career at Princeton, CP became internationally known as a scholar of Chinese literature and intellectual history. He published on literature of the late Ming dynasty in his early career and then carved out a second influential research profile in the thought of early twentieth-century Chinese intellectuals.

CP's scholarly publications have ranged widely over the course of his career, beginning with the study of the late Ming author Yuan Hongdao (1568-1610) and the iconoclastic "Gongan School" of literature. He demonstrated that these writers' advocacy for a wider expressive range for literary writing, not just in elite classical genres such as poetry and belletristic prose but also vernacular writing, had a far-reaching impact on late imperial Chinese literature. His first book, *Yüan Hung-tao and the Kung-an School* (Cambridge University Press, 1988; also published in Chinese in Taipei, 1986) was the first monograph in English to focus on the significance of this literary movement. Expanding this approach, CP next connected these developments in the late Ming dynasty to the modern Chinese literary revolution of the early twentieth century (centered in the May Fourth Movement), including its promotion of vernacular literature. Tying the expressive and

individualistic tendencies of late Ming writing to new twentieth-century developments, he argued that the indigenous origins of the literary revolution had long been overlooked in the framework of “western influence” that had dominated prior scholarship.

His research on intellectuals such as Hu Shi (1891–1962), Lu Xun (1881–1936), Feng Youlan (1895–1990), and Lin Yutang (1895–1976) have worked to show the persistence of liberalism and the May Fourth Movement in twentieth-century intellectual culture after 1949. His many books on twentieth-century literature and intellectual history published since the 1990s include *Hu Shi and Modern Chinese Thought* (in Chinese; Nanjing University Press, 2002); *Studies in Modern Chinese Intellectual History* (in Chinese; Taipei, 2003); and *Hu Shi’s Thought and Modern China* (in Chinese; Jiuzhou Press, 2012), which won several awards in China; *Modern Chinese Intellectuals and Cultural Reflections* (in Chinese; Beijing, Jiuzhou Press, 2013); *The Sparks of Freedom: Hu Shi and Lin Yutang* (in Chinese; Taipei, Yunchen Press, 2018); and *Hu Shi’s Romance in America* (in Chinese; Hong Kong, Zhonghua shuju, 2019).

Chou’s biographical scholarship on Hu Shi has been extensive, including a co-authored study with Susan Egan of hundreds of letters exchanged with Edith Clifford Williams, published in *A Pragmatist and His Free Spirit: The Half-Century Romance of Hu Shi and Edith Clifford Williams* (Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2009). In recent years, he turned to examine the international impact of novelist and translator Lin Yutang, and his current scholarship examines the influential twentieth-century historian and intellectual Qian Mu (1895–1990). He also regularly publishes and presents his work in the field of Chinese language pedagogy.

In addition to his prolific scholarly publications, CP also transformed the teaching of Chinese language at Princeton over the course of four decades, making Chinese at Princeton one of the nation’s premier programs. He has published more than twenty textbooks, most with Princeton University Press, trained generations of Chinese language teachers, and directed the Princeton in Beijing program, which he co-founded with his Princeton colleague Perry Link in 1993.

Since 1987, CP has served as director of the Chinese language program in East Asian Studies, overseeing significant shifts in Chinese language teaching at Princeton that have continued to shape the field nationwide. When he joined the Princeton faculty in 1979, there were fewer than one hundred students per year studying all levels of Chinese and a handful of language lecturers; since the early 2000s, between 400 and 500 students annually enroll in Chinese language courses, with

many instructors who teach both the modern and classical language. In the late 1990s, he reformed the curriculum to include a double-track system for heritage and non-heritage learners, making Princeton one of the first universities to expand in this direction. As Princeton's student population has grown and diversified, this double-track system has worked to serve the needs of the growing number of heritage and non-heritage learners who fill the department's classrooms.

Both the pedagogy and the curriculum for Chinese language had to become more creative and flexible to meet those changing needs, and CP has consistently supported these curricular innovations by producing new textbooks for both modern and classical Chinese. Fifteen of his language textbooks have been published by Princeton University Press in their "Princeton Chinese Language Program" series, including *Oh, China! An Elementary Reader of Modern Chinese for Advanced Beginners* (Princeton University Press, 2011), the first college-level textbook aimed at heritage learners. The Princeton University Press textbooks have been used throughout the world, testifying to the international success of Princeton's Chinese language program. Every year since 1993, CP has also hosted an international conference on Chinese language pedagogy, which attracts hundreds of scholars to Princeton each April. Both Princeton in Beijing and the Chinese language pedagogy project have benefited from the strong support of the Program in East Asian Studies over the years.

Beyond Princeton, CP has broadly influenced the teaching of Chinese in the U.S. and abroad, first through his many years of service (1983–1992) as the director of the Chinese Summer Language School at Middlebury College, known for decades as the most rigorous "total immersion" language program in the country, and later through his three decades of directing the Princeton in Beijing summer language program. In this respect, CP has honored and enriched the traditions begun by the founder of East Asian studies at Princeton, Frederick P. (Fritz) Mote, and the prior director of the Chinese language program Ta-tuan (TT) Ch'en.

Building on his experience at Middlebury, as China began to open in the early 1990s, CP and Link took the ambitious step of establishing Princeton's own summer language program in China in 1993, the first U.S. university to do so. Located on the campus of Beijing Normal University, Princeton in Beijing began with eighty-seven students in the summer of 1993 and grew rapidly to enroll an average of 160 students per summer, with the exception of the SARS year of 2003 and the recent COVID-19 pandemic year, when Princeton in Beijing operated remotely. CP was essential to this successful, constantly