



Seattle University
College of Arts and Sciences and Asian Studies
present

The 2023 Peter L. Lee Endowed Lecture
in East Asian Culture and Civilization

**“Heavenly Learning”:
Jesuit Science in Imperial China**

Florence C. Hsia, PhD
Professor of History of Science
Department of History
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Monday, May 8, 2023
4 p.m., Reception
4:30 – 6 p.m., Lecture
Casey Commons
Seattle University

Seattle University, founded in 1891, is a Jesuit Catholic university located in Seattle, Washington. Nearly 7,300 students are enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programs within the eight schools and colleges. U.S. News and World Report’s: Best Colleges 2022 ranks SU in the top one third of all national universities. For 19 years running, SU has been recognized as one of the best colleges in the nation for undergraduate education by the Princeton Review.

The **College of Arts and Sciences** is the largest college in the university, with more than 1,900 students. The college offers a full range of undergraduate degrees in the humanities, arts, and behavioral and social sciences, eight master’s degrees, and three professional advanced degree certificates.

Peter L. Lee Endowed Lectureship in East Asian Culture and Civilization



Thanks to a generous contribution by Dr. Peter Lai Sun Lee '64, Seattle University established the Peter L. Lee Endowed Lectureship in East Asian Culture and Civilization in April 2015. Housed in the College of Arts and Sciences and managed by the Director of Asian Studies, the lectureship brings to campus prominent experts to explore the impact of East Asian thought and tradition on contemporary global issues.

Dr. Lee, who majored in chemistry, was one of the earliest international students to come to Seattle University from Hong Kong. Early in his career, he served as the first President of Coca Cola China. Subsequently, he led the Asian operations for several multinational companies including Mead Coated Board (then part of Mead Corporation) and Chesapeake Corporation. His most recent venture is Rondabosh International Ltd., a company he founded upon retiring from Chesapeake in 2008.

Dr. Lee received his PhD in chemistry from Michigan State University, did postdoctoral research at New York University, and studied with the great China scholar Joseph Needham at Cambridge University. He has had a longstanding association with the Joseph Needham Foundation for Science and Civilisation in Hong Kong and currently serves as its chairman. Throughout his academic, corporate, and nonprofit leadership involvement, Dr. Lee has worked tirelessly to build bridges of understanding between China and the West.

2018 University Service Award

Dr. Peter Lee, '64, is the recipient of the 2018 University Alumni Service Award. He has shown extraordinary dedication to connecting Seattle University leaders with prominent Asian alumni.

Professor Florence C. Hsia

Florence Hsia earned a B.A. in East Asian Studies at Princeton University and a PhD in History at the University of Chicago. She is now Professor of History of Science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she is also currently serving as Associate Vice Chancellor for Research in Arts & Humanities and as Associate Dean in the Graduate School. She is the author of *Sojourners in a strange land: Jesuits and their scientific missions in late imperial China* (Chicago, 2009), and has focused on the history of Jesuit science in the context of the Society of Jesus' global missions in the early modern period. Current areas of interest include data practices in astronomy and indexing methods for Chinese characters.



"Heavenly Learning": Jesuit Science in Imperial China

From its beginnings in the late sixteenth century, the Jesuit episode in late imperial China framed a meeting of distinct scientific traditions, from concepts of earth and sky to modes of reckoning time and space. The encounter challenged members of the Society of Jesus to rethink how to best advance missions both religious and scientific, and to address how pursuing these intertwined goals might shape their own identities. This talk explores the long history of Jesuit scientific work in the Celestial Empire in order to better understand what such efforts meant for the Jesuits' various audiences, as well as for themselves.