

Asylums and the Insane in Early Twentieth-Century China

A Lecture with Dr. Emily Baum (UC Irvine)

**Friday, March 1, 2019, 12pm,
PL-4005, Pfau Library**

Talk Description: How was “madness” understood in early twentieth-century China? This talk will explore the shifting meanings associated with madness during the last decade of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911) and the first decade of the Chinese republic (1911-1949). During this time, the first public asylum and the first modern police force were both established in the Chinese capital of Beijing. In tandem with the advent of these new quasi-disciplinary, quasi-charitable institutions, understandings of who should be considered "insane" shifted dramatically. This talk will demonstrate the ways in which the concept of "madness" evolved over the course of the early twentieth century, and will argue that these changing understandings of insanity arose in part due to the emergence of new policing mechanisms in the capital city.

Speaker Bio: Emily Baum is an associate professor of modern Chinese history at UC Irvine. Her first book, *The Invention of Madness: State, Society, and the Insane in Modern China*, was published by University of Chicago Press in 2018. Her research interests center on the history of illness, deviance, science, and superstition both in China and around the world, and she is currently at work on a project investigating fortune telling and occultism in the People's Republic of China and Hong Kong.



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Please contact Jeremy Murray (History) with questions at jmurray@csusb.edu.