

Workshop Description

In the past two centuries, China witnessed first-hand the radical restructuring of the world as a result of the Industrial Revolution. Accompanying such a restructuring was a dominance of the world view undergirded by Western sciences among China's intellectual elites during the 19th and 20th centuries. Indeed, before the middle of the 19th century, at least some Chinese literati in the late Ming and early Qing periods were already aware of the superiority of Western sciences (natural philosophy). Starting from the late 19th century, applying scientific knowledge to resolve the issues and tensions within the broader landscape of society, institutions, culture, and thought became the automatic response from the mainstream Chinese scholars whose existential anxiety concerning the future of China was entangled with the desire for a science-driven modernisation. After the Opening and Reform in the late 20th century, Chinese intellectual elites have turned to the West again for advanced science and technology. As such, what China stood for traditionally before the arrival of the Industrial Revolution was largely sidelined by a reconfiguration of knowledge that orientated the Chinese understanding toward the sciences — a Copernican Revolution forcing the eastern learning into an active negotiation with Western frameworks.

It is within this backdrop that this special issue proves to be timely. Put simply, we seek to assemble the best of critiques and contemplations that reflect upon the scholarship of Chinese historiography of science within the framework of socio-technical relationships. How have the Chinese intellectuals viewed Western sciences? What have been the different responses? Have the sciences been viewed as compatible with the Chinese intellectual tradition? How have the Chinese scholars written the history of the sciences, either Western or Chinese? What have been the historiographical, methodological, and philosophical responses?

This workshop aims to bring together potential contributors to the *Historiography of Science in China*, a special issue of *Transversal: International Journal for the Historiography of Science*. Accepted speakers are required to share their manuscripts in advance, so they will have an opportunity to discuss their manuscripts with broader audiences.

Topics to be addressed include, but are not limited to

- Philosophical foundations of the history of science and technology in China;
- Historiography of Chinese sciences;
- Methodological reflections on the Chinese historiography of science and technology.

Venue

Zhejiang University, Hangzhou

Dates

24 – 25 October 2026

Organising Committee

Bohang Chen (ZJU)

Yuzhe Sha (ZJU)

Yafeng Shan (HKUST)

Jingwen Xiao (ZJU)

Qinyi Wang (HKUST)

Qiyue Zhang (HKUST)

Confirmed Speakers

Che Jiang (Tsinghua University)

Sichen Wang (Xidian University)

Haohao Zhu (University of Science and Technology of China)

Submission Guidelines

Please submit a 1,000-word abstract for blind review and a title page including the name, affiliation, and email address of the author to philsci@ust.hk by 31 August 2026. Notifications of acceptance will be sent by 10 September 2026.

Contact

Should you have any questions, please contact Qiyue Zhang (qiyue.zhang@connect.ust.hk).